

The Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

A newspaper of the Christchurch Catholic Worker

No 106, Spring 2023

Price: free or donation

Global warming getting worse

Thomas Reese SJ

Anyone who does not believe in global warming after what the world has endured this July and August is so deep in denial they would not flee a burning house if their clothes were on fire.

And yet millions of people still do not accept the facts revealed by science. Rather, they continue to believe the lies propagated by the fossil fuel industry, their political cronies and the pseudo-scientists who have prostituted themselves to the industry.

Just as bad are all of us who accept the science of climate change, but don't do anything to stop the madness. We are like frogs in a pot of water being slowly cooked as the temperature rises. We don't have the sense to get out of the pot, let alone turn off the heat.

July the hottest month

July 2023 was the hottest month on record in all of human history. Emergency rooms were flooded with heatstroke victims as well as people burned by roads, sidewalks and metal equipment turned hot in the sun.

July 2023 was the hottest month on record in all of human history. Emergency rooms were flooded with heatstroke victims as well as people burned by roads, sidewalks and metal equipment turned hot in the sun.

Globally, 5 million people a year die from the heat. The elderly, the sick, the poor and the homeless suffer the most from the heat. The rich and the middle class can retreat to their air-conditioned bunkers, which makes matters worse with increased CO2 emissions from the power plants that create the electricity to run our air conditioners.



Others died from floods caused by warm air that holds more water during storms. The Northeast was especially hard-hit this summer, while earlier Pakistan was devastated by floods.

Drought will inevitably return in the future. The heat and

floods cost billions of dollars in damage and in lost productivity. They are creating more climate refugees who must migrate to survive.

As awful as this all sounds, it is only the beginning. We are doing permanent damage to the home in which we live. Around the world, mountain glaciers are shrinking. When they are gone, millions of people will lose dependable sources of water. Warm water and increased acidity are killing coral reefs around the world, reefs that took hundreds of years to grow, reefs that are the nurseries of the ocean. When these reefs are gone, it will be the end of thousands of ocean species that breed or live in the coral reefs. They will never recover. It will be the end of the oceans as we know them, along with the fish we eat.

Meanwhile, the oceans continue to rise. There is less ice in the water around Antarctica this winter, which does not have an immediate effect, but it means the ice on the continent will be threatened. And there is less ice at the North Pole. Not only does all this melting add to ocean levels, it also means open oceans will absorb more heat since ice reflects sunlight.

The only remaining question is how fast this climate apocalypse will come. Some scientists think the worst will not come until the next century, while others warn of tipping points that could bring it on quickly. Around the world, mountain glaciers are



shrinking. When they are gone millions of people will lose dependable sources of water.

‘If we are able to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, US sea level in 2100 is projected to be around 0.6 meters (2 feet) higher on average than it was in 2000,’ according to NOAA. ‘On a pathway with high greenhouse gas emissions and rapid ice sheet collapse, models project that average sea level rise for the contiguous United States could be 2.2 meters (7.2 feet) by 2100 and 3.9 meters (13 feet) by 2150.’

Two future scenarios

Two climate scenarios for quicker disaster are terrifying. One is that all the ice on Greenland destabilizes and slides into the sea. If all the Greenland ice melts, sea levels will rise by 6.5 feet. If the entire Antarctic ice sheet melts, sea levels will rise by 190 feet. Coastal cities will be flooded,

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.

displacing hundreds of millions of people.

Such a catastrophe will also upset the Atlantic Gulf Stream that warms Europe. Ironically, under global warming, Europe without the Gulf Stream could become as cold as Alaska, since they are on the same latitude.

The other tipping point could come from unfreezing the Siberian permafrost, which might release enough methane (a potent greenhouse gas) to end the world as we know it. The planet could quickly warm, melting ice everywhere.

In the 22nd century and beyond, when people have forgotten the wars, the pandemics and the economic and political crises of the 20th and 21st centuries, they will not honour us for our technological innovations. They will curse us for destroying our planet, their only home.

The Earth will never recover. Perhaps in a few millennia, other species will evolve that can live in the wasteland that is Earth, but it will never be the same.

Today, we ask why Germans did nothing to stop genocide under the Nazis. Future generations will ask why we did nothing to stop global warming. It’s not like we did not know. Millions will die in the coming catastrophe, perhaps half the world’s population. Billions more will suffer privations on an impoverished planet for centuries to come. Governments will collapse into chaos; the whole world will look like Haiti does now.

The Earth will never recover. Perhaps in a few millennia, other species will evolve that can live in the wasteland that is Earth, but it will never be the same.

Destroying God’s creation

For believers this is even more depressing because we are destroying God’s creation, God’s greatest gift to us. Rather than treasuring this gift, we are like children who break all our toys on Christmas Day. Christians profess that we should take up our cross and follow Jesus. Instead, we are making crosses for future generations to carry.

Jesus tells us, ‘Do not be afraid.’ I must confess that I am terrified by what is coming even though I know I will be dead before the worst happens. For once, I am happy I don’t have children. I pray for a miracle, even though we do not deserve one.

To those not yet born, all I can say is, ‘I’m sorry.’ But I don’t expect you to forgive us.

—Rev. Thomas J. Reese is a Jesuit priest and a Senior Analyst at Religion News Service in the USA.

Editorial The Gospel path of nonviolence

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. —Howard Zinn

I am writing this on Nagasaki Day, 9th August, the feast of St Franz Jägerstätter, the Austrian farmer who singularly from his village, refused to fight for the Nazis and was executed for this act of conscience on this day in 1943. He is a martyred victim of gospel non-violence based on the teachings of Jesus, with much to teach us in our modern age.

In Aotearoa, we are faced with fresh pressure to become more aligned to the western military alliance led by the US, which regularly flexes its muscles in shadow war scenarios with different political opponents and wants more and more for us to become part of its overall military strategy. This is the road Australia has gone down in recent years and has led it to a new military alliance with the US and the UK, AUKUS.

The Catholic Worker position, like that of Pope Francis, is to follow a road much less travelled but more human, built on the teaching of Christ, whereby war is always considered as evil and never to be entertained. We hold this on moral grounds firstly flowing from our faith base, but also based on bitter evidence, noting that millions of men, women and children have died in wars this past century who were totally innocent

victims They became ‘collateral damage’ for the generals and politicians who decide these things. Many of these countries we fought in war and whose citizens we killed (eg Japan, Germany, Italy, Vietnam) are now considered our good friends and staunch allies. Yet our blood still stains their soil.

It is with considerable mistrust that we note that US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, met with our Prime Minister Chris Hipkins and Foreign Minister Nania Mahuta in Wellington in early August. While publicly they held the line that NZ was not entertaining notions of joining AUKUS at any level, it seems only a matter of time before an incoming government succumbs to the economic and political pressure regularly being applied. We are being bullied to buckle!

The new defence strategy announced recently by Government Minister Andrew Little gives cause for considerable concern as he presents three strengthened military options as responsible in a volatile world – as if more military engagement with nuclear weapons as the ultimate backdrop was inevitable and we needed to be ready to ‘play our part’. Who really wants to ‘play our part’ in a potential doomsday scenario?

Embracing a strategy of non-violent engagement as NZ showed in expediting the Burnham Truce Agreement in Bougainville in 1997-98, makes much more human and environmental sense given the fragile state of the planet, our still independent foreign policy and limited resources.

We dare not keep playing out old war responses to future international difficulties. The price is too high.

—Jim Consedine

CW Website

Leading articles from the first 27 years of
The Common Good
Alternative funerals
Restorative Justice
Other theological issues
www.catholicworker.org.nz

FUNERAL CHOICE

A Catholic Worker Project
Cheaper alternatives to consumer funerals
www.funeralchoice.co.nz

Doctrine of Discovery: its importance for NZ Catholics

Gerard Burns

One of the strong social movements of our time is the growing recognition of indigenous (first/original/aboriginal peoples) in countries that have taken their contemporary form following a period of colonisation by European powers.

The ways colonisation took place varied according to place and time but usually involved the imposition of European power over local peoples and the establishment of economic and political systems benefitting the colonisers.

The ‘doctrine of discovery’ refers to a set of decisions and permissions given by the Popes of the late 15th century to the first main European colonising powers – Spain and Portugal.

The papacy court in pre-Reformation times was a kind of ‘high court’ of Europe, and these decisions were meant to avoid conflicts among Catholic rulers.

The decisions permitted ‘discoverers’ from Europe to take possession of lands that were ‘found’ and to bring the Catholic Christian faith to them.

The conquest of the West Indies, Mexico and Peru was accompanied by clergy as chaplains to the conquerors and bringers of Catholicism to local peoples.

Underlying these documents was a presumption of the superiority of European (white) ways and technology and of the Christian faith, especially in the form of Catholicism.

It was assumed that the arrival of all these things would greatly benefit local peoples.

Although later papal documents of the 16th century took a different approach in light of what colonisers were doing in the ‘New World’, the real effects of the initial conquest and colonisation and their underlying attitudes continued.

The colonisation of Aotearoa by Britain was relatively late from the 1840s onward.

There had been a realisation by some in England (e.g., the influential anti-slavery ‘Clapham sect’ group) of the damage done by British colonisation in other places. Hence the move to seek a Treaty with the ‘independent tribes of Niu Tireni’ (cf: 1835 Declaration of Independence).

Captain Hobson gathered chief’s signatures to allow British settlement. However, when in May 1840 he proclaimed British sovereignty over NZ (not conceded in the Treaty’s Māori version), it was by virtue of the Treaty for the North Island and by ‘right of discovery’ for the South and Stewart Islands.

The ‘doctrine’ was most notably summarised by US Judge Marshall in 1823 and has underpinned colonial and post-colonial legal systems in various countries.

It has come under strong attack, especially in

Canada and New Zealand, as indigenous peoples reclaim lost rights.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is part of this repudiation. In Aotearoa, the Waitangi Tribunal and constitutional change are part of the process of recognising indigenous peoples.

Since the late 1970s, popes have sought to meet indigenous people, offer apologies for Church practices that facilitated their subjugation and recognise indigenous spiritualities (cf Pope John Paul II in Auckland 1986, also Querida Amazonia, 2020).

Recently, the Vatican declared that the ‘[doctrine of discovery](#)’ is not part of the Church’s official teaching but came from a particular historical political and legal situation.

This should remove any question that the Church supports colonialist practices, including where they might still occur.

Some campaigners against the doctrine have claimed the declaration is a way for the Church to absolve and distance itself from the racist assumptions and consequences of these documents. They have said there should not just be a repudiation of them but a formal rescinding plus clear action for redress.

What does the doctrine mean for pastoral ministers in Aotearoa NZ, today? It means we continue to recognise the historical exclusion of Māori in Aotearoa, the importance of te Tiriti o Waitangi and the role of the Church in safeguarding the place of that Tiriti.

Other steps

- learning good pronunciation of te reo as an official language of the country;
- reading some good histories of this land;
- learning the Māori names for objects, birds, and plants;
- learning parts of the Mass in te reo; and
- act against colonial practices.

Decolonisation is the process of freeing an institution of colonisation’s social, economic, and cultural impacts.

This involves our way of thinking and acting towards one another, and it is not simply about political independence. This includes holding meaningful and even uncomfortable conversations about how the Church has been an instrument of colonisation and racism.

This could also mean kōrero on the rights of the indigenous all over the world and what the Church teaches about the dignity of all peoples

—Gerard Burns is the Vicar General in the Archdiocese of Wellington

12th National CW Hui

Otaki, 14-17 July 2023

The opening greeting from Catherine Land set the tone. Bouncing out of her van, she announced, ‘we have just arrived from the Far North, 42 of us including loads of children’. And loads there were among the 70–80 participants who came to Te Puawhai o te Aroha CW at Otaki, 14–17 July 2023 for the 12th national Catholic Worker hui since our launch 34 years ago on Nagasaki Day, 9th August 1989. We have met nationally since at Hokianga (3 times), Waikanae, Hiruharama (Jerusalem), Rapaki, Otaki (3), Kopua and Wellington (Berrigan House).

The format was basically the same as previous years beginning on the first evening with a welcome from our kaumatua Ron Findley and local CWs, followed by introductions. Being Matariki day, we acknowledged active supporters who had died in the previous year including Sally Dunford, Robert Consedine, Fr Bryan Parish, Fr Tom Keyes and Sr Helen Goggin RSM, our proofreader for *The Common Good* for its first 96 editions.

Input and workshops over the following days focused on CW spirituality led by Jim as a counter-cultural pilgrimage ‘creating a new world within the shell of the old’ (as CW founders Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day would say) a powerful ‘around the traps’ reporting session led by Francis on day-to-day hospitality and an excellent session led by Kathleen on implementing *Laudato Si* in the face of the deterioration of our sacred planet. This included looking at practical steps we could all take to live a nourishing sustainable lifestyle in the face of the rampant consumer model we are presented daily in the wider culture. Jo hosted a twice-daily mediation time in her little whare, we had important workshops led by Teresa on raising children in the CW tradition and ‘keeping them safe’, and discussion on resistance and how to take the next step in non-violent opposition to injustice.

Covid Response

A special at feature this hui was the focus placed on the hurts and pain people suffered during the Covid ‘lockdowns’ due to the strong anti-vaccination and mandate stance taken by

several members. We spent two lengthy sessions airing those hurts and their effects and talking through the steps that forgiveness has to offer to help heal breaches of trust and friendship. We discussed forgiveness as an ongoing process beginning with the decision to forgive, followed by trying to walk a kilometre in ‘the other’s shoes’ to get a better understanding, how essential it was to pray for the grace to enable us to forgive fully, to recognise forgiveness is not a ‘one-off’ action but often needs to be repeated as Jesus taught, and to recognise that the person who forgives is always the first beneficiary of the action, regardless of what happens to the other. Such a person is refusing to be locked into the pain of the past or be chained to the perpetrator.

A positive insight from this reflection was that we can hold varying opinions about such matters but still remain in solidarity with the CW kaupapa. It was not an easy topic to deal with but it proved to be a matchwinner on both occasions.

The Saturday night was given over to a very successful barn dance to the music of the internationally renowned CW All Stars band, with lead guitarist Franz Dowling flown in from Brisbane for the occasion. The parish Eucharist on the Sunday was also very important for many and an acknowledgment of the supportive role the Marists priests and Otaki parish community play in the lives of the local CW.

Throughout the hui, we were well co-ordinated by Jack Leason and his team and owe a special debt of gratitude to Shelley and Adi Leason for their hospitality and generosity of spirit in opening their doors and welcoming us in trying health circumstances. One of the highlights of the gathering was that we were regularly fed by a generous grouping of CWs led by John Richards with sumptuous food, much of it home-grown. Many of us put on a couple of kilos in weight!

It was a very enjoyable gathering which strengthened our Christian faith and CW spirituality, our solidarity with the poor, deepened our awareness of our Mother Earth and of one another.

— Jim Consedine

Honouring our CW History

Jim Consedine

Address to 12th national hui

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Worker in New York by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. It also marks a third of a century since we began in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is appropriate then to reflect at this 12th national hui on who we are and what makes us distinct (NB - not necessarily better!) from other Christian religious groupings and movements.

As a movement we are firmly planted in the society around us with a specific **outreach to the poor**. In our fast-moving world, a lot has happened in the past few years. The deepening divisions between the rich and powerful who control things and the poor who are either controlled or ignored completely, continues to expand. Few in political leadership seem to understand God's plan for all people is tied to working ceaselessly for the common good and the enhancement of the environment and not for personal gain only.

According to the UN, more than one tenth of the world's people now go to bed hungry or undernourished at night, a figure that rises to one fifth on the continent of Africa. That is around one billion people. Each is a child of God destined for fullness of growth and opportunity, denied daily by their social reality.

With divisions rising and hope diminishing, the **rise of fascism** and right-wing governments seems to be on the increase as people become more individualistic and fearful. The loudest voices backed by a compliant media are calling too many shots. At the same time, the politics of the left remain fractured by personal ambition rather than collective vision based on solid moral principles seeking the common good. The Church's anaemic contribution to public debate is a continuing cause for concern to Christians of all denominations. Pope Francis, the most extraordinary world moral leader in our time, stands out as an exception to this generalisation.

Since our last national hui in 2021, there have been **major wars** started in Ukraine and Sudan. These are in addition continuing wars in Syria, by Israel on the Palestinians, in Myanmar, Haiti, the Congo, Yemen, Mali, Ethiopia and a range of the Central and North African countries. Worldwide there are 35 wars, large and small, being waged in different countries at this moment. The only people benefitting from them are the major arms suppliers –

the US, Russia, China, Israel, the UK. The recent sale of internationally banned cluster bombs by the US to Ukraine is unconscionable but not unexpected. There is money to be made from war. Always has been. Always will be.

These wars have created **millions of refugees**, forced to flee the violence and seek safety elsewhere. At the end of last year, the UN estimated there were 108.4 million people displaced by war, violence and climate change, and 6.5 million living in refugee camps.

The negative effects of **climate change** are clearly with us now. Last month, June 2023, the hottest days in history worldwide were posted breaking records set in previous years. The UN Secretary-General called this evidence 'catastrophic' and begged governments and the world's peoples to take action. It is heartening to see many young people around the world have taken up this challenge with direct non-violent actions.

Modern technology is extraordinary and way beyond anything our founders could have envisaged. The world of social media is phenomenal. It didn't exist 20 years ago when we held our first national CW hui but has emerged as a key component of society since. It has transformed our ways of communicating. The six biggest tech giants including Google and Microsoft made \$1.4 trillion in the first four months of this year and are bigger than most nation-states. While the internet always had huge potential for good, it has become too often not so much a tool for better communication but another means of exploitation through invasive advertising, fake news and questionable content. Already it is becoming more difficult to tell the difference between truth and lies.

And now there is **Artificial Intelligence** (AI) to contend with. To say it scares me somewhat would be an understatement. Yet it is here and growing in influence by the day.

Like all these modern developments there are benefits and positive features if put to good use. But like all created entities, there is a dark shadow side where nefarious forces are able to work and exploit the vulnerable and exercise power and control over the unwary. Many see the power of evil now more prominent than ever and even more deadly. Richard Rohr OFM and Walter Wink are two world-class theologians who have spelt out the demonic powers present in many international corporations and their modus operandi.

Modern technology has also invented sophisticated weapons of war including nuclear weapons capable of destroying Mother Earth herself. It has also produced pesticides and toxic products destroying the very air we breathe, the rivers and oceans of our planet, the land we use to cultivate our crops and grow our food. Every day we read new reports of its destructive ways. Chasing ‘the golden calf’ is their prime motivation, as verified annually by their bloated profits and the luxurious lifestyles of senior officials. These are huge issues confronting people today.

A CW way forward

As Catholic Workers we form part of a prophetic movement, suited more than ever to our times. If ever the world needs prophets, it needs them now. And radical Gospel witness. In a world that has by enlarge lost its moral compass, we are a movement of hope. We are challenged to live ‘a revolution of the heart’ to quote Dorothy Day. It is a privilege for each of us to be so called. Not everyone is.



Hiroshima Day, Avon River

candles burning
in white paper lanterns
on the river
no wind
only when Elsie’s granddaughter stands
a single breath of wind comes
and blows the oldest banner down
the singing plays like air out across the
water
people gathering by the water
again and again and again
so that it will never happen
again
ever
standing together
like rain
and sky
and sand
and dust
over the years
chanting marching floating
paddling out into Lyttelton Harbour together
against the US nuclear powered warship
putting our bodies on the line
again and again
tending the flame here
with our hands and feet
carving out the peace
through the years
since 1945
so it burns a hole in the armour
so they don’t come here anymore
so other people
light flames in other places
so the single candle
becomes a river of candles burning

—Kathleen Gallagher,
6 August 2001

conscience

conscience can be a sharp razor
pecking away at our minds
like a hen in the yard
constantly nudging us
to stand for justice
confront oppression
side with the weak
embrace the lonely

prowling about
unseen but ever present
close to the heart itself
she challenges us
to speak truth to deception
flush out the demonic

informed by the common good
illuminating dusky reaches
she scythes cleanly
guiding the open soul
to deeper wisdom
clarity and action

—Jim Consedine
Feast of St Franz Jägerstätter
9 August 2023

Around the Traps

New Zealand CW communities (August 2023)

Te Puawai o te Aroha CW, 38 Bennetts Road,
Otaki 551206 3648960,
adileason@gmail.com; japleason@gmail.com

Thomas Merton CW, P O Box 33135,
Christchurch 82444, ph 0220300248.,
jim.conse@xtra.co.nz

Suzanne Aubert CW, 8a Cottrill Street,
Addington, Christchurch, 03 3387105,
Francis at 027768919,
frankjsimmonds@gmail.com

Trinity CW, 315 Napier Drive, RD 10,
Palmerston North 4470, m.t.hogan@me.com

St Francis CW Farm, Jacksons Rd, Whirinaki,
RD3, Kaikohe 0473
x-marissa@hotmail.com

Berrigan House, 4 Kelburn Parade, Kelburn,
Wellington 6012

Beware Scammers – The latest Crime and Victimization Survey released by the NZ Ministry of Justice found the annual number of fraud and deception crimes between November 2021 and 2022 had risen to 510 000 from 288 000 the previous year. One in 10 adults said they had been victims of fraud or deception, up from one in six in the previous survey. Two in every 100 said they had been a victim of cyber-crime. Scammers pretending to be NZ Police, Waka Kotahi – NZ Transport Agency, NZ Post, Inland revenue and several NZ-based banks were the most frequent attackers.

The Press, 1 July 2023

No new mines? – Jacinda Ardern was definitive in her first speech as prime minister in 2017: ‘There will be no new mines on conservation land’. However, in the past 5 years, there have been 211 new mineral permits issued on Department of Conservation (DOC) land. NZ Petroleum and Minerals has granted 51

prospecting permits, 78 exploration permits, 81 mining permits and one for special purpose mining.

The Press, 27 May 2023

Deadly deep-sea mining – Researchers have released findings showing that nearly 5000 species, deep ocean animals, nearly all of them unknown to science, are endangered by proposed mining of the sea floor in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) of the Pacific Ocean. This area stretches from Hawaii to Mexico. This area is covered by billions of potato-sized rocks called polymetallic nodules, which are rich in cobalt, nickel and other valuable metals used to make batteries for electric cars. The International Seabed Authority (ISA) has issued 16 contracts allowing companies to prospect for minerals, fuelling a contentious debate within the organisation, where many of the 167 members-nations are calling for a moratorium on such practices.

Current Biology, 28 May 2023

Alcohol harm in NZ – New research has shown that the drug which causes the most widespread harm in New Zealand isn't methamphetamine, synthetic cannabis nor tobacco. It is alcohol. NZ's two most widely used legal drugs, alcohol and tobacco were found to cause the first and fourth largest amount of harm overall.

This is not simply because alcohol is the most widely used. It is the most harmful because of its association with a huge number of diseases, cancers, psychological disorders and other medical conditions. Alcohol also causes more harm to others than to those who use it, including families, friends, communities and wider society.

The authors said NZ drug policies also cause harm. ‘A significant portion of drug harm arises from the legal status of the drug, rather than the drug itself. This includes harms to the drug user, such as loss of employment and relationships, along with harms to others including crime and whanau.’

Journal of Psychopharmacology, June 2023

Open letter and response: Penal abolition

Hi Fr Jim,

I just wanted to respond to the submission, *Turuki! Turuki!* on penal reform as I see that it has Catholic Worker named as one of the groups that supports it. I had a chat with Abe about it, and we both felt that it wasn't really possible for any submission to be supported by the Catholic Worker - unless of course, there was a process that included all the Catholic Workers and got their agreement of support. Which, as we went on to reflect, is not really possible either, because Catholic Worker doesn't really have members (in any formal sense), we don't have policies, we don't have remits, or sub-committees, spokespersons, etc. So it really is not possible to put the Catholic Worker name on any submission.

Maybe this submission is one that most, if not all CWs (whoever they actually are) do support, and really, it probably doesn't make a lot of difference if the CW name is on it or not. I guess the point is, there may be other times when a submission is made and some CWs want to put the CW endorsement on it - but some other CWs would be in strong disagreement with it. But those in favour go ahead and add the CW endorsement, which obviously would be wrong.

Could we please have an agreement that CW is never used as an umbrella name for a group endorsement on any submission or political lobbying in any 'official' way? This, to myself and Abe, would be maintaining the actual CW ethos - we are not an organisation. We are a dis-organisation. An organic, Spirit-led (hopefully!) somewhat anarchic network of people trying to work things out together, with some ideas and lifestyles in common - and plenty of differences too!

Of course, every CW person can and should lobby to their hearts delight, under their own name.

Thanks, and keep up the good work!

Shalom,

Forrest Chambers

Hi Forrest,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter re the submission *Turuki! Turuki!* on penal abolition. The point you raise about not speaking on behalf of the national CW without consultation is a valid one and I concur with you. Local or regional groupings are welcome to consult and make their own declarations



if they feel called to. I would not presume to advance anything nationally that didn't fit within the original kaupapa of the NZ Catholic Worker and wasn't held in mind and practice from the beginning. Our stance on war, non-violence, peacebuilding, hospitality, the poor, militarism, personalism and community development make it difficult to argue 'we don't have any policies'!

Given that NZ is such a small country and Catholic voices are so rarely raised on matters of justice and peace was a factor that led to the signing, but not the main one by any means.

You may not know it but in NZ we have a history of supporting penal abolition dating back to the beginning of our movement here. We helped develop and expand Restorative Justice as a realistic road towards it. One of the earliest editions of *The Common Good*, Pentecost 1997, No 4, devoted the whole edition to penal abolition. It led with an article titled Penal Abolition - Is it the Christian Option? in which I argued that penal abolition was a natural outcome after reflection on true justice based on biblical and indigenous traditions and assessing the disastrous impact of building more and more prisons and the negative impact they had on nearly everyone.

It also contained articles by Dr Pita Sharples and the late Moana Jackson on traditional Māori restorative practices, RJ facilitators and lawyers Helen Bowen and Jim Boyack of Auckland, the late Ruth Morris of Canada, a key founder of ICOPA

(International Convention on Penal Abolition) and world renown abolitionist law professors Thomas Matheson of Norway and Monika Platek of Warsaw. Within ICOPA, it was generally accepted that 'abolition' did not include everybody but recognised that 'the dangerous few', usually about 10 - 15% of prison musters, needed confinement.

Since long before my ordination in 1969, I had personally been a Catholic Worker and through the 1970s and 80s ran a community house (which evolved into a CW house) mainly for ex-prisoners. I was a speaker at four international abolitionist ICOPA meetings in Barcelona, Auckland, Hobart and Toronto during my 23-year tenure as a prison chaplain, where I observed daily the structured violence imprisonment inflicts on those incarcerated, all sons and daughters of God born free and made in the divine image.

In the 1980-90s, the prison-industrial complex grew exponentially all around the world and became more and more dominated by private corporate companies and vested interests, which included many prison staff, police, lawyers and politicians. With the advent of private prisons, imprisonment often seemed to have less and less to do with true justice and often more to do with profit-making from peoples' misery. Crime rates and heavy sentences needed to be maintained to keep the prisons going! As usual, it was the poor who suffered the most.

Letters

Tauranga,
4 July 2023

Kia ora Jim,

I have enjoyed *The Common Good* journal over the years and its always a welcome sight in the mailbox. Understandably, with rising costs you will be going digital. Please add my email address.

I'm afraid that without the journal turning up in my inbox or physical mailbox, I won't have the prompt to read it and will forget to check it on the website.

I really enjoy all the articles and thought-provoking writing and wholeheartedly support the kaupapa, though I am not a Catholic. (I go to St Luke's church, Tauranga).

I would love to be involved with a group of like-minded Christians in my area who value the principles of the Catholic Worker movement. Please let me know of any such group in the Tauranga to your knowledge.

I also note your comment on the passing of so many kaumatua of the Church in recent times. It

In my writings in the 1990s, I advanced a more non-violent response to crime by promoting restorative justice processes, community panels, greater probation oversight, more drug and alcohol habilitation centres and community-based programmes. This kaupapa was always a vital contribution at national prison chaplains' gatherings, and eventually formed the substantive agenda at the world prison chaplains' conference in Mexico in 1999 attended by 66 countries which focused on penal abolition, where Ruth Morris and I were the keynote speakers.

These options all flowed from a CW spirituality of non-violence with concrete application to the poorest in prison. The CW houses I visited overseas including LA, NY, Washington DC, Worcester (US), the UK, Toronto and others also embraced this approach to promote RJ as a nonviolent way to prison reduction and eventual abolition. They all published articles on it in their CW papers.

The NZ bishops accepted this approach by issuing a pastoral letter on restorative justice and the US bishops included a special section on RJ in a major pastoral letter on social justice.

Blessings and thank you,

Jim Consedine

seems to me to be important for the younger generations to be shepherded into the teachings and practices of movements such as the Catholic Worker.

Nga mihi nui,

Angela Wallace.

371 Pine Hill Road
Dunedin 9010

Dear Editor,

In CG 105, you rightly highlight Pope Francis for his promotion of sound environmental stewardship. Yet later in the 'Around the Traps' section you include an announcement of your diocese wanting to construct a \$30 million motorist's parking building!! Are these not contradictory?

Yours faithfully,

Des Boyes

LACW,
632 N. Brittainia St,
Los Angeles, CA 90033

Dear Jim,

Greetings from Ammon Hennacy CW House in LA. Jeff and I are still hanging in there. He is in 'active retirement', still pulling his weight. I haven't quite pulled out yet, though I just had my 89th birthday. We would appreciate continuing to receive *The Common Good* in print, as our email is sketchy.

Thank you,

Catherine Morris

More than 40 years ago, Catherine Morris and her husband Jeff Dietrich were the founders of the Los Angeles CW, which remains one of the largest most active CW groups in the US. They were also editors of the Catholic Agitator until recent years.

Christchurch,
August 10th 2023

Dear Editor,

August 6th was Hiroshima Day. It should have been a day to reflect on the horrors of war, on the horrors of technologically advanced weaponry. Here in Christchurch we have had small groups advocating international bans on nuclear weapons, as well as cluster bombs and depleted uranium weapons. There have been, in the past, protests against the Vietnam war, against the attacks on Iraq 'shock and awe', the attacks on Afghanistan 'mother of all bombs', the attacks on Libya 'we came, we saw, he died'.

We should be joining peace activists like Code Pink, Black Agenda, MAPA (Massachusetts Peace Action) and others who are demanding a cease fire now, to be followed by negotiations. The devastation inflicted on Hiroshima was horrific. Yet now weapons are so much more deadly. Martin Luther King observed, 'We have guided missiles and misguided men'.

Let's make August 6th in the future a day for reflection, for research, for discussion, for remembering. We should remember Eisenhower's warning too, 'We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.'

Yours,

Lois Griffiths

Wairoa
2 August 2023

Dear Editor,

After reading through your article 'No to joining AUKUS' in *The Common Good* (CG105) under the above heading, I am provoked to write my thoughts regarding nuclear involvement in any shape or form. It must surely be evident that there is only one outcome at the end of a worldwide conflict. The Western Alliance seems intent on using any/all weaponry in their quest for ultimate 'power' which includes 'nuclear.'

History has shown throughout the South Pacific that the Western Alliance has abused any/all of the opinions of the Polynesian people, including the use/testing of 'nuclear' weaponry. There is no discussion/conversation with the Pacific peoples regarding any Alliances or strategic planning that incorporates the thoughts and wishes of all Pacific people. The discussion forums that are formed are of a white perspective only, plus normally some selected politicians who only express the 'party line' derived from trading outcomes.

The South Pacific people have primarily been utilized as a 'workforce' to satisfy the outcomes of the wealthy and have no voice in the future of their homelands. The mere presence of a Western Alliance in the South Pacific would be like a 'Red/Rag' to a bull in western terms. The present strategy being used by all parties (West/East) in establishing relationships with the Pacific people, is non-threatening and gives the Pacific people a choice. It would be completely 'naïve' to believe that the 'Superpowers' were coming here in the 'interests' of the Pacific communities.

Proposed Forum for Pacifica

As a Māori of Aotearoa, I am flabbergasted that Polynesian people have not had opportunity to discuss their concerns or their cultural views with certain provisions. This Forum should be mandatory prior to any final agreement or otherwise. The Forum and its participants should be fully funded and informed about what it is that the politicians hope to achieve. The future of the South Pacific and its people should be a choice of their making and not made by 'trading partners' with their own agenda's. The recruitment of such persons for the Pacific Forum should be carried out by the Government agency, Te Puni Kokiri.

Your faithfully,

Walter Wilson

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Read *The Common Good* online at catholicworker.org.nz

The Common Good

Te Wairua Maranga Trust
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Christchurch 8244
New Zealand



And once the storm is over you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive.

You won't even be sure, in fact, whether the storm is really over.

When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in.

—*Huriki Murakani*