

The Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

A newspaper of the Christchurch Catholic Worker

25th anniversary edition

No 97, Pentecost 2021

Price: free or donation

Israel's Apartheid State

B'Tselem Human Rights Organisation, Tel Aviv

(Recently, in May 2021, over a period of days, Israeli troops repeatedly used teargas, stun grenades and rubber-capped steel bullets and attacked Muslims at sacred Ramadan ceremonies within the Al-Aqsa mosque in Occupied East Jerusalem, leaving many hundreds injured. Muslims have worshipped on this site for 1400 years since the time of Muhammed, Al-Aqsa is the 3rd holiest shrine in the world for Muslims. This triggered a response from Hamas firing rockets and directly led to the the subsequent war. Ed)

Over 14 million people live between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, roughly half of them Jews and half Palestinians. It is commonly held that the area is divided into two separate regimes: Within the sovereign borders of Israel – a permanent democratic regime governing about 9 million people, all Israeli citizens. Within the territories Israel occupied in 1967 – a temporary military regime ruling over some 5 million Palestinian subjects.

This accepted distinction ignores crucial facts: that this 'temporary' reality has persisted for more than 50 years; that hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers live in more than 280 permanent settlements in the West Bank; and that Israel has de jure annexed East Jerusalem, and de facto annexed the rest of the West Bank. Most importantly, it obscures the fact that the entire area is organized under one principle: advancing and perpetuating the supremacy of one group – Jews – over another – Palestinians.

This policy is implemented by engineering space.

For Jews, the entire area is open and contiguous (except Gaza). For Palestinians, it is divided into separate units Within Israel's sovereign territory, Palestinians make up some 17% of the state's citizenry. As Israeli citizens, they are afforded certain rights, yet these are not equal to those of their Jewish counterparts.

In East Jerusalem, which Israel annexed in 1967, the 350,000 or so Palestinians living there

are defined as permanent residents of Israel – a revocable status that allows them to live and work in Israel, receive social benefits and health insurance, and vote in municipal, but not national, elections.

In the West Bank, over 2.6 million Palestinians live in dozens of disconnected enclaves under rigid military rule and are denied political rights. In the Gaza Strip, about 2 million Palestinians are also denied political rights. In 2005, Israel withdrew its forces and dismantled its settlements; in 2007, Hamas seized control. Since then, Israel has held Gaza under blockade while controlling almost every aspect of life from outside. In each of these territorial units, Israel decides which rights to grant Palestinians. In not one of them are they granted the same rights as Jews.

Jewish supremacy

The regime employs several methods to promote Jewish supremacy. Israel works to 'Judaize' the entire area, treating land as a resource chiefly meant to benefit the Jewish population. Jewish communities are established and developed, while Palestinians are dispossessed, corralled into small, crowded enclaves.



Palestinian loss of land, 1948 to the 2000s



Since 1948, Israel has taken over 90% of land within its sovereign territory and built hundreds of Jewish communities, yet not one for Palestinians (with the exception of several communities built to concentrate the Bedouin population, after dispossessing them of most of their property rights).

Since 1967, Israel has also enacted this policy in the Occupied Territories, dispossessing Palestinians of more than 2,000 kilometres on various pretexts. In violation of international law, it has built over 280 settlements in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) for more than 600,000 Jewish citizens. It has devised a separate planning system for Palestinians, designed primarily to prevent construction and development, and has not established a single new Palestinian community.

Jews living anywhere in the world, their children and grandchildren – and their spouses – are entitled to immigrate to Israel and receive citizenship, even if they choose to live in the Occupied Territories.

Palestinians who live in other countries cannot immigrate to the Israeli-controlled areas – even if they, their parents or their grandparents were born and

lived there. Their only option is to marry a person who already holds status in these areas.

Palestinians who live in one territorial unit have difficulty obtaining status in another. According to Israeli law, Palestinians from the Occupied Territories cannot receive permanent status in Israel or East Jerusalem even if they marry Israelis.

Israel allows its citizens and residents – Jews and Palestinians alike – free passage between the units, with the exception of entering Gaza, which is defined as ‘hostile territory,’ and (formally) entering areas in the West Bank ostensibly under PA [Palestinian Authority] responsibility.

Palestinians in the West Bank or Gaza need a permit to travel between the units. Israel has held Gaza under blockade since 2007, prohibiting movement in or out except for rare cases it defines as humanitarian.

All Israeli citizens can leave and re-enter the country at any time. Palestinian subjects cannot usually fly abroad from Israel’s international airport and need an Israeli permit to get to the airport in Jordan. Israeli citizens – whether Jewish or Palestinian – can participate in national politics, including voting and running for office. However, leading politicians consistently undermine the legitimacy of Palestinian political representatives.

Palestinian subjugation

The roughly 5 million Palestinians who live in the Occupied Territories (including East Jerusalem) cannot participate in the political system that governs their lives and determines their future. While most can theoretically vote for the PA, its powers are symbolic and subordinated to Israel.

Palestinian subjects are denied not only the right to vote but other political rights, such as freedom of speech or association, and are forbidden from criticizing the regime or organizing and working towards social and political change.

The territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea is governed by a single regime that works to maintain Jewish supremacy. To that end, Israel has divided the area and the Palestinians into several distinct units. In each one, Palestinians are granted a different set of rights, which is never equal to the rights granted to Jews.

This policy, which denies Palestinians a slew of rights including the right to self-determination, is achieved by engineering space geographically, demographically, and politically. This includes: granting citizenship to any Jew in the world and their relatives, and generally withholding it from Palestinians; seizing land and allocating it to Jews while confining Palestinians in small, crowded

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

enclaves; restricting Palestinian movement; and excluding millions of Palestinians from effective political participation.

This is apartheid

A regime that uses laws, practices and organized violence to establish and maintain the supremacy of one group over another is an apartheid regime. This did not emerge overnight but took shape gradually. The accumulation of measures, which receive public and judicial support and are enshrined in practice and law, points to the conclusion that the bar for defining Israel as an apartheid regime has been met.

In recent years, the Israeli regime has grown increasingly explicit regarding its Jewish supremacist ideology. This process culminated with the enactment of Basic Law: Israel – the Nation State of the Jewish People, which declares the distinction between Jews and non-Jews fundamental and legitimate, and permits institutional discrimination in land management and development, housing, citizenship, language, and culture.

Meanwhile, official statements regarding formal

Editorial Lament for India

O God,

In Otautahi Christchurch, we enjoy a sparkling autumn day and blue skies. We take deep breaths of clean air with strong lungs. But our sisters and brothers in India are under a heavy cloud. Millions of people right now are unwell with COVID-19. And thousands are struggling to breathe any air at all. They need oxygen cylinders, they need beds in ICU, they need food and they need comfort in this time of great trouble and anxiety.

We also are deeply troubled that this world has so many inequalities and injustices that have led to this situation in the wider world and India. We know that we have more vaccines than we need in NZ, while people in India have run out.

Where are you God? Show your face.

God, as well as those who are sick, we know that the poorest people can't earn their daily wages. People need rice, lentils, tea and bread. People need a way to pay their rent. Migrants are returning on expensive journeys back to their villages. Old people are sheltering and fearful. Middle aged people are queuing for food supplies and COVID tests and vaccines. Children who have missed school for a year are bored in their tiny houses.

O God, show us ways to show compassion and share light at this time. May we pray, share what we have with people in need beyond our borders as well as with each other. Save us from wallowing only in our own troubles – and lift our eyes to notice the

annexation of more parts of the West Bank attest to Israel's long-term intentions to achieve permanent control over the land.

Conclusion:

This is a call for change. It is impossible to fight injustice without naming it: apartheid. It is painful to look reality in the eye, but more painful to live under a boot. That is why a determined struggle for a future based on human rights, liberty, and justice is more vital now than ever before. The reality described here is harsh, yet we must remember, people created this regime and people can replace it.

There are various political paths to a just future here, between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, but all of us must first choose to say: 'No To Apartheid.'

This statement was released in January 2021 by B'Tselem, Israel's most prestigious Human Rights organisation. B'Tselem in Hebrew mean 'In the Image of God'.

needs of others. Save us from self-pity and help us see your presence and grace for people in India today.

In case you had forgotten God, You have made each of us in your image. India is a land of colour and chaos and the home of a billion people made in your image. Millions of people in India seek God each day and find God each day. But now they are fearful and they don't know where God is. Where are you God?

Now what? God you know our tender sad hopes on this luminous autumn evening. You have not forgotten India and you have not forgotten us. Your mercies are new every morning. You are the creator of tarns, rocks and tussock. You are the creator behind chillies, rickshaws, butter, chicken and festivals.

People in India bear your image as we do here in Otautahi tonight. May fathers, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters know that they are beloved. May we also know that you are with us always.

May the COVID deluge in India end as abruptly as it started. May all the earth share resources and show compassion. And may we keep circling around and back to you and your unending love.

Amen

Kaaren Mathias has lived in India with her husband Jeph and family working as a doctor for 16 years pre-COVID-19. She is currently back in Christchurch, where she forms part of the CW community. Kaaren prayed this lament at a recent Wednesday evening service.

CW Appeal for India

'What we have over and above what we need does not belong to us but to the poor who have nothing.' This quote, from St Basil the Great (330-400), has always appealed to me as a guide as to how to approach sharing resources, including money.

The huge surge of COVID-19 in India is overwhelming health systems and the measures to control COVID (lockdowns) are impacting communities by restricting their opportunities to earn money e.g. driving rickshaws, selling food at roadside stalls or working in factories. There are many people going hungry and many people hit with huge costs for health care of family members.

There are 1.3 billion people in India, and around 400 000 are getting sick with COVID-19 every day. They need our help. If you are keen to support community-based responses to COVID-19, donations given will be sent to the Emmanuel Hospital Association (www.eha-health.org) who have a focused health and development programme and many community workers and volunteers to support people in communities. Dr Kaaren Mathias has worked for this association for the last 10 years and

personally knows many of the people involved with its work.

The focus will be on measures to reduce spread of COVID-19 (supply of sanitiser, masks, promoting vaccine when it is available) and on support to families who have little or no income (people with disabilities, female-headed households, migrants).

There are no overheads so the money will go to those who need it. But as it is not going through a Kiwi charity, we cannot issue tax deductible receipts. An update on where donations have been sent will be shared with all people who send an email to kaaren@eha-health.org. Please send queries to Kaaren too.

Appeal for India donations to ASB account:

**Account name - Donations and MH
Account number - 12-3409-0009389-51**

— Jim Consedine

No more cheques!

John Ruane

On 25th June this year, in line with other major banks, our bank, Westpac (who gobbled up the Canterbury Savings Bank whom we started with 32 years ago), will cease to issue cheques and will stop allowing cheques to be deposited.

This means that the main way of giving donations or making payments will have to be made online. This is an inconvenience to those who do not currently have a computer or do not use online banking. It means that our annual appeal inviting a cheque response cannot be used any more.

We are trying to think differently. The banks are following government departments, such as Inland Revenue, and overseas banks in their plans to cease accepting cheques.

During the Covid lockdown there was also a fall in the use of cash used for transactions with a move towards online and card usage to carry out transactions. The year the income from our annual appeal was reduced by 40 percent. A sign of the times!

The closedown in cheque usage and less ATM machines will result in some staff reductions and a reduction in the services to bank customers. This is

all bad news for most of us.

The Charities Commission estimate that over 20 percent of donations are currently made by cheque. It is mainly the elderly and the poor who will be affected most by these changes. This badly affects us at the Catholic Worker for funding our works of hospitality and outreach, and for donations to publish *The Common Good*.

However, our bank accounts do remain open and our CW budget remains stable at about \$25 000. Should you wish to make a donation to help keep us on the road or a regular contribution (much preferred!) our bank account details are:

**Te Wairua Maranga Trust
A/C number: 03 1703-0036346-02**

With a print run of 3500 copies, our postage costs have soared. It now costs more than \$5000 per edition to mail out *The Common Good* around NZ and around the world. Though print copies will still be available meantime, we would prefer that you consider receiving an emailed PDF. Please advise our e-dispatcher Maree Williamson if you wish to receive it electronically at maree.williamson37@gmail.com

The 10 Commandments for Sustainability

Marilyn Yurjevich

The traditional Hebrew 10 commandments relate to worship and ethics for an ancient people and have stood the test of time. Yet applied in the new way to building a sustainable world, they still have much to offer today.

Love God: All societies worship their deities as they understand them. Except current modern society, which is predominantly atheistic and materialistic. If the precepts of the various religions were kept, a happier, thus more sustainable world would result.

Idol-worship: Making false idols of external accoutrements like wealth, status, or material objects, which people use for their identity, does not lead to fulfilment. Living simply, purposefully and more humbly on planet earth requires a degree of quiet contemplation to appreciate nature, beauty and the interconnectedness of nature and society. This hasn't occurred to many but such reflection can contribute to saving the planet.

Taking God's name in vain: Many overtly religious people have often flouted principles of nature, the law and sustainability in the name of religion to dominate earth's ecology and social functions. Such belief is akin to using God's name in vain. Beliefs and behaviour need to be consistent to be credible.

Keeping the Sabbath day: Neoliberal capitalist society insists on operating 24/7, 365 days a year. Changes are needed as we all need to rest to be refreshed, de-stressed and to have recreational time. Productivity increases with rested workers who are paid sufficiently well to not need to work 24/7.

Parents – honour them: If we do that, the chances of our being honoured when we are old are more likely, having become more understanding and loving. People of all ages would be happier. The flip side to this is to not deeply wound children if you want to be honoured later in life.

The same principle applies towards Planet Earth. Honouring Mother Earth is an imperative that would see people happier for longer while benefiting from nature's services, provided for free.

Life - don't kill: Treat people and the planet with respect and do not violate people of any age, or the planet. It means not being discriminatory, being inclusive, being kind and includes having decent health, welfare, conservation practices, education and other systems. Neoliberal capitalism's antagonism towards government, with its self-orientated and

exploitative doctrines, is killing billions of people and other species, but slowly, out of sight and mind. It is still violence. Affordable sustainable practices are required for flourishing life.

Relationships - don't commit adultery: Treat people of all ages with respect; children would not be wounded, adults would thrive and families would be stable and generally happier. When aggregated this would lead to stable societies. Good relationships with nature are just as relevant for the same reasons.

Possessions - don't steal: Thieving creates anguish. Especially, not paying taxes deprives governments of funds to maintain society and at world scale gross inequality leads to massive injustices. Enriching the rich is thieving from the poor. This eighth imperative includes to not steal from future generations; extracting irreplaceable minerals from the earth, overfishing, overloading the atmosphere with greenhouse gases, land pollution, and deforestation, are theft from future generations, who will suffer the consequences of our generation's profligate wastefulness.

Truth - don't tell lies: Telling the truth is important for personal integrity. Lying about others steals their mana while demeaning the liar. Ignoring the truth, for example unjust industrial practices used under hyper-globalisation to justify unjust practices and other behaviours that destroy the environment is the flip side equivalent to lying. Promoting conspiracy theories, designed to cause disruption, and being anti-science because it is inconvenient, are also forms of lying.

Acceptance - don't covet: The current capitalist model relies on continued consumption by encouraging greed, but greed is killing people and the planet. All but the poor can be content with what they have, and it often leads to creativity that could alleviate personal poverty. Gratitude is a virtue that brings personal peace. Helping the poor is vital so that they don't need to covet to simply live. This does not mean that we should all live in poverty, but it does mean redistributing wealth needed for everyone to live meaningful lives.

Marilyn Yurjevich has been a campaigner for justice in Christchurch for decades. An active member of Ecu-Action, she belongs to the Christchurch North Catholic parish.

The Spirituality of Charity

Jim Consedine

Our physical hearts are the size of a small pudding. But our emotional and spiritual hearts can be as large as we want to make them, or as shrunken as a dried-up piece of fried sausage.

The central command of Jesus, 'to love God and love your neighbour' leads to our understanding from scripture that charity and justice form the component parts of this command. I have been asked to reflect on, 'the spirituality of charity'. But this can only be done by linking charity with justice the way the scriptures do. You cannot love your poor neighbours properly (charity) without also seeking to help heal the social situations that keeps them poor (justice).

In essence, spirituality is a way of being, a way of living out our lives. And there is not just one way of doing so. While different spiritualities will have differing emphases, all authentic Christian spiritualities should share the basic imprint of the sacred scriptures to underpin their evolving traditions.

For Christians, Christ is the beating heart of their spirituality. Our arms, legs, tongues, brains and actions give flesh to Christ in our time. Christ relies on us to act.

Pope Francis speaks specifically of charity in his latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, which essentially is about living a conscious spirituality for our time. In addressing all religious faith traditions, he spells out how charity should be practiced in relation to others, in the spirit of what he calls, fraternity – brotherhood/sisterhood. He says, *'only the closeness that makes us friends can enable us to appreciate the poor today, their legitimate desires and their own manner of living their faith. The 'option for the poor' should lead us to friendship with the poor.'* #234

To accept that the heart of Christ sits at the heart of the world, which is what our theology teaches us, requires us to constantly expand our own hearts, deepening our faith and love at each step. For it is only as love grows within that we can experience the love growing without.

Holistic growth

To accept that the heart of Christ sits at the heart of the world, which is what our theology teaches us, requires us to constantly expand our own hearts, deepening our faith and love at each step. For it is only as love grows within that we can experience the love growing without.

This modern generation is privileged to see, understand, and accept the enormity of our Creator God, whom most of us have constrained to a manageable level. In truth, this Great Spirit is much bigger than anything we have ever known, more colossal than anything the mind can imagine.

And we teach that the Cosmos, with its billions of galaxies of which we humans form an infinitesimally tiny part on the tiniest planet, is where this Great Spirit of Loves dwells, always available to us, always caring about us, continuing to create, always calling us forward to greater practice of love, compassion, justice and mercy. Charity and justice call us to expand our hearts throughout our lives to the point where they are at one with the heart of Christ, active in this amazing, wonderful Cosmos.

Our physical hearts are the size of a small pudding. But our emotional and spiritual hearts can be as large as we want to make them, or as shrunken as a dried-up piece of fried sausage. I have met many people, sadly, who have allowed bitterness, a lack of forgiveness, unresolved grief or anger to shrivel their hearts to that size!

