

Rekindling hope

John Dear

Since I was young, I have been asking my teachers what gives them hope. Forty years ago, when I first met Daniel Berrigan, he answered, 'We can't afford the luxury of despair. All we have to do is close our eyes to the culture and open them to our friends. We have enough hope to go on.' Later, he said, 'If you want to be hopeful, you have to do hopeful things.'

When I asked Archbishop Desmond Tutu about how he maintained his hope, he spoke of grief and joy. He said he cried over the state of the world every day since he was a boy, and he had also laughed every day of his life. He cried and laughed telling me this, and in doing so, gave me hope. He was way beyond despair, fear or anger, into some new uncharted liminal space of steadfast, faith-filled, determined hope.

Years ago, Jimmy Carter asked me to come and visit him and talk about peace. I asked him where he finds hope. 'John,' he said, 'all our hope is in Jesus and the Kingdom of God.' I was deeply moved by his response.

'Cheap hope' and 'costly hope'

When I was visiting a priest friend in Bogota, Colombia, who spent his life resisting the war and facing constant death threats, I asked him about hope. He answered like Bonhoeffer, talking about the difference between 'cheap hope' and 'costly hope.' 'Hope is not hope,' he said, 'unless it is the hope of no-hope-whatsoever. Real hope is the hope of Jesus on the cross, where there is no hope. In that place of no-hope-whatsoever, as we give our lives for justice and peace, we place our hope in God and surrender ourselves to God. That is hope.' This too, was a life-changing teaching.

Shortly before she died, I asked my friend Sister Anne Montgomery, a member of the Plowshares 8, about hope. 'What gives me hope are the ordinary



Theresa Windle

people who get involved, who take one step out of their comfort zone and join the work for peace. We are all learning that when we powerless people come together, we have power. I also have hope in knowing that God's power and God's nonviolence are stronger than violence and war. Love is stronger than evil, hate, fear or

war.'

The opposite of love is fear, and the government tries to keep us in permanent fear. But when we come together in love and struggle for peace, we are no longer afraid and we can change things. As we trust each other and God, our fear lessens. So we cannot be afraid to do the right thing. Love is always stronger, and that gives me hope.' 'Hope is the thing with feathers,' Emily Dickinson wrote.

I think hope is a verb. It is universal love in action, the practice of daring, creative nonviolence. Hope is people power—when ordinary people trust in the Higher Power of Love and Peace and build a bottom-up grassroots movement of nonviolent resistance to tyranny, racism, injustice, greed, war and nuclear weapons.

Hope as a verb

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Hope is found as we follow Jesus in his global campaign of nonviolence. Hope springs within, becoming contagious as we walk the way of the cross in lifelong nonviolent resistance to empire and the



culture of violence into the new life of resurrection peace. Hope comes alive through our participation in the Paschal Mystery of the nonviolent Jesus.

I keep returning to Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. As a lifelong student of his, I am repeatedly struck by the realization that he hardly ever spoke about hope. Maybe he did not have to. Everything he struggled for seemed, at first glance, to work – from the Montgomery Bus Boycott to the sit-ins and freedom rides to the Birmingham Campaign and the March on Washington, to the Nobel prize and the Selma Campaign. Through all that hard work and suffering love, he embodied hope.

But in his last years, as he took on economic injustice and, finally, the US war in Vietnam, he began to face a new wall of opposition. Everyone turned against him, starting with the media and other Civil Rights leaders. He was denounced left and right.

As he organized the Poor People's Campaign and

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.

www.catholicworker.org.nz

joined the Memphis garbage workers' strike, he was deeply depressed. It was then, for the first time in his life, in my opinion, that he began anew to grapple with hope. It was there, during his last months and days in Memphis, that he made a new decision. 'I refuse to give in to the politics of despair,' he said.

One night, he told the crowd his definition of hope. 'Hope is the final refusal to give up,' Dr King said. What a profound insight! It is so simple, so profoundly spiritual, yet practical. That is the heart of the revolution of Gospel nonviolence. That, too, gave me hope. We are all learning that when we powerless people come together, we have power. I also have hope in knowing that God's power and God's nonviolence are stronger than violence and war. Love is stronger than evil, hate, fear, or war.

The opposite of love is fear, and the government tries to keep us in permanent fear. Another favourite phrase of King's: 'Keep going forward!' In the end, Dr. King's refusal to give up made all the difference. He left behind 'a committed life,' as he said he wanted to. That refusal to give up continues to bear tremendously good fruit for all of us today.

Favourite definition of hope

So that is my favourite definition of hope—no matter what, we refuse to give up; we keep going forward; we work for justice, disarmament, and creation no matter how impossible the struggle; we serve the poor and practice nonviolence at every level; we completely trust in God and resist, as Dorothy Day insisted, 'this filthy rotten system;' and we organize grassroots campaigns and work for the abolition of war, racism, poverty, nuclear weapons, gun violence and environmental destruction in pursuit of the coming of God's reign of nonviolence. Just imagining our own lives within that vision of lifelong commitment is inspiring, empowering, hope-making.

True hope touches the edge of despair but refuses to give in, knowing that death does not get the last word, that life has the slight edge, that resurrection—with all its glorious social, economic, racial, political and environmental implications—will win out. So we go forward, one step at a time, doing what we can, sowing seeds of peace, justice and nonviolence for a harvest of peace we will not live to see, leaving the results in God's hands, and trusting that one day, all shall be well.

Like Dr. King, from now on, we must refuse to give up.

Rev. John Dear visited the CW in NZ in 2017. His new book, The Gospel of Peace: Reading Matthew, Mark and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence, is available from Orbis Books. He offers webinars at www.beatitudescenter.org

Editorial 1 Israel, Gaza, and God's Law

After the Nazi forces invaded Poland in 1940 they herded nearly half a million Jews - adults and children - into the Warsaw ghetto. They locked them into a few hectares, behind a three-metre wall, starving them and depriving them of medical supplies, although diseases were breaking out. In 1943, when the Nazis began sending tens of thousands from the ghetto



The Warsaw Ghetto

to extermination camps, the Jews rose up against their persecutors. The German army then destroyed the ghetto, burning it down and capturing or killing 'Jews, bandits and sub-humans'. Very few escaped.

Two thousand years before that, a young Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, had gone about teaching people how to become free, to live in ways that would bring about the Reign of God. His simple teaching challenged the established religious leaders. Jesus pointed out: 'You shall love God with all your heart, soul and strength' (Deuteronomy 6:5) and 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18). He was summarising what many prophets had pointed out: that God expects us to treat every person justly: 'Do not oppress the orphan, the widow, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another...' (Zechariah 7:9)

The Nazi's inhuman cruelty was the complete opposite of this teaching. The same can be said of the murder and kidnapping committed by Hamas when they emerged from Gaza to kill or capture nearly 2000 people on October 7th 2023.

But the Israeli government is now retaliating more violently against the innocent people of Gaza. Bombing that densely populated area, it has already killed ten times more non-combatants than Hamas killed. It has blockaded Gaza for many years, but now cuts off its water, food and the fuel needed for electric power to pump water and sewage. Hospitals have almost no medical supplies, so that operations are performed without anaesthetic and many more people die. In addition to these horrors, Israel commanded a million people to move from the northern half of Gaza to the already overcrowded southern half but continues to bomb them there.

When the Secretary-General of the United Nations dared to say that Hamas' actions 'did not happen in a vacuum', the Israeli ambassador exploded in anger.

He attacked Antonio Guterres for daring to point to what many Jewish historians admit: since Israel was founded seventy-five ago, its government has committed grave injustice against the Palestinians. When the United Nations gave Israel 52% of the land, Israel's leaders from the beginning intended to acquire it all, by driving out the Palestinians. In 1948 - just four years after the Warsaw

ghetto - Israel destroyed 500 Palestinian villages, massacred hundreds of Palestinians and expelled 700,000.

Today the Israeli army has occupied most Palestinian territory for more than fifty years. It destroys Palestinian homes, schools and olive-orchards. Its soldiers conduct brutal night raids and imprisons people - even children - indefinitely. Against international law, nearly a million Israeli 'settlers' have built homes on stolen Palestinian land and are now being armed and encouraged to attack the Palestinians around them. The UN Secretary-General was saying that these decades of inhuman treatment have driven Hamas to seek liberty for their people.

These tragic happenings, are completely opposed to Jesus' teaching and to the Jewish Law. They challenge us to ask what we can do to bring about the Reign of God, a world of peace, the foretaste of eternal life. Since Jesus also taught that 'The truth will set you free'...

Can we cut through the lies that always accompany war, to learn what is actually happening? Can we speak the truth that all people are of equal value?

Can we demand that our government act to consider all the most vulnerable 'orphans and widows': those massacred by Hamas and the many more killed by Israel's bombs in Gaza?

Can we remind ourselves and others that colonising other peoples' lands is unjust?

Can we pray, not foolishly trying to get God on our side, but to let the Spirit of the Holy One empower all of us to heal our broken world?

A Dominican friar for nearly 60 years, Peter Murnane OP, has always been a strong supporter of the Catholic Worker both here and in Australia, where he currently lives serving among the poor.

Editorial 2 Advent

Advent often feels like it arrives too soon. Yet here we are, with Advent in front of us again. And the invitation I have found this year is the call to an expansive way to God. This comes from two of the pivotal Advent readings from Isaiah 40 and from Matthew 3. First, Isaiah chapter 40 :

A voice of one calling: *'In the desert prepare the way for the LORD ; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground made smooth.'*

This is echoed and brought to fullness in Matthew 3: 1-3:

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, *'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.''*

These are surprising words. Until then Jews had understood that the way to God required a great deal of attentive compliance to a huge rule book, sacrifices, tithes on herbs and never eating meat and milk in the same meal (aka no lasagna). It was a narrow way to God.

Yet, these words suggest that they and maybe we have got the wrong end of the stick. They suggest that the good news of Christ, is that he makes a highway to God. A way that is much wider and smoother than

in earlier days.

Jesus widened the horizons and narrow thinking in his years on earth in many ways. He built relationships with people who were typically excluded (like a Samaritan woman, like a woman who worked as a commercial sex worker, like the swindling tax collectors). Jesus was also expansive in the ways he interpreted scriptures and seemed often more interested in the spirit of the law than the letter of the law, eg, he brushed away concerns that he or his disciples were breaking rules when they ate grain or healed people on the Sabbath.

If Jesus came to make paths smooth, wide, and generous, could that mean that as followers, as the church, we are also expansive and welcoming to all? Is the good news of salvation big enough for people who don't feel they fit the binaries of male and female genders? Are gay people welcome to worship, marry and share life together in churches? Are our gatherings on Sundays welcoming to people who have been excluded (like gang members, unvaccinated, mask wearers, vape store owners, people who vote for fringe parties and alcoholics?).

May this Advent be a time for us to look at putting into action an expansive message of Good news for all!

Kaaren Mathias, a physician and university lecturer, is a member of the Christchurch CW.

Editorial 3 Speaking Truth to Ideology

I have been asked to give a Christian perspective at this rally. Mine is influenced by my own background as one who researches and writes in biblical studies. I'm influenced too by Tuma Hazou, a West Jerusalem-born Palestinian, now retired in Auckland. At the 2021 PSNA AGM, he spoke of the need for Christians to question what we carry in our religious imagination about the name and the boundaries of the land of Jesus and his Jewish ancestors, which many assume are similar to the recent construct of state of Israel.

Boundaries mentioned in the bible are varied, fluid, not there anymore. Literal interpretation of Scripture holds that 'Israel' means the Old Testament (OT) people of God. Consequently, the OT promises are restricted to the then existing Israel nation and promised exclusively to the present-day political entity of the state of Israel which is believed to have a divine right to the land God promised to Abraham. Ironically, people so committed to the fulfilment of

OT prophecy, overlook their prophets' consistent call to live God's requirements relating to justice.

Scriptural traditions and beliefs are not the same as modern history, which is grounded in scientific research which includes archaeology. Archaeology tells us that in about 12, 000 BCE humans were in the region of Palestine and that there was a stable population there over 6,000 years ago – thousands of years before the settlers of biblical accounts and CE 1948.

It is time for Christians to become better acquainted with stories and realities of both Jews and Palestinians and to integrate these stories and realities into their theology and actions in ways that do not disregard the complexity and intricacy of the long-running Middle East conflict.

—Kathleen Rushton RSM, a Sister of Mercy, spoke at the Palestinian solidarity rally in Christchurch, 21 October 2023

Dear friends,

It is with sadness that I write to inform you that the ravages of war have touched Bethlehem University, with one of our third-year students, Khaled Al-Muhtasib, being shot and killed in Jerusalem on 12 October. Please keep him and his grieving family and friends in your prayers. We have also heard that Israel has detained two of our students under Administrative Detention, which means no reason needs to be given and no indication of time is provided.

The situation in Gaza is very bad. I was down there a few months back to monitor the ways in which Bethlehem University has been supporting young people with online courses and exploring options for further such courses. These courses would enable the young people to take a recognized qualification to an NGO to possibly get employment. I was very impressed with the young people with whom I engaged, but appalled at the conditions under which they were living then.

So much has changed since then and things have got so much worse. Bethlehem University has some 400 graduates from Gaza and we are deeply concerned about their safety. There are about 1000 Christians in Gaza and they are sheltering in buildings associated with Churches because they don't know how to stay safe and it is dangerous to move.

In this whole saga it is important to remember that the Palestinians have been under military occupation for decades and the worst in Gaza (the open-air prison) is that 2 million people have been under siege for more than 17 years with limited access to food, mobility and health care. All of that with the support of the international community. In addition to Gaza, the constant abuse, humiliation, restrictions, increasing violence from the military and settlers in the West Bank, that Palestinians have endured has resulted in the Palestinian frustration boiling over through Hamas.

Israel's response to the attack by Hamas has been the constant bombardment as well as cutting off all water, power, medical, food and other essential supplies to all people there. This collective punishment of all people in Gaza is having a devastating impact. I heard one Israeli ex-minister say that Israel will continue to do this, but if Hamas was to come out and surrender and lay down their arms, Israel would provide all the humanitarian aid the

people would need! Virtually the definition of Collective Punishment, which is clearly illegal! The power inequality is enormous and Israel has used that to kill more than 11 000 Palestinians in Gaza. This is a form of genocide. There is a great need for more governments to join those around the world who are taking a stand against that! I hope the New Zealand government will take a firm stand against this genocide. There is a need for International Law to be applied to the whole situation and for people to be held accountable.

Israel has closed all checkpoints into Jerusalem and around Bethlehem. This means the 40% of our students from East Jerusalem are unable to get to campus. In addition, there are Israeli 'flying' checkpoints south of Bethlehem making it impossible for students from Hebron and villages around it to get to campus. As a result, Bethlehem University has moved to online classes in the meantime. How long this will last is uncertain.

At Bethlehem University things are quiet without any students around and all the Brothers and other employees here are safe. However, the situation is tense and unpredictable with a heightened Israeli military presence in and around Bethlehem. Here at Bethlehem University we are pursuing a position that the Church in the Holy Land has consistently taken of speaking about justice, peace, reconciliation, respect and a search for equality. It is an uphill task against the dominant words of hate and revenge!

The situation leaves me with a sense of helplessness as I imagine hearing people in Gaza asking the question the young homeless girl asked Pope Francis in Manila: 'Why is God allowing this to happen to us, even if it is not our fault?' There is no easy answer to that! The Pope responded, 'Certain realities of life are seen only with eyes that are cleansed by tears.' We need to stand in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza. We need to weep for what is happening, help others weep, and then have the resolve to stand as communities to act to help protect those people.

Please keep us in your prayers as we navigate our way into this unpredictable future. Best wishes and thanks for your ongoing interest and support.

Brother Peter Bray FSC, EdD
Vice Chancellor

Around the Traps

Death in the family – It is with sadness we record the death of Brian McDonald (52) in mid-October. Brian had been a constant in our lives for several decades when he lived in Addington. For many years, he said the grace at our Christmas day dinners and joined us in celebrating his birthday the day after. A challenging character, Brian had a good heart and love of the Lord and carried a bible everywhere he went. While his interpretation of it was somewhat suspect, no one could doubt his desire to please God and live as a Christian. Jim, Francis, Mike and Jason from the CW attended his hope-filled funeral at St Mary's Anglican church, in Church Square. May he rest in peace.

Vigils for Palestine – Moana Cole, a Ploughshares activist from the 1990s, Kathleen Gallagher, a CW member, and Donna Miles, a Kiwi-Iranian writer, have convened a vigil each Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Bridge of Remembrance in Christchurch in support of Palestine. This is complementary to the weekly rallies organised by the Palestinian Solidarity Network, Aotearoa, that have been regularly taking place on Saturdays at 1pm at the same site.

Big Oil Sued – The state of California filed a lawsuit against some of the world's largest oil and gas companies, claiming they deceived the public about the risks of fossil fuels now faulted for climate change-related storms and wildfires that have caused billions of dollars of damage. Those names include Exxon Mobile, Shell, Chevron and BP.

The 135-page complaint claims that the companies have known, at least from the 1960s, that the burning of fossil fuels would warm the planet and change the climate, but they downplayed the looming threat in public statements and marketing. The companies scientists knew as far back as the 1950s that the climate impact would be catastrophic. Instead, they mounted a disinformation campaign. *The Press*, 18 September 2023

Ice shelf melting – The sea ice surrounding Antarctica is at its lowest level for September since records began. Scientists have described the degree of melting as “almost mine blowing”. The continent is covered by a sheet of ice that is 2km thick on average. Satellite data shows that the sea ice surrounding Antarctica covers an area almost 1.5 million square kilometres less than the September average. The amount of missing ice could cover an area seven

times the size of mainland Britain. *The Press*, 19 September 2023

Cassandra Dixon of Mary House NYCW is going back to Palestine for a trial Sept 6th. She was arrested for protesting illegal occupation of by Israel of Palestinian land. She said, ‘all too often as I check Instagram and Facebook, I see the faces of people dear to me -- not celebrating births or weddings but being viciously attacked by settlers living illegally on stolen land, or violently arrested by the Israeli army just for farming and going about their daily life ON THEIR OWN LAND.’

‘Over the summer settlers have stolen sheep, crops and land, broken, burned and uprooted olive trees, forced their way into homes, broken up furniture, destroyed personal belongings, destroyed the village’s well, assaulted shepherds and waged a campaign of terror aimed at forcing residents to abandon their village.’ *Casa Cry*, Sept 2023

The Price of War - It is estimated that 120,000 Russian troops and 70,000 Ukrainian soldiers have already been killed in action. *NY Times*, 21 August 2023

Marcos Govt moves - We heard a couple of shelters for persons living with HIV/AIDS have either closed permanently or temporarily. One good news is that a shelter run by a Roman Catholic parish in the Diocese of Malolos- is scheduled to open up sometime, pending the receipt of a governmental permission.

We have also received news that the Philippine government will cut funding to the Department of Health in 2024, meaning services for PLHIVs will also be cut. In the meantime, ‘confidential’ funds (in billions of pesos) have been earmarked for the Office of the President (son of the former dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, Sr.) and Vice President (the daughter of the former President Duterte).

In the meantime, people are clamouring because of food insecurity, among other problems facing the nation... On the 51st anniversary of the declaration of Martial Law by the former dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, Sr. we joined a commemoration and protest at the Liwasang Bonifacio. With the late dictator’s son in power, the revisionism of history concerning the dictatorship is starting now.

Magnificat – Newsletter of the CW, The Philippines

God is weeping

*rockets, missiles, bombs
purchased from money
stolen from the poor
rain down like hailstones
on victims unable to escape
indiscriminate death from the skies*

*a scorched earth campaign
collective punishment on Gaza
administered as state policy
genocide of the innocent
women at their kitchen sinks
the elderly in market squares
children at play centres
babes in cots and prams*

*the arms barons, merchants of death
criminals every one
knowing war is good for business
watch the stock exchange rise
from Wall Street offices
high above the fray
or loll on sunny beaches
in the tax-free Caymans
manicured hands dripping blood
visible to all, except themselves*

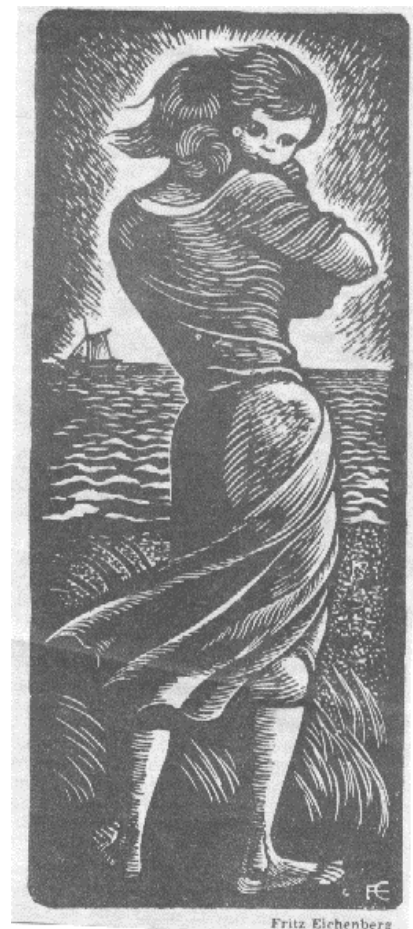
*are we really truly human
when embedding inequality
theft, violence, greed, racism
into so many social structures
occupying so much stolen land
leaving such heartbreak in our wake?*

*facing this carnage
the Divine Spirit of Love
Te Atua, Allah, Yahweh
the non-violent Jesus*

*bombed repeatedly night and day
gassed with white phosphorous
driven from flattened homes
riddled with bullets
buried daily in poisoned soil
crucified again, again and again*

weeps uncontrollably

—Jim Consedine



Jewish Voice for Peace - stop imminent genocide

The Israeli government has declared a genocidal war on the people of Gaza. As an organization that works for a future where Palestinians and Israelis and all people live in equality and freedom, we call on all people of conscience to stop imminent genocide of Palestinians.



Jewish Voice for Peace mourns deeply for the over 1,200 Israelis killed, the families destroyed, including many of our own, and fears for the lives of Israelis taken hostage. Many are still counting the dead, looking for missing loved ones, devastated by the losses.

We wholeheartedly agree with leading Palestinian rights groups: the massacres committed by Hamas against Israeli civilians are horrific war crimes. There is no justification in international law for the indiscriminate killing of civilians or the holding of civilian hostages.

And now, horrifyingly, the Israeli and American governments are weaponizing these deaths to fuel a genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza, pledging to ‘open the gates of hell.’ This war is a continuation of the Nakba, when in 1948, tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing violence sought refuge in Gaza. It’s a continuation of 75 years of Israeli occupation and apartheid.

And now, horrifyingly, the Israeli and American governments are weaponizing these deaths to fuel a genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza, pledging to ‘open the gates of hell.’ This war is a continuation of the Nakba, when in 1948, tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing violence sought refuge in Gaza. It’s a continuation of 75 years of Israeli occupation and apartheid.

Already more than 10,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed. The Israeli government has wrought complete and total devastation on Palestinians across Gaza, attacking hospitals, schools, mosques, marketplaces, and apartment buildings.

As we write, the Israeli government has shut off all electricity to Gaza. Hospitals cannot save lives, the

internet will collapse, people will have no phones to communicate with the outside world, and drinking water for two million people will run out. Gaza will be plunged into darkness as Israel turns its neighbourhoods to rubble. Still worse, Israel has openly stated an intention to

commit mass atrocities and even genocide, with Prime Minister Netanyahu saying the Israeli response will ‘reverberate for generations.’

And right now, the US government is enabling the Israeli government’s atrocities, sending weapons, moving US warships into proximity and sending US-made munitions, and pledging blanket support and international cover for any actions taken by the Israeli government. Furthermore, the US government officials are spreading racist, hateful, and incendiary rhetoric that will fuel mass atrocities and genocide.

The loss of Israeli lives is being used by our government to justify the rush to genocide, to provide moral cover for the immoral push for more weapons and more death. Palestinians are being dehumanized by our own government, by the media, by far too many US Jewish institutions. Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said that Israel is ‘fighting human animals’ and should ‘act accordingly.’ As Jews, we know what happens when people are called animals.

We can and we must stop this. Never again means never again - for anyone.

We call on all people of conscience to stop the imminent genocide of Palestinians. We demand the US government work towards de-escalation, that it immediately stop sending weapons to the Israeli military. A future of peace and safety for all, grounded in justice, freedom and equality for all, is still the only option.

Jewish Voice for Peace is a Jewish activist anti-Zionist organisation based in the US with more than 80 chapters worldwide. This statement was issued at the start of the current Israeli – Gaza war. Oct 12th, 2023. www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org

Aotearoa NZ climate action

On the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, 4th October, this year, Pope Francis released an apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum* ('Praise God'), as a follow-up to *Laudato Si'*. It contained a strong call for climate action in line with its predecessor.

Pope Francis lays out the stark realities of climate change, explaining the scientific and faith-based rationale for climate action, and discussing the importance of multilateralism and an integrated approach. We strongly encourage you to read it for yourself; this article explains a couple of paragraphs we think are particularly relevant to our focus on reducing Aotearoa New Zealand's emissions.

Taking responsibility for our actions

In an attempt to simplify reality, there are those who would place responsibility on the poor, since they have many children, and even attempt to resolve the problem by mutilating women in less developed countries. As usual, it would seem that everything is the fault of the poor.

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Yet the reality is that a low, richer percentage of the planet contaminates more than the poorest 50% of the total world population, and that per capita emissions of the richer countries are much greater than those of the poorer ones. How can we forget that Africa, home to more than half of the world's poorest people, is responsible for a minimal portion of historic emissions?

New Zealand loves to talk about how we 'punch above our weight', be it on the sporting field, in science, or internationally. However, we must acknowledge that we punch far above our weight in the wrong way when it comes to emissions – we rank the fifth-highest in emissions per capita of the most industrialised countries.

People opposed to climate action love to argue that bigger countries in the developing need to pull their weight, but in 2019, the bottom 50% of the world population were responsible for 12% of global emissions while the top 10% emitted 48% of the global total according to the study Pope Francis is referring to. Climate action across the globe has been grossly inadequate, and it is utter hypocrisy of us to

lay the blame at the feet of poorer countries while we have some of the highest emissions per person of any country.

This reality becomes clearer through the lens of Catholic social teaching. Our principle of Distributive Justice – *Te Tika ka Tohaina* teaches that resources and opportunities should be allocated to where they are needed. If we consider global emissions through the lens of this principle, it becomes apparent that emissions reductions should be allocated more to countries like Aotearoa that emit the most, rather than serving to further deprive those who have the least, and already emit the least, such as our Pacific neighbours.

There is cause for hope

Nonetheless, every little bit helps, and avoiding an increase of a tenth of a degree in the global temperature would already suffice to alleviate some suffering for many people. Yet what is important is something less quantitative: the need to realize that there are no lasting changes without cultural changes, without a maturing of lifestyles and convictions within societies, and there are no cultural changes without personal changes.

It is easy to be swept away in doom and gloom when we are confronted with the overwhelming scientific consensus and recent news on climate change. However, this paragraph especially gives us hope that we can make a meaningful difference.

Firstly, as Pope Francis says, even if the amount by which we reduce global warming is small, this can have a tremendous impact on the lives of many people, sparing them future hardship and suffering. Even if we are not able to address the whole problem ourselves, and even if goals of under 1.5°C or 2°C prove unattainable, the difference between 2.0°C and 2.1°C remains significant, and still something we can be proud to fight for.

Secondly, Pope Francis emphasises that the lasting policy changes we often seek through our submissions are only possible with changes in our societies and attitudes – this is a source of hope and inspiration, because we can already see the progress being made by our parishes and communities across the motu. *Laudate Deum* reminds us that personal changes are the first step to inspiring our communities to change, which is the step required for countries to change, which in turn will deliver the multilateral action needed to address the climate crisis.

—*Caritas Aotearoa NZ*

‘*Laudate Deum*’ - Francis calls for a ‘drastic’ response to climate change

Max Foley-Keene

Pope Francis concludes *Laudate Deum*, his October 4th apostolic exhortation on the climate crisis, by pointing to condemning the ‘irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model.’ Let us, then, engage in an examination of conscience, calling to mind some elements of the Western lifestyle.

Think of those little daily actions that rarely inspire deep reflection: flipping a light switch, picking up a coffee, flushing a toilet, refrigerating your leftovers. Behind all these actions is a web of interdependence. A cup of coffee is the result of cultivation, packing, shipping, brewing, and service—the work of human hands enlisting the fruit of the earth: coffee beans, soil, water, fuel. When these processes come at an environmental cost—and they usually do—those costs are very often concealed from view.

The human species, as Francis repeatedly reminds us in his two ecological writings, has acquired for itself awesome and terrifying powers. Yet, what Francis calls the ‘technocratic paradigm’ is very often experienced as powerlessness, even for relatively privileged Westerners. Every individual is, in fact, radically dependent on the whole of Creation, but the practices associated with the technocratic paradigm allow us to imagine ourselves as autonomous. This is alienation; it is also sin.

How often do we encounter those who bear the special burdens of environmental degradation, the people who live, in Pope Francis’s disquieting phrase, ‘at the bottom of the pile’? Even those of us with firm ecological commitments find that we contribute, in countless little and mostly unconscious ways, to the destruction of our common home. And we are damaged by our participation in these processes, even when it’s unintentional—and even if we struggle to find alternatives. As the effects of our actions are

hidden from view, we become increasingly numb and thoughtless.



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In *Laudato Si*, Francis insisted that human beings are created for relationship: with God, with the earth, and with our neighbours, especially the poor. ‘These three vital relationships,’ Francis writes, ‘have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin.’ Social and economic structures that contribute to the rupture of these three fundamental relationships can be properly described as sinful.

Radical restructuring required

Laudate Deum is an urgent cry for us to create new structures that will foster and protect these relationships. Francis calls for coordination on a massive scale and the erection of a true world political authority. He demands a response to the climate crisis that is ‘drastic, intense, and counts on the commitment of all.’ In the face of technologies and economic institutions that appear to have escaped human control, he insists that human beings must ‘control political power,’ subjecting new technologies to some conscious plan.

Yet at the same time, Pope Francis warns against the assumption that human power is limitless and asks us to rediscover the virtues of humility and restraint. In this latest exhortation, Francis quotes a critical passage from *Laudato Si*.

We stand naked and exposed in the face of our ever-increasing power, lacking the wherewithal to control it. We have certain superficial mechanisms,

but we cannot claim to have a sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint.

Ultimately, Francis is seeking nothing less than a revolution in how human beings relate to their own capacities. We are creatures capable of creatively refashioning nature to meet our needs, but we have forgotten our obligation to take responsibility for Creation, to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world. Instead of viewing fellow creatures as companions on our earthly sojourn, we view them as adversaries. Confrontation and mastery replace friendship and stewardship.

Francis, in his ecological writings, is a virtue theorist. ‘Only by cultivating sound virtues,’ Francis insists, ‘will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment.’ Virtues are excellences of character that emerge when we learn to perceive reality in a particular way and engage in activities that produce certain sustaining dispositions. I cannot be genuinely courageous, for example, if I am not practiced in courage, so that it has become a kind of habit. While Francis makes it clear that effectively repairing our common home will require ‘major political decisions’ at the highest levels of power, he worries that such large-scale efforts at transformation are unlikely to be sustained if we are not practiced in ecological care. ‘It is we human beings above all who need to change.’

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In *Laudato Si’* and *Laudate Deum*, Francis describes a whole host of ecological virtues: care, love, gratitude, humility, sobriety, solidarity. None of

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them have any hope of getting off the ground if we do not first learn to see properly. We need to perceive that Creation is a sacrament, a material manifestation of God’s love, which is, Francis writes, ‘the fundamental moving force in all created things.’

Christ the model

Jesus Christ models praiseworthy ecological attention, inviting his followers to see God’s love in the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. How can we learn to see that Creation is a web of interdependence? Only once we do that can we react with the proper dispositions to ecological destruction. Francis urges us to feel ‘the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement,’ the sickness of the earth as our own ailment. Christ, once again, models the habits of ecological virtue.

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Francis reminds us that Christ spent the vast majority of his life as an anonymous carpenter ‘in daily contact with the matter created by God,’ endowing human labour with sacred significance. His example shows us the close connection between work and relationship. ‘Underlying every form of work,’ Francis writes, ‘is a concept of the relationship which we can and must have with what is other than ourselves.’ If our activity is not animated by care—a desire to preserve and repair—we will come to see ourselves as masters rather than servants.

Virtue, the saying goes, is its own reward. The exploitative and extractive practices on which our way of life now depends estrange us from God, the earth, and ourselves. They have turned us into anxious, aimless creatures. In his call to construct a political-ecological order sustained by the ecological virtues, Francis offers the promise of internal peace and a ‘serene attentiveness’ that joyfully accepts every moment, and every creature, as a gift from God.

What’s required to restore our common home, it turns out, is also what’s required to restore our own peace of mind.

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All wars are by their very nature evil and destructive. It has become too late for civilised people to accept this evil. We must take a stand. We must renounce war as an instrument of policy. We must affirm that there will be no more war. Never, ever again. War is hunger, thirst, blindness and death. I call you to resist it.

—Dorothy Day, 1940