

# The Common Good

## Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

A newspaper of the Christchurch Catholic Worker

No 103, Advent 2022

Price: free or donation

## ‘Just War’ or Nonviolence?

Jim Dowling

As the Ukrainian/Russian war drags on, I have become more and more disturbed by the number of my friends who have previously been involved in anti-war actions with me (some for decades), who are currently supportive of the armed conflict.

One good friend has written a short article about why he has abandoned his pacifist position and is now a very vocal supporter of waging war against the Russian invaders. His weekly emails contain many articles supporting the Ukrainian military and denouncing any who would even mildly question the sending of billions of dollars’ worth of weapons to wage this brutal war.

***I find it baffling to try to understand how people can support this litany of mass murder, under the label of a ‘Just War’. The never-ending propaganda machine of western media surely goes a long way to explaining it, of course. But you would think people can rise above it. Maybe that is where we all fail? In the proud belief that we are above mass indoctrination. We surely are not.***

Of course, understanding how/why people think what they think, is not my forte. In fact, I find it baffling to try to understand how people can support this litany of mass murder, under the label of a ‘Just War’. The never-ending propaganda

machine of western media surely goes a long way to explaining it, of course. But you would think people can rise above it. Maybe that is where we all fail? In the proud belief that we are above mass indoctrination. We surely are not.

### Nonviolence is active resistance

When I have had many, many discussions with people about Just War vs Nonviolence, I have usually had to point out at least four or five times, that nonviolence is not doing nothing. It is active resistance.

My friend went on to say that his turning point came after hearing about the Bucha massacre: ‘After the invaders withdrew at the end of March, the bodies of more than 450 civilians were uncovered. More than 400 of these had been killed.’

He then went on to detail the stories of rape and other atrocities. Many/most of these horror stories are probably true. But when you show him any articles claiming similar atrocities, torture, murders of civilians, etc by the Ukrainian side, he claims the author lacks credibility. Even if they are quoting the United Nations Office or Human Rights Watch.

Of course, this is always what war is all about. Our side good. Their side bad. This is the only definition of a Just War that most people need to hear. As in the excitement of any war, reason takes a back seat – a long way back.

LORD,  
MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT  
OF THY PEACE.  
WHERE THERE IS HATRED,  
LET ME SOW LOVE;  
WHERE THERE IS INJURY,  
PARDON;  
WHERE THERE IS DOUBT,  
FAITH;  
WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR,  
HOPE;  
WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS,  
LIGHT;  
WHERE THERE IS SADNESS,  
JOY.  
O DIVINE MASTER, GRANT  
THAT I MAY NOT SO MUCH  
SEEK TO BE CONSOLED  
AS TO CONSOLE,  
TO BE UNDERSTOOD  
AS TO UNDERSTAND,  
TO BE LOVED  
AS TO LOVE;  
FOR IT IS IN GIVING  
THAT WE RECEIVE,  
IT IS IN PARDONING  
THAT WE ARE PARDONED,  
AND IT IS IN DYING  
THAT WE ARE BORN  
TO ETERNAL LIFE. St. Francis



## Remember East Timor

I pointed out to my friend that he had lived through the illegal invasion and occupation of East Timor. The Indonesian military was infamous for rape and torture for all its 25 years of occupation. Some folks spent years non-violently resisting that genocidal occupation which saw the death of a third of the population. I personally did more than one jail sentence for that nonviolent resistance. I asked my friend why he did not advocate either for Australia waging a war with Indonesia, or at the very least sending weapons to the East Timorese resistance. No answer.

The truth is, the Indonesians eventually left East Timor after world-wide nonviolent resistance to their murderous occupation. Fretlin guerrillas waged their war throughout the occupation and saw thousands of Indonesians and East Timorese

killed in the fighting. But the turning point in the war came when students risked their lives non-violently protesting at the Dili cemetery, where up to 300 were murdered by the Indonesians. A film of this massacre reached nearly every TV station in the world. Nonviolent resistance groups grew around the world. By 1999, the Indonesians had capitulated and East Timor was free.

## Vietnam and the Middle East

How about the atrocities of Vietnam? ‘Our’ side murdered an untold number of civilians. Maybe 100,000? One million? Maybe more? They did it by burning children alive with napalm, and poisoning the environment, leading to birth deformities for generations. Most infamously, ‘our’ side massacred 500 old people and children in Mi Lai (and who knows how many more, elsewhere). Ah, the horrors of another ‘Just’ War’!

### 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 regular liturgies at the Suzanne Aubert House, 8A Cotterill St, Addington, (off Poulson St, near Church Square), followed by a shared meal. Anyone is welcome – phone Francis, 338-7105.

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

---

***Before our next ‘Just War’ of 2003, the Australian Navy was put in charge of the sea blockade of Iraq in the 1990’s. The British Medical Journal Lancet claimed the blockade was responsible for the deaths of 600,000 children. Many human rights groups pleaded for an end to this collective punishment, to no avail.***

---

In my files I have a small cutting from the Sept 1991 Brisbane *Courier Mail*. The article has US soldiers admitting they buried up to 5000 Iraqi soldiers alive in their trenches (trenches on the border of Iraq – not in Kuwait, note, but in Iraq). Only minor news, of course, just light reading for the ‘just warriors’ at home. This happened after the ‘turkey shoot’ on the ‘Highway of Death’, as it was called, when US jet fighters slaughtered thousands of fleeing, defeated, soldiers and many civilians, retreating from Kuwait to Iraq. The same war saw 300 civilians killed by a US bomb in just one fallout shelter, and numerous children shredded by US cluster bombs.

Before our next ‘Just War’ of 2003, the Australian Navy was put in charge of the sea blockade of Iraq in the 1990’s. The British Medical Journal *Lancet* claimed the blockade was responsible for the deaths of 600,000 children. Many human rights groups pleaded for an end to this collective punishment, to no avail.

I asked my friend ‘Did you advocate taking up arms against our own government?’ Many of us were nonviolently resisting these horrors, though.

When the more recent Brereton report came out

admitting Australian SAS had murdered at least 39 unarmed Afghan civilians, did you suggest taking up arms against our own government? Even after seeing the photo of a group of brave Aussie soldiers drinking beer out of their great 'trophy'? This was a prosthetic leg of a man they had just murdered.

Surely a 'Just War' could be waged against our soldiers? Well, the Taliban clearly thought so, and they won their war. Of course, their 'Just Warriors' have committed their own well publicised horrors.

One of my friends said recently that Ukraine was winning the war. Well, recently the Ukrainian military proudly announced they had killed 65,000 Russians. I think they were only boasting. Even 'just warriors' can boast about their kill surely? Well, perhaps they have only killed as few as 30,000, most young men, and perhaps only 30,000 Ukrainians have died. Has your 'Just War' really been worth it?

## Non-violent resistance the only sane way

I am absolutely certain nonviolent resistance would not have seen this many dead, and whole cities destroyed as has happened in Ukraine already. But we would have to leave behind any ideas of patriotic glory and 'victory', that goes with fighting this war. We would have to learn from Martin Luther King Jr, Dorothy Day, and Gandhi, and their teacher Jesus, that non-violence sits at the heart of a mature humanity. I fear that if we don't eventually learn this, the future can only hold nuclear annihilation, as Putin has already threatened.

Martin Luther King Jr expressed this clearly when he said, 'The choice today is between nonviolence or nonexistence'

*Australian Jim Dowling has been a Catholic Worker and war resister since the mid-1970s. He and his family live north of Brisbane.*

## Editorial 1 Rocket Lab: War in Space?

It is clear local mana whenua were misled by Rocket Lab founder Peter Beck when iwi land at Mahia Peninsula was leased to launch satellites into space.

At the time, Peter Beck was clear Rocket Lab would be used for civilian purposes only and would not take up military contracts, despite this being a particularly lucrative path to take.

Fast forward a few years and we find Beck has abandoned any principles he may have had and his company is now majority-owned by the US military and is launching satellites for US military purposes.

The government has to sign off on each launch to make sure it is in line with what's acceptable to this country but it's clearly a rubber stamp process conducted by Stuart Nash, Economic and Regional Development Minister.

Any assurances from Peter Beck for Stuart Nash, who signs off on the launches for the government, that Rocket Lab's work is for the betterment of mankind are not credible.

Peter Beck sets up straw man arguments, saying claims of Rocket Lab weaponizing space are 'misinformation' and the company would 'not deal in weapons'. 'We're certainly not going to launch weapons or anything that damages the environment or goes and hurts people,' he told Newshub last year.

What nonsense. No-one has claimed the rockets

contain weapons but what is absolutely clear is that the US military launches rockets for military purposes and this is what is happening at Mahia.

The *NZ Herald* reported last year on the capabilities of 'Gunsmoke-J satellites', which have been launched from Mahia for the US military, saying:

The other is the 'Gunsmoke-J' satellite being launched for the US Army's Space and Missile Defence Command (SMDC). Gunsmoke-J is a prototype for a possible series of nano-satellites that will collect targeting data 'in direct support of Army combat operations' according to a US Army fact sheet and a US Department of Defence budget document.

Rocket Lab is donkey deep with US strategies for 'full spectrum dominance of the planet – including space.' In doing so Beck and the government have made Mahia a target for conventional or even tactical nuclear weapons if hostilities break out between the US and another world power.

It's ironic that the government-provided startup funds for Beck to get Rocket Lab off the ground, only for Aotearoa New Zealand to find the company has put us to bed with a foreign military power and made us a target for conventional or nuclear attack.

Mana whenua in Mahia are right to be concerned – and so should the rest of us.

—John Minto

## Editorial 2 Hope in troubled times

My brother Robert, who died peacefully mid-September, spent much of his final two years lying on a couch, too unwell to walk far. Yet to nearly everyone he met, he spoke a word of affirmation, of hope, of the importance of maintaining hope in the midst of troubled times.

He knew it was a demanding virtue. In *The Prophetic Imagination*, internationally recognised theologian Walter Brueggemann defines hope as, *'an absurdity too embarrassing to speak about, for it flies in the face of all those claims we have been told are facts... It is mind-boggling to think of the... expression of hope as a way of subverting the dominant embrace.'*

Fostering hope involves a careful cultivation of that interior world: managing the fears, nurturing the life and filtering out the doom. As the prophet, Sr Joan Chittister OSB reminds us, *'Hope is a thin and slippery thing, sorely tested and hard to come by in this culture. But hope is not for easy times, 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 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.'*

Robert wasn't naïve, living a delusionary life away from the madding crowd. Few people in the country knew more about what was really going

on in the world, of the despots and wars and poverty and violence that millions face daily. He read voraciously every day of his life, books, magazines, newspapers. He had worked for decades in Church movements, development agencies, tertiary education, political movements. He had grown in knowledge and wisdom.

But his deep Christian faith and life experience of love led him to conclude that despair was not an option, that the world was essentially a good place, that generally people were decent, honest and wanted to be good, that life was worth living and needed to be protected from the worst that came along. He often spoke of hope.

He more than most, knew that we all need to participate in the process of making it better, of making life more just, of living the reality of the love we so often talk about but which, besides being practical, romantic or sentimental, 'often can be a harsh and dreadful thing in practice compared to love in dreams', as Fyodor Dostoevsky famously wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

He totally agreed with the recent words of Pope Francis: *As Christians, we do not receive a vocation individually; we are also called together. We are like the tiles of a mosaic. Each is lovely in itself, but only when they are put together do they form a picture. Each of us shines like a star in the heart of God and in the firmament of the universe. At the same time, though, we are called to form constellations that can guide and light up the path of humanity, beginning with the places in which we live.* (May 2022)

That is why he kept affirming people in who they were and what they were doing to the very end. His final word to so many and to us is a word of hope.

—Jim Consedine

### CW Website

Leading articles from the first 24 years of  
*The Common Good*  
Alternative funerals  
Restorative Justice  
Other theological issues  
[www.catholicworker.org.nz](http://www.catholicworker.org.nz)

### FUNERAL CHOICE

A Catholic Worker Project  
Cheaper alternatives to consumer funerals  
[www.funeralchoice.co.nz](http://www.funeralchoice.co.nz)



# Around the Traps

**# Promoters' deaths** – In the past few months, we have mourned the loss of several great promoters of *The Common Good*. **Fr Bryan Parish** was pastor of Aranui and New Brighton parishes in Christchurch East for 40 years and always a great supporter of the Catholic Worker and our little paper. He 'discovered' Dorothy Day in the 1960s and never let her go, subscribing to the NY Catholic Worker ever since. It helped shape his spirituality and ministry in the six decades following. **Sally Dunford** (cf obit p 8) was the principal distributor at the Pro-cathedral in Christchurch and a regular at our Wednesday night liturgies and quarterly mailouts. And **Terese Bakkum** was also one of our main supporters and a distributor of our paper in North Canterbury and died in late July. Terese had a great love of God and the Church and will be missed by her family and friends. May she rest in peace. *Bryan Parish, Sally Dunford and Terese Bakkum, presente!*

**# Robert Consedine RIP** – One of our greatest supporters and main helpers with *The Common Good* mailout, Jim's older brother Robert Consedine, died after a lengthy illness, 13th September 2022, two weeks shy of his 80th birthday. (Cf Obit p 8). On mailout mornings, Robert would bounce in and immediately engage with others on their lives and the affairs of the world. Never shy of an opinion, he always had a considerable debate going on around him as he applied 30 years of Treaty of Waitangi workshop skills to his mailout labours. He was a 'personality' in the best sense of the word, and always a very welcome presence. He really loved Sister Judith's date scones! *Robert Consedine, presente!*

**# Rental homes rip-off** – A 2020 stocktake by Stats NZ showed that one in three rental homes had large gaps around windows and doors, more than one-third were always or often cold, and nearly one-half were mouldy. One in two needed moderate or major repairs. A Habitat for Humanity survey this year found many rentals needed repairs either internally (38%) or externally (42%). In short, somewhere between 30% and 50% of our 600,000 rental homes – that is 200,000 to 300,000 dwellings – are in terrible condition.

*The Press*, 13 August 2022

**# Child Poverty in NZ** – Far too many children continue to live in poverty in New Zealand. On average around 1 in 10 children. But the effects of poverty are not evenly experienced. One in five Māori children and one in four Pasifika children live

in material hardship, meaning they lack 6 or more core items on a household survey. Disabled children and children with caregivers who are disabled also show higher rates of poverty, with one in five of these children experiencing material hardship.

—*Child Poverty Action*, October 2022

**# Social media's toxic rebranding of NZ** – Social media underbelly: 'Just over the past 72 hours, I've had to deal with threats to two women MPs being raped, and the Prime Minister being raped every day. Because of the hate and hurt of dangerous speech, the violent nature, vulgarity, venom, viciousness, misogyny, hyper and toxic masculinity, rape culture, antisemitic and trans/queer phobia. It is just a frothy bile – a verbal diarrhoea of hate.'

— Dr Sanjana Hattotuwa, *The Press*, August 2022

**# Gun obsession** – According to the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), more than 45,000 people died by gunfire in the US in 2020. In excess of 24,000 were by suicide, while over 19,000 were homicides. More than 1,000 people were shot to death by police. There are now more than 400 million firearms in private hands – more than one gun per person. We are a nation under siege.

—*Democracy Now*, 13 October 2022

**# Greenland Ice melt picture 'bleak'** – The melting of the ice on Greenland will result in 27 cm of sea-level rise irrespective of our response to the threat posed by climate change. The findings of a recent report in the journal *Nature Climate Change* imply that on the basis of the present rate of arming alone, more than 3% of the ice is destined to melt.

*The Press*, 31 August 2022

**# Ethiopian Crisis** – A top United Nations official has warned fighting in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region has spawned the worst humanitarian disaster on Earth. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus — who's originally from Tigray — said the conflict, which first erupted in late 2020, now threatens the lives of millions, even as global leaders largely ignore the crisis. The UN warns the Tigray conflict has combined with a worsening drought across Ethiopia to threaten the lives of 20 million people. This comes as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said it recently registered the 1 millionth person displaced by Somalia's devastating drought, which has led to widespread crop failure and the death of livestock since January 2021.

—*Democracy Now*

# **Starving the poor** - The Biden administration has ruled out releasing roughly \$7 billion of frozen US-held Afghan assets, a year after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and occupation, even as the UN warns a staggering 95% of Afghans are hungry. This money belongs to the Afghan people. And the US, for 365 days, has been holding their money in a New York vault while Afghan people boil grass to eat, sell their kidneys, watch their children starve.

—*Truthout*

### **what kind of man this?**

*(for a dying Robert Consedine)*

on a wet Sunday afternoon  
sitting misty eyed beside the bed  
where Robert lies quietly  
resting in care, palliative now  
awaiting the end

fuelled by love for whanau  
a passion for justice, the poor  
the marginalised, the Treaty  
this life of wisdom, great mana  
slowly ebbing away

with his ever-expanding heart  
creative skills brought to bear  
organising, writing, speaking  
always affirming, rarely critical  
nothing too big, too small

overflowing with grace  
empathy, compassion, sensitivity  
his faith dynamic, hope-filled  
the journey within  
expressed without

what kind of man this?  
a prophet no doubt,  
but much more, surely?  
a rare breed, holy, complete  
peaceful now between the sheets

truly grateful, awaiting passage  
to his new beginning

—*Jim Consedine*

# **The US National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee** celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and is seeking help in celebrating. You probably already know that the largest-funded military in the world belongs to the US, whose military budget surpasses the budgets of the next nine highest-funded militaries combined. In the last week of July, the House of Representatives authorized another increase of the already-bloated Pentagon budget to \$839 Billion in a 329-101 vote. Not only does this represent a \$67 Billion increase from last year, its \$37 Billion more than President Biden requested. The increase in war spending alone, at \$67 Billion, is more than our entire budget to fight climate change (\$44.9 Billion).

—*Democracy Now*

### **Quail Island**

*(for CW Graeme White, drowned  
Lyttelton Harbour, October 2007)*

to quail was never your nature  
Graeme brave spirit  
boldly going where dragons feared to  
tread

blazing ways we could not follow  
crusader in your placid sackcloth  
quietly afire with Brother Sun, Sister  
Moon

your innocence became our burning  
bush  
near you we knew ourselves  
on holy ground

at one now with the elements  
Whakaraupo's choppy waters  
crying seabird, moaning wind  
your cross of fire consumed by watery  
grave

now marks our tribes, grief's bitter ash

fly free wild spirit to your Saviour's  
Sun  
your mauri and its spark now flame as  
one

—*Sally Dunford*

## Whakapapa

Each of us are part of an unbreakable chain of people going back and forward over time. Back to our ancestor at the beginning of time and into the future at the end of time. Each of us in this chain of people have our arms interlocked with those on either side of us. We are unbreakable....

Each of us will have our time in the sun. But the sun is always moving. Moving towards the west, where it will finally settle.

When the sun shines on us we are alive, we are strong.

For we have passed down to us the culture that immerses us in deep belonging.

We feel safe and respected. We share beliefs and a sense of identity with those around us and this anchors us.

We share a purpose with them. We share a vision of the future.

We fit in here. Rituals and traditions tie us together.

The experience and wisdom of those who walked in the light before our time are passed on to us.

Whakapapa points a finger at us and tells us. You will not be judged by your money or celebrity or sense of self pride... you will be judged by what you did for our tribe.

—Owen Eastwood, Ngai Tahu and Irish



**The Christchurch CW core group in May 2022**

**Back row: Roger Pike, John Ruane, Francis Simmonds, Anne-Marie Pike, Mike Coughlan, Kathleen Gallagher, Leony Miller**

**Front Row: Kaaren Mathias, Jim Consedine, Judith Murphy, Sally Dunford (RIP), Pamela Mathias. Absent: Jeph Mathias, Maria Fresia.**

# NZ Recommendations - Synod on Synodality 2023-24

**Inclusion:** We want the Church to be a non-judgmental and safe place of welcome and belonging. Church teaching which excludes some people from the Eucharist is causing pain and hurt. Awareness of those who feel marginalised or excluded can lead to new attitudes and action. Action on inclusion must be part of our synodal journey.

**Gathering:** There is great love for the Mass, but also concerns about inclusion and lay participation. A new English translation of the Roman Missal is needed. Homilies must help people to encounter Jesus in the reality of their lives. If lay people are allowed to give homilies, they must have good formation. Small groups for prayer, formation, scripture study and mission to build community are needed.

**Leadership:** Collaborative ministry should become the norm, with greater sacramental involvement for lay people. Co-responsible leadership with barriers to lay participation in decision-making removed. Women participate equally in decision-making and have greater participation in liturgical roles.

**Mission:** Formation is needed for mission and

help with engaging in mission collectively. Ecumenical activity and interfaith dialogue need to be embraced as part of mission. Shame related to abuse in the Church makes evangelisation difficult. Prophetic leadership is needed in the community on social justice, ecological and bicultural issues. The only public voice of the Church for many is on euthanasia and human sexuality.

**Education and Formation:** Further formation is needed for both lay people and clergy in discernment and synodality. There is a need for catechesis in Church teaching. Education and formation in safeguarding is essential for both lay people and clergy. Seminarians' formation should involve more community engagement and include biculturalism and cultural sensitivity. Both clergy and laity need formation in collaborative ministry and co-responsible leadership.

**Synodality and Change:** The Synod process is exciting and transformative. We want to bring back those who are missing. Synodality and discernment can help us change while holding on to what is central to our faith. We want to learn to journey together in a synodal way.

NZ Catholic Bishops' Conference - August 2022

## Obituaries

### Robert Consedine (1942–2022)



Robert Consedine, who died in Christchurch on 13th September 2022, left a legacy of family, faith and spirited adventure that was powerfully witnessed in political activism and Te Tiriti (Treaty of Waitangi) justice work.

Robert's whakapapa and faith called him to act for justice. He was a fourth-generation Irish Pākehā, whose ancestors were freedom fighters in Ireland. A Catholic working-class upbringing in Addington, Christchurch, also grounded his identity. He knew where he was from, to whom he belonged and the kind of life he was expected to live.

In his youth, Robert was a diocesan leader of the Catholic Youth Movement in Christchurch and supported social change movements in Aotearoa and overseas. He became an organiser for the international aid agency CORSO, a trainer in direct

non-violent action and a leader of the community-led Northeast Christchurch Energy Protest Group.

A stint in jail for nonviolent civil disobedience, followed by a call to action from Māori activists for Pākehā to work with Pākehā, changed the direction of Robert's life. Treaty education became his 'dynamic purpose', an idea he took from French Jesuit theologian, Teilhard de Chardin.

Over the next 30-plus years, Robert developed positive, productive and enduring relationships with Ngāi Tahu and other Māori. He worked with more than 200 organisations across the motu, delivering Treaty workshops for more than 40,000 Pākehā.

His pedagogical signature was curious enquiry and profound listening. He encouraged people to tell their stories – difficult stories, hilarious stories, inspiring stories, the privilege and measure of which he deeply appreciated.

His book, *Healing our History: The Challenge of the Treaty of Waitangi*, became a Penguin best seller. Co-authored with his daughter Joanna, and



published in 2001, it was commended for its timing, relevance and substance. Now in its third edition and about to be published in Japanese, it remains a valuable resource for Treaty educators and especially for Pākehā.

In retirement, battling serious health problems, Robert's strong faith and indefatigable spirit nourished him. He continued to read voraciously and bolster in others the passion for justice that distinguished his life.

Known for his loud laughter and singing, his voice softened when he spoke of his family. Robert often said he owed everything to his beloved wife Trish, his beautiful daughters Suzanne (who died in a tragic accident 29 years ago), Joanna and Bernadette, his darling grandchildren, and his ever-staunch, loyal and loving Consedine clan.

A respectful and generous human being, Robert left this world feeling deeply grateful for his life. It had been, he said, wonderfully joyful.

—Frances Hancock

## Sally Dunford (1940-2022)



One of the personalities of the Christchurch Catholic Worker, Sally Dunford, died 13 October, after a short illness. She was 82. Sally joined us at our Wednesday night liturgies about 25 years ago and was as regular as clockwork in

her attendance and support.

Sally was a deeply spiritual woman. At her well attended wake, she was remembered as someone who was always searching and inquiring, wanting to know the 'why' of a particular idea or proposal. Besides being a CW, she was a Benedictine Oblate and took very seriously the spiritual exercises that accompany such a position. Several Oblates attended her funeral Vigil and Mass. Her poetry often deeply mystical, reflecting this dimension of her life.

Music was a huge part of Sally's life. She belonged to a variety of choirs, groups and orchestras. A gifted and talented musician, for many years on Wednesdays she accompanied our guitar players on her violin, always accommodating and fitting in with whatever music was emerging from their corner. Her bright smile and generous spirit would overcome any difficulties they experienced.

Her family were a vital part of her world and always central to her thinking. After her husband, Jim ('with his lovely tenor voice'), died and following the Canterbury earthquakes in 2011, she shifted from her beloved home in Lyttelton to the city. There, she maintained a busy life schedule to the end, only succumbing to illness in her latter months.

With the snowclad Southern Alps as a backdrop, Sally was buried on a beautiful spring day beside Jim at Cust in North Canterbury. With grateful hearts, CW members joined her family in accompanying her to her final resting place. May she rest in peace.

—Jim Consedine

## Reviews



***Kōtuku Shining Flight*, Kathleen Gallagher, collected poems, Pukeko Publications, 340 pages, \$30 for one book, \$50 for two. Order by email – [pukekopublications@gmail.com](mailto:pukekopublications@gmail.com). Reviewer: Helen Moran**

*Kōtuku Shining Flight* brings together Kathleen's four books of

beautiful, sensuous poetry, rooted in Aotearoa, a body of work spanning 1979-2022.

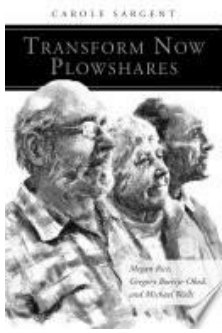
This volume is an absolute treasure. Reading from start to finish is a sacred flight, a kind of pilgrimage: *Kōtuku* (2022), luminous, compassionately sifting memory and experience for meaning; *Twilight Burns the Sky* (2001), passionate, detailed, life events and significant people described with rich, luscious physicality; then the grit, longing and struggle of human experience in *Gypsy* (1993);

and finally, twenty-six poetic gems, her first collection, *Tara* (1979-1986).

Kathleen's work is robust and tactile, deftly simple and deeply evocative. Through her we see with fresh clarity and a different lens. To read her poetry is to be surprised, to laugh and to weep, and to marvel at the preciousness of every ordinary moment, every simple thing, every being. We are challenged to be just. We fall in love with creation. We are reawakened to love.

*love is aroha  
aro – in the presence of  
ha – the breath  
through all the dimensions  
in love  
in aroha  
we become of God*

'Good Friday 2014', *Kōtuku*



***Transform Now Plowshares: the legacy*, Carole Sargent; 248 pages; Liturgical Press, US\$19.95; Reviewer: Rosalie G Riegle**

Is there cause for hope in these perilous times? With Russia's war against Ukraine igniting international conversation about the use of nuclear weapons, it's up to the citizens of the nuclear nations to call our countries to their senses. The Transform Now Plowshares did this with their nonviolent action in July 2012. 'A Holy Child sister and two Catholic Workers committed the largest breach in US nuclear security history,' as it says on the back cover of *Transform Now Plowshares*: Megan Rice, Gregory Boertje-Obed, and Michael Walli.

Author Carole Sargent has written an engaging and exciting book that can inspire us to stand together in similar hope once again.

*Transform Now Plowshares* profiles the three faces of the action, Sr. Megan Rice, Greg Boertje-Obed and Michael Walli, as well as the cast of supporting players behind the scenes.

Plowshares actions – of which there have been over 100 since the group's inception in the early 1980s – are characteristically composed of four parts: discernment and planning; the action itself; the trial and supporting activities surrounding it; and finally, imprisonment. In the Transform Now Plowshares action of 2012, the larger planning group became three who pledged to do the action, with many 'unindicted co-conspirators' in the support circle.

Rice, Boertje-Obed and Walli chose to protest at the 'mother plant' of the country's nuclear arsenal: the Y-12 facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a behemoth which produces the deadly enriched uranium necessary for nuclear weapons. As such, it is protected with high security; a reported \$150 million a year goes to private contractors to ensure that this is so.

After planning and prayer, the three nonviolent resisters cut through fences of the 150-acre complex and walked down hills and through ravines in the dead of night to reach the heart of the complex. They carried with them bolt-cutters, flashlights, tiny hammers in which to symbolically 'beat swords into plowshares,' spray paint, a Bible, bread, banners, candles and a statement of intent. Their hope was to expose to the world the truth about nuclear weapons and, in particular, the spending of vast sums of our taxpayer money to build a new Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility at Oak Ridge.

As unlikely as it was, the elaborate security system failed to stop the resisters. Sargent writes, 'Whether you call it contractor ineptitude, the Holy Spirit, or pure luck' the three activists walked unseen through areas no one should have been able to enter. They hung banners, poured blood and spray-painted slogans on the corner of a building and, when they reached the centre, prayed, sang and awaited arrest until security guards finally came. Together they summoned an imagination for the transforming of the facility 'into life-giving alternatives which resolve real problems of poverty and environmental degradation for all.'

This particular Plowshares action generated more publicity than any other because of the egregious security failures. Y-12 was closed for two weeks. As reported by *The Washington Post* and elsewhere, security cameras were repaired, one guard was fired and others suspended, officials changed and congressional hearings were held. Sargent does a commendable job of detailing with clarity the often murky trial throughout several chapters.

On May 8, 2013, in less than three hours, the jury found them guilty of depredation of property and sabotage (the intent to cause injury to the national defence system). After the defendants spent the long intervening months in jail, they were sentenced to federal prison in February 2014. In May 2015, however, the conviction for sabotage was vacated by a federal appeals court and the resisters were swiftly released from prison.

The book ends with a joint letter Rice, Boertje-Obed and Walli wrote on the second anniversary of their action: 'In order for the US to negotiate for nuclear disarmament in good faith, we say it is essential to peaceably transform these very corporations so that they are no longer able to violate the most basic moral and legal principles of civilized society by deliberately precipitating planetary self-destruction.'

When read with care and prayer, *Transform Now Plowshares* can move us from politely protesting nuclear armaments to non-violently acting for their abolition, calling our country in stronger and stronger ways to abolish its arsenal and encouraging the citizens of the other nuclear countries to do so as well.

As I worked my way through this book during the most dangerous nuclear moment since the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, I felt both sobered and hopeful. Sobered because the new Y-12 nuclear bomb factory that these three Catholics risked their lives to protest is still being completed and will still supply the enriched uranium they were protesting. But hopeful because this present moment calls us all

to action. Apathy is not an option; we must widen the circle and become ourselves conscientious resisters. Author Carole Sargent, a member of the beloved community of anti-war activists, asks, ‘And if not us, who?’ Her last words in *Transform Now Plowshares: War no more.*

—Rosalie Riegle calls herself a ‘Catholic Worker at large.’ She is Professor emerita in English at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan.

**Documentary New Zealand; No Māori Allowed, and Crime: Need vs Greed. Available to watch on TVNZ+. Reviewer: Barbara Corcoran**

We know this stuff. But there’s knowing and then there’s knowing. *Documentary New Zealand* is a series that goes a fair way to improving the quality of our knowing. There are eight episodes, available to watch on TVNZ+.

The programme *No Māori Allowed* allows us to hear the very personal stories of discrimination told eloquently by older people who somehow managed to survive their youth without eternal bitterness. It’s humbling, and it reminded me of the time I went to the US National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Describing to a family member how moving it was, the response was, ‘Isn’t it time we just got over it?’. Yeah, nah. It’s not time to get over it, not yet.

*Crime: Need vs Greed* focuses on financial crime in New Zealand Aotearoa. It’s wide-ranging, but even just focusing on tax/welfare fraud, the scale is wildly disproportionate. There’s approximately \$26

million in welfare fraud each year in NZ, and around \$1 billion in known tax ‘discrepancies’ – actual amount estimated to be more like \$5-\$7 billion.

The numbers can be a little hard to picture, so I decided to look at the difference between millions and billions. On YouTube I found *A Million Dollars vs A Billion Dollars, Visualised: A Road Trip*, where the difference was illustrated by imagining \$1 banknotes stacked vertically |||||. It took about a minute to walk the length of \$1 million, but then you had to get in a car and drive for more than an hour to get to \$1 billion. A million is a drop in the ocean.

\$60,000 welfare fraud will pretty much guarantee you a prison term, where your white-collar fraud has to be significantly larger before you’re threatened with jail. A prison sentence affects a person’s whole life, yet there is clearly more concern for the impact on a rich white person’s life than the potential of impacting a poor brown person’s life.

After a tough start in life, including time in Ōwairaka Boys Home, Fa’afete (Fete) Taitu (Senior Pasefika Engagement Advisor, Royal Commission of Inquiry into State Abuse and Faith-Based Abuse), comments ‘Being on remand is, for me, another form of oppression... I’ve never seen a white-collar crime boy remanded in custody. They’ve been bailed the whole time, and then, the ones I know of, even when they’ve been found guilty, and remanded for sentence, they’re out on bail! Yeah, before they’re sentenced, and they’ve been found guilty. White-collar crime boys? They don’t lose much.’

## Letter

Wellington  
October 2022

Dear Editor,

Well done in publishing the NZ bishops’ statement on Palestine. I’m not sure how many bishops’ conferences speak on the issue but it was good to see the NZCBC do so. Given the ongoing suffering and land loss of the Palestinians I was hoping that the statement could have taken up a couple of extra points – adopting the term ‘apartheid’ to describe the treatment of the Palestinians (as many human rights groups, including Israeli ones are doing) and the supporting of the ecumenical *Kairos* statement and movement.

I’m sure the Holy See’s diplomatic position supporting a two-state solution and ‘special status’ for Jerusalem and Bethlehem was a baseline for the bishops’ statement. However, I also think an acknowledgement of the ‘one-state’ solution

proposal would have been good as ongoing settlement-building and land confiscation are making the two-state solution unviable. The Oslo-Accords have not led to Palestinian sovereignty in their territories and so other possibilities need to be examined. The *Kairos* document (2009) and movement offer an ecumenical Christian and non-violent way forward also.

The Palestinians are in the same situation as the Ukrainians (land being invaded). Palestinians could justly be aggrieved that while Ukraine has no problem seeking arms to defend against that invasion, Palestinians are slammed for any form of self-defence.

I do not support armed violence but there is a clear double standard operating here.

Best wishes,

**Gerard Burns**

<b>In this issue</b>	<b>Page</b>
Jim Dowling on Just War or Nonviolence .....	1-3
Editorials – John Minto and Jim Consedine.....	3-4
Poems .....	6
Obituaries – Robert Consedine, Sally Dunford.....	8
Reviews, Letter.....	9-11

Read *The Common Good* online at [catholicworker.org.nz](http://catholicworker.org.nz)

### ***The Common Good***

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



## **Prayer**

‘I don’t pray,’ people say to me. And I say back, ‘Neither do I. I just breathe God in and hope somehow to learn how to breathe God out, as well.’ The purpose of prayer is simply to transform us to the mind of God. We do not go to prayer to coax God to make our lives Disneyland. We go to prayer to be transfigured ourselves, to come to see the world as God sees the world, to practice the presence of God, to put on a heart of justice, of love, and of compassion for others. We go to become new of soul.

—Joan Chittister OSB