However, I also know many more people with hearts so massive in their capacity to love, embrace and forgive, so inclusive, that you wonder at the depth of their holiness. Think Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu, Dorothy Day, mosque shooting survivor Farid Ahmed, Pauline O'Regan, Suzanne Aubert. Jesus said, *'By their fruit you know them.'* (Matt 7)

Expand our hearts

We are called daily to expand our hearts. When we fail to expand our hearts through love, we are holding back the plan of God for ourselves, humanity, and creation. The key to growing such a spirituality is to see that personal sacrifice is often asked of us, not just an institutional response, which can appear at times quite 'cold'. That is not the way of Christian charity which calls each of us to a personal response, to keep reaching out and growing in spirit.

Within an ever-expanding universe, followers of Jesus are invited to be open to a greater penetration by the mystery of Christ. Paradoxically, the more we engage with Christ and the greater our love for others becomes, the more the Cross of Christ will present itself on our road as we empathise with them, understand their burdens and walk with them on this sacred planet, which itself needs our love and protection. Like St Paul, *'We preach a Crucified Christ, to the Greeks a scandal, to the Jews an*

obstacle, to the pagans, madness.' (1 Cor 1/22-25) It's crazy! But it is our gospel in a nutshell.

This teaching sits at the heart of all loving relationships, the bitter-sweet subject of a million songs and poems. We all know that love is much deeper than mere romance and can be hard work. Bitter-sweet, death -resurrection. This is the essence of both Jesus and St Paul's teaching. Charity is a practical expression of such love.

Conclusion

'The spirituality of charity' is a useful phrase if we can see it as a concept challenging us to grow and

expand our hearts towards justice as well as charity, to keep making them more inclusive, more compassionate, less judgemental, more tender, more Christ-like. As Vincentians, we are privileged to have the opportunity to be in close touch with the poor, to meet Christ and to expand our hearts by recognising the divine presence within them.

Each encounter we have is an eternal moment. In this, we are most blessed.

This article is an abridged version of Jim Consedine's keynote address to this year's national St Vincent de Paul AGM in Lower Hutt.

Around the Traps

Glaciers melting – NZ glaciers are melting seven times faster than they were 20 years ago. A new report published in Nature magazine, found that between 2000 and 2019, glaciers lost a total of 267 gigatonnes (a gigatonne is a billion tonnes) of mass a year and that rate was accelerating by an estimated 48 gigatonnes per year. NZ lost an average of 1.5 metres of thickness each year between 2015 and 2020 – nearly seven times higher than the level disappearing between 2000 and 2004.

—*Nature*, March 2021

NZ Military sales to Saudis - The NZ Foreign Affairs Ministry granted export permits for military equipment to Saudi Arabia in 2016 and 2018, raising concerns the NZ Government may have breached human rights obligations, due to Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Yemen's civil war. In this war, at least 100,000 people have died and Yemen has been pushed to the brink of famine. The Ministry approved the sale of military simulation training equipment, computers and radios among other equipment to the Saudi Navy.

—*The Press*, 16 February 2021

The wealthiest Kiwis pay only 12 percent of their income in tax on average, according to Inland Revenue and Treasury data. The same research found that 42 percent of the wealthiest Kiwis were paying lower tax rates than the lowest tax rate paid by people who earn their money from an ordinary job or a benefit. According to Treasury, 42 percent of high wealth individuals pay less than 10 percent of their income on tax. That is lower than the lowest income tax rate which is 10.5 percent, which income earners pay on income up to \$14 000. Data shows that the top super-wealthy 1 per cent had 11 percent of the of the country's wealth in owner-occupied housing.

—*The Press*, 25 February 2021

Lethal legacy – The Defence Force's ongoing clearance of firing ranges used by New Zealand soldiers in Afghanistan has dug up nearly 700 unexploded ordinance and war remnants, of which 11 percent were possibly left behind by Kiwi troop. The cache of mostly Russian explosives has been retrieved by an organisation hired by the Defence Force to clean up the ranges in Bamyán province. A documentary in 2019 revealed that 17 Afghan people were killed in nine separate incidents connected by the UN to the firing ranges used by NZ soldiers to train in Bamyán. PM Jacinda Ardern in 2019 asked the Defence Force to urgently clear the ranges. The Government claims the clearance is running ahead of schedule.

—*The Press*, 10 April 2021

Save on Electricity – A five-minute job could save many New Zealand households up to \$400 a year on their power bill, Consumer NZ says. Electricity prices are expected to rise this year and the consumer watchdog is encouraging people to check they are on the right plan by using the energy comparison site, Powerswitch, a free-price comparison website run by Consumer NZ. In 2020, an analysis of Powerswitch data showed a potential median annual saving of \$388 per household. If need be, consumers can switch in less than five minutes and save themselves hundreds of dollars.

—*Consumer NZ*, April 2021

Victory for Environment – Plans to spend more than \$300 million remodelling Christchurch's Otakaro Avon River corridor over the next decade have been welcomed by ecological groups. The Christchurch City Council has set aside \$316m in its draft 10-year budget to start transforming 602 hectares of red zone land into 'the jewel in Christchurch's crown'. Another \$21m has been set

aside for the red zone land in Brooklands, Port Hills and Southshore.

It has previously been said that it would take about \$800m to regenerate the river red zone, which straddles the Avon River for 11 kilometres from the city to the sea. The legacy project is expected to take 30 years or more to complete. The money would be spent on a city-to-sea pathway, ecological restoration, cultural and recreational facilities, flood protection, stormwater management and the Pages Road bridge.

—*The Press*, 22 March 2021

Who wants to be a trillionaire? - A new report reveals that as a record number of people in the United States lost their jobs and struggled to put food on the table during the past year of the pandemic, the combined wealth of the 657 billionaires in the country grew more than \$1.3 trillion, nearly 45%, including Elon Musk and Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, who saw his personal wealth increase by \$65 billion — more than \$7 million every hour.

—*Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for Tax Fairness*

Huge increase in UK Arms Sales to Saudis – The UK has significantly increased the number of licences for weapons exports to Saudi Arabia, despite concerns over how they may be used. The most recent increase of arms exports – bombs, missiles, weapons totalling \$NZ\$2.5 billion – is the largest since March 2015 and the Saudi intervention in Yemen. Arms exports to Saudi Arabia have now totalled more than \$12 billion in the past six years. ‘Once again the UK politicians have put profit before Yemeni lives’, said Oxfam in a statement.

Saudi Arabia is the world’s largest importer of weapons. The US accounts for about 75 percent and the UK 15 percent of these sales. The conflict has displaced 4 million Yemenis and caused 18 500 civilian casualties.

—*The Press* 11 February 2021

Gun numbers – The US is the only nation where there are more guns in civilian hands than there are civilians. In a recent Small Arms Survey report, in 2018 we had 120 privately owned guns per 100 citizens. Next in line is Yemen with 53 guns per 100 population, and Yemen is at war! France and Germany both had 25 firearms per 100,000 citizens, Japan had less than one and gun deaths there are exceedingly rare. Last year the US saw an average of more than 100 gun deaths per day.

—*Washington Post*, 25 March 2021

the flame still flickers

(Written for the closure of Lyttelton Catholic parish after 156 years)

from the bowels of the earth
raw energy explodes
spreading fear around the bays
shifting hills, highways
loosening foundations
the harbour basin, whakaraupo
shaking like a leaf
in a Canterbury nor’wester

amidst dam leaks, power cuts
embankment collapses
chasmic rock falls
united we stood
despite liquefaction spreading
like vomit on the dance floor

with barbarians at the gate
quaked churches decimated
people regrouped, reaching out
solidarity our cornerstone
an old Lyttelton tradition
stretching way back

in the rubble
the stone rolled back
empty tomb exposed
the flame still flickers
love, compassion, mercy

a sacred beam
defying the odds
shining into shadows
healing the hurt
nourishing hope

Christ’s lighthouse
signalling the future

—*Jim Consedine*

Report - Ōtaki Summer camp

Shar Mathias

I decided to go to Ōtaki Summer camp in January because my sister and friends were going, without really knowing what I had signed up for. All I knew was that it was aimed towards young people (under 30 for the most part) and had something to do with politics.

This is an event held over Wellington Anniversary Weekend at the Catholic Worker Farm in Ōtaki. This year, around 240 young people came along, some associated with specific groups (e.g. School Strike For Climate) and all interested in being changemakers.

The way the camp was run reflected a lot of the values that the speakers and discussions centred on. One focus is the environment. The camp had composting toilets and all the meals were not only delicious, but entirely plant-based. My personal favourite was an Ethiopian-style meal with fermented pancakes and spicy lentils. We also ate lots of fresh produce from the farm's garden.

By day, there were a number of options for activities, including gardening, two different tramps in the Tararua ranges, and a river ecology walk. We were also all camping outside. We got to engage with the environment rather than just talking about it. We also had great presentations from the former director of Action Station and an employee of 350.org about running environmental campaigns.

Another hot topic was anti-racism. I loved that there was lots of te reo in everyday conversations, and from the speakers. At the coffee/tea area there was a sign with the words for each drink on it and how to ask for a drink and say thank you in te reo. The camp started with a pōwhiri from the local iwi and some of the attendees/invited speakers were tangata whenua currently occupying Shelly Bay. There was ethnic diversity among the speakers and MCs and campers which was very affirming.

Book Reviews

A Collection of Poems on my 80th Birthday. Sally Dunford. Privately published, 113 pages.
Reviewer: Jim Consedine

Long-term Christchurch Catholic Worker Sally Dunford set herself a project to publish this lovely book of more than 100 poems to celebrate her recent 80th birthday. Having known her for decades, it shed fresh light for me into the life and soul of this

Ōtaki Summer Camp is all about social justice, equality and inclusion. The camp was entirely accessible to people with disabilities. There were talks about inclusion and action from Anjum Rahman and Behrouz Boochani. They made the camp very affordable thanks to all the volunteer efforts in running and hosting it as well as offering scholarships to anyone who required it. Socially, the vibe was very inclusive—it was easy to sit down and have a korero with new people, and it felt safe to speak our opinions in the discussion groups following each session.

Most importantly, the camp was great fun. We had a ceilidh one night, which I had never experienced before. Although it was colder than I had hoped for a camp with 'summer' in its title, a night of dancing in a big group under the marquee soon had me sweating. In the rare moments of down-time we could help with collages, have chats while shelling beans, go on a swim in the river, have t-shirts screen-printed or read interesting books about politics. Adam McGrath, from the Christchurch band The Eastern, also performed one night, telling hilarious stories about how he wrote his folk songs and finishing with everyone dancing in front of the stage.

The CW farm was a great place to have it (although did result in a Wellington bias in attendees). There was lots of space, and the Catholic Workers there were excellent hosts. I felt the event reflected a lot of the values of the Catholic Worker without pushing a specific agenda and it welcomed a lot of people from diverse walks of life. Overall, the ideas and people I met, as well as the way the camp was run really challenged me to consider how to make a difference as a young person, not just in how I think but also how I act.

remarkable woman. While the poems are divided into four sections, each part is permeated with insights into the awe of God's presence around her and grief she has felt over her life through death of people close to her. She has a wonderful sense of the presence of God and the life this Great Love has shared with her through her relationships, through nature and through the events of our time. She has the soul of a poet. It was a treat to read.

Llew Summers – Body and Soul – John Newton, Canterbury University Press, 2020, hardback, 200 pp, including 200 photographs. Reviewer: Jim Consedine

Llew Summers was a Christchurch sculptor known throughout the city and beyond for his magnificently large bodies depicting life's most intimate postures. Many reflected his own life's journey and spiritual quest. When he died at his home in McCormack's Bay in August 2019, the nation lost a unique treasure, still underappreciated.

His friend, John Newton, has compiled a wonderful photo/bio of Llew and his life. As a sculptor growing into his craft, he had an artist's temperament which showed itself in various ways outlined honestly in Newton's book, but also seen in the prodigious amount of work he produced over his lifetime – more than 900 pieces. Many were so large that they took a truck and sometimes a crane to move them. Often provocative and voluptuous, they reflected Llew's no-nonsense earthy sensual approach to life and relationships. He was proud of them all. However, they were not always recognised and welcomed in the more traditional circles of art.

Among many, one of Llew's commissions was to create the Stations of the Cross in 2005 for the now demolished Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch. He created 14 beautiful figures which reflected a deep understanding of the life of Jesus and his suffering and death, leaving a hint of resurrection in the last station. Let us hope they will be rescued from the rubble, reassembled and placed in any new cathedral.

This is a terrific book. I was spellbound by the photos and loved the truthful story that unfolded as I discovered so many things about this good man and great artist whom I had known for 40 years. This is a large beautifully illustrated classic coffee-table book which will enthrall many with an eye for beauty.

Let Us Dream – Pope Francis - November 2020 The Tablet (London) review.

In his new book *Let Us Dream*, Pope Francis recognises the success of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. 'The countries with women as presidents or prime ministers have on the whole reacted better and more quickly than others, making decisions swiftly and communicating them with empathy,' he says. By way of example, Francis cites the success in New Zealand, Germany, Iceland, Taiwan and Finland.

This observation has led him to increase the number of women in decision making roles in the Vatican. Women are 'much better administrators than men,' he writes. In his new book, Francis suggests 'the perspective women bring is what the world needs at this time.' 'Allowing women's perspectives to challenge existing assumptions' in the Church, is something he has tried to focus on as Pope, he writes.

Throughout his pontificate, Francis says he has sought to appoint women to leadership positions – in the Roman Curia and in advisory, board level positions on Vatican bodies.

'I chose these particular women because of their qualifications but also because I believe women in general are much better administrators than men,' he says. 'They understand processes better, how to take projects forward.'

Francis is often criticised for not doing more to include women and for using outdated or non-inclusive language. He makes it clear that female leadership in the Church cannot simply be equated with what happens in the Vatican or on 'specific roles.'

Leadership should not be equated with inclusion into the ranks of the clergy, he says. 'Perhaps because of clericalism, which is a corruption of the priesthood, many people wrongly believe that Church leadership is exclusively male,' he writes.

'But if you go to any diocese in the world you'll see women running departments, schools, hospitals, and many other organisations and programmes; in some areas, you'll find many more women than men as leaders.' 'To say they aren't true leaders because they aren't priests is clericalist and disrespectful.'

Francis' new book is his latest attempt to try and influence the world's post-pandemic response. In his view, the worst reaction to the passing of the pandemic would be a return to 'feverish consumerism and forms of selfish self-protection' instead of protecting the environment. He offers an alternative future – one of people-focused politics concentrating on communities, with new inclusive forms of globalisation and a Universal Basic Income.

He also has sharp words for cultural warrior Catholics who 'turned into a cultural battle what was in truth an effort to ensure the protection of life.' He also calls out anti-maskers, labelling them as 'victims only in their own imagination.'

Regarding the debates about pulling down statues during this year's antiracist riots in the US, Francis writes that he applauds the defence of human dignity in the protests, but objects to attempts to 'purify the past' by 'amputating history.' Better to learn from the shame of the past than to try to 'cancel' it, he says.

Letters

New Brighton
Christchurch

Hi Jim,

It's been a long time since we heard such a pathetic outpouring of evasive obfuscation as Stuart Nash's attempt in Parliament to defend the indefensible. The launching by US owned company Rocket Lab of the satellite "Gunsmoke J", designed to enhance the accuracy of the US Military's missiles, from the Mahia Peninsula in March will be a clear and blatant breach of legislation regulating the role of the New Zealand Space Agency, with the connivance of Minister Nash and of the Labour Government.

Regardless of which Party or combination of Parties is in power, we continue as a country to behave like a subservient vassal state of the US. The image we attempt to project of Aotearoa New Zealand as a clean, green nation of peacemakers with an independent foreign policy is looking increasingly ragged; it's largely aspirational window-dressing. Labour MPs can no longer hide behind the excuse that naughty coalition partner NZ First foot-tripped them. They've long talked the talk. It's time to walk the walk.

Best wishes,

Rex Knight

Metlifecare, Apt 16
Box 624
Palmerston North 4440

To all CWs,

Greetings to you all. Thanks for all the good things you do. Special congratulations to *The Common Good*. A vital witness to Christ, for Christ, in Christ.

+ *Owen Dolan*

Co-adjutor Bishop Emeritus

Thomas Merton CW
Christchurch
20 April 2021

Kia ora koutou e hoa ma

Recently I took a trip to Wellington and did a short CW weekend tour. What a joy! With CW Danielle Web at the wheel of my sister Marie's car, I spent

Saturday driving to three CW establishments: to Berrigan House in Central Wellington, Ramos House in Lower Hutt, and to Otaki to be with Adi and Shelly Leason and 30 others at their ever-expanding CW farm, Te Puawai o te Aroha. Besides the main house, they have 14 units, mainly small cabins and caravans on the property. I also visited and lunched with Jack Leason and Hanneke Llethwaite's (and wee Francis') place in the hills above Te Horo.

To say I was blown away at what is going on would be an understatement. And it is mainly younger people leading the charge. It was a fantastic and very moving experience to meet with so many young people committed to the Gospel and relevant CW spirituality and wanting to make a difference for the better. There was hope at every turn.

At the farm, I also was privileged to attend a seminar led by Peter Healy SM as he presented material he is working on as to the role of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in our time of an expanding universe and cosmic understand of faith.

We capped off the Saturday with the world curry-tasting championship dinner at the farm on Saturday night, with about 10 dishes from different cooks nominated for best curry. After a certain amount of corruption and bribery was rooted out, a Thai curry emerged as the overall winner and its creator will be reigning world champion for a year. It was very noticeable that there was a different smell about the place the next morning!

The meal was followed by a concert in the barn by Ari Leason, aged 16, a budding Joan Baez, singing her original material. Beautiful voice, stunning stuff for one so young. Watch this space! She has real talent. I stayed the night with Alan Roberts, the local PP, sipping whiskey and watching the Crusaders lose (which they do occasionally!)

Grace is everywhere. The CW is definitely a movement both for the now and the future and a great hope for the Church and the world. The ones I met up with focus on small groups and personal relationships, just like in the early Church. Core gospel values dominate their thinking and their lives and I was greatly heartened and a bit blown away, to be truthful. They actually take the radical call of the non-violent Jesus seriously, and haven't sanitised his message. They seek to live it!

So there you have it – a fullish report, after an amazing few days. Nga mihi nui kia koutou,

Jim Consedine

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The Common Good

Te Wairua Maranga Trust
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When we encounter the evolutionary story, we encounter not only the big God at the heart of it all, but also the God of radical intimate closeness, energising, befriending, empowering and affirming us at every step of the way, truly the image of the birthing and nurturing mother.

Theologian Diarmuid O'Murchu MSC