

Nature's Future – Our Future

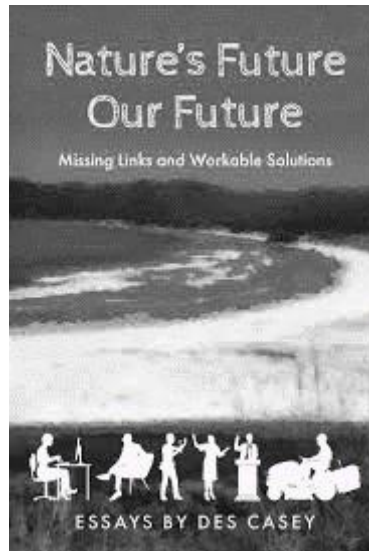
Des Casey

When talking about the environment, we find ourselves positioned somewhere on two different continuums. One continuum has to do with how little or how much of a problem we think there is. Over here, no problem, things haven't really changed much at all; nature's fine, no worries. This was certainly the common view in the 70s and 80s. While over there, at the other end of the continuum, there IS an emergency, what is happening in nature is a huge issue.

All of us stand somewhere along this line; maybe moving to and fro towards one end or the other. The drift has clearly been in this direction since the 1980s. Turning to those who believe there IS a problem, there is a second continuum. At one end are those who think, or fear, that it is all too much, we are too late; it is game over. While over here at the other end of the continuum, there is hope that we can do something about it, stop the decline; it is too early to give up. It is not game over; it's game on. THIS is where my book sits.

Initially, I felt so small in the face of what was showing up as something very big. What could I do about it? It was about that time that I latched onto what would become one of the key themes to my book. And that has to do with the subtitle of the book which includes the words: 'Missing Links'. It's one of the main themes. Several missing links are mentioned, but a key one has to do with our occupational lives, our careers, what we do at work and what our work is about. In most occupations there is a gap, often a huge gap, a disconnection even and a lack of consciousness (a lack of that heart and gut response), between what we do in our work and what nature does, what nature needs for its survival.

Disconnection with nature



I was well into 40 years of working in mental health, when this dilemma surfaced. I had two big interests in my life besides family. There was my work - counselling, family therapy, tutoring, supervising, running workshops. And there was this strong interest and love of the natural world, and concern at what was happening to it, the trouble it was in. These two central factors in my life were so separated; they were not talking to each other. I began to question this disconnection.

There had to be some sort of coming together on this surely – some sort of link.

Then I thought of all the careers, occupational settings that everyone else was a part of. The same thing again: a gap, a missing link, between work, occupation, career and a declining habitat, the natural world. The more I thought about it, the crazier it seemed. Then I started to REALLY make some connections: There can be no jobs, no careers on a ruined planet.

Many might say, what does nature - what is happening in the environment - got to do with my work? I'm a builder, I'm a radiologist, I'm an architect, I drive trucks, I teach history, I'm an accountant, I'm a nurse. What's happening out there in nature isn't what my work is about.

The challenge ahead, I think, is to see our work situation as two-pronged: build, teach, do what the work is about, but bring in an ecological, environmental, context into that working space – in such a way that work/career stands side by side, equal in status and in operation, with nature and its needs. This rarely happens. We are on a conveyor belt fixed on the goals, processes, and priorities of what our particular work or career is about. That might be fine, except it ignores what is missing – nature's needs, nature's plight. Closing the gap is a focus running



through the book. I believe it will be pivotal in us getting on top of the environmental challenge. Because it is very clear – the big three are not going to move fast enough on this. That is, governments, politicians generally, economists, the commercial world (especially the corporates). They will only take the issues seriously when there is a movement of people, communities, and occupational work environments demanding change. That means the smaller units of occupational work become the stage for a transformation.

Facing social change

Change? Let's look at that. A model for social and organisational change is built round the idea of innovators, advocates and adopters. Probably there are innovators right now in many work situations - and here in this room, your work arena. People who are concerned, who have hold of the facts of what's

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

happening out there, and what needs to be done about it. Advocates too – ready to get behind change; to take initiatives on behalf of nature and its ecosystems. But the chance for real change often stops there. Getting larger numbers (that is, the adopters) behind the change is more difficult, and this is often because those who should be leaders – owners, managers, boards, associations, the organisations that drive the particular occupation - stand back and refuse to move.

Let's imagine for a moment a different scenario. Imagine eight, maybe ten, different occupational fields – let's say civil engineers, plumbers, accountants, teachers, psychologists, shop-assistants, nurses ... along with the leaders of their associations or organisations that represent them doing a number of things: *First*, they are well on the way to starting the conversation about the missing links – the environment emergency and what it means for their particular work, career, profession.

Second, taking a public stand, stating there is an environment crisis out there, owning how they have been part of the problem and/or they have simply been standing back and watching nature's decline. They AND those in leading positions state publicly what is happening out there. They take seriously the burgeoning evidence that nature is cracking at the seams, and they **MAKE THIS KNOWN**.

Third, they inform the community, the public of the changes they are going to make within their work environment in taking greater care of the natural world. *Fourth*, they publicly urge other occupational fields to do the same. And *fifth* – and this is SO important - they challenge government and all politicians (whatever the party), economists and commercial institutions (especially corporates) to take a lead and change the ways and systems that continue to do the damage.

The impact on the community, on society, I think, would be profound. We would be **THINKING** differently about what is happening 'out there', we would be looking nature in the face, and taking seriously the need for change, the need to care for nature. We would be on our way, to setting stronger change in motion.

—*Abridged talk given at the launch of Nature's Future – Our Future, Missing Links and Workable Solutions by Des Casey, CopyPress, Nelson, New Zealand. Foreword by Dr James Renwick, climate scientist. Should soon be available in bookshops, or available direct from author now at descasey29@gmail.com or <https://descasey.com> \$40.00.*

Editorial 1 Gaza – The only path to peace

We have already seen six months of war in Gaza. Now, it seems that Israel is beginning its last phase of conquest, after ordering a million and a half people to take refuge in Rafah, a border town with Egypt. Soon, there may be almost no one left in the rest of Gaza.

There have been several wars in Gaza, but this time there are thousands of human victims, and ruins like never before, and peace does not seem to be near. More than suffering, more than the loss of men and women, children and babies, humanity is lost.

Why this new war? The immediate cause is the horrific Hamas attack on Oct. 7, 2023. But another direct cause is the permanent siege imposed upon all Gazan territory in 2007, when the Hamas political party became the governing authority of the enclave.

Since then, the entire territory—2.5 million people over an area of 141 square miles—has been under total military siege imposed by Israel and Egypt. And since Oct. 7, Israel's military operations have limited even the most necessary humanitarian aid for Gaza, to the point that it now stands on the cusp of famine.

The real cause of this war

The real cause is the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, begun in 1948, which no peace agreement has been able to end and which the international community seems to have neglected.

Under Israeli military occupation, Gaza — and all of Palestine — has suffered thousands of deaths, thousands more taken as political prisoners, demolished houses, military checkpoints on all roads that disrupt freedom of movement and daily life, and a paralysed, dependent Palestinian economy.

In short, we are in a permanent state of war. This is the root cause of all wars in Gaza, including the one following Oct. 7. And despite the useless, inhuman violence of the present war, more will come if a just and lasting peace is not reached between the two peoples.

The war must stop without further delay because it is no longer a war. It is a massacre.

Making peace

But what comes after the war? Israel, as the occupier of Gaza, must take responsibility for seeking a sustainable peace with equal justice for all. Otherwise, we will see an unnecessary defeat for all. It is time for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be put back on the international agenda and for the global

community to take responsibility for building peace, which has seemed impossible until today.

Peace means the security of Israel and, at the same time, the security of the Palestinian people. In fact, the fundamental question that arises today is: Do the Palestinian people have the right to stay at home, on their own land, in their own towns and villages?

To this question, the current government in Israel has said no. Instead, Israel has been trying to forcibly displace the Palestinian people, making it virtually impossible for them to live a normal, humane life and raise their families on their own land. That cannot be a path to peace or security for anyone.

To achieve peace, we must simply admit that even in this conflict, human beings are equal. Israelis and Palestinians are equally created by God, in the image of God, and are capable of loving as opposed to killing.

On this holy land, there is room for both peoples to exercise the same political rights: two states, each at home, independent, free and capable of resisting a return to war. We have experienced war for decades; we now need a new way of thinking that brings about a lasting peace.

The peacemakers

Who is responsible for building this peace? First, the two peoples themselves, Israeli and Palestinian. Then, the international community, the friends of Israel and Palestine. The true friends of Israel are those who help Israel achieve peace. Making Israel militarily stronger, to win wars but remain insecure, is not friendship or true help to Israel.

One can ask the question: Are the two peoples capable of living in peace, each in their own state? Why not? There is much suffering and injustice in living memory, that is true.

But there is also the will to live and the fundamental goodness that God has placed in everyone. God created the human being capable of life rather than death, love rather than killing.

The surest path to peace is direct engagement with the enemy, especially when two enemies share the same land. A sustainable peace cannot be brokered by outside forces.

—Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah served as the archbishop and Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1987 to 2008, the first native Palestinian to hold the office for centuries.

Editorial 2 Israel's Oil Expropriation

One compelling explanation of the massive western support for Israel to continue to occupy Palestine and even take total control of the lands and sea is of course the massive deposits of oil and gas that lie beneath Palestine land and waters off the coast of Gaza. A UN Trade Development Report says 'geologists and resources economists have confirmed that the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) lies above sizeable reservoirs of oil and natural gas wealth, in Area C of the West Bank and the Mediterranean coast off the Gaza Strip.'

The new discoveries of oil and natural gas in the Levant Basin, amount to 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas at a net value of \$453 billion (in 2017 prices) and 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil at a net value of about \$71 billion. This offers an opportunity to distribute and share about US\$524 billion among the different parties in the region and

promote peace and cooperation among old belligerents, the study notes.

Israel is presently tapping into those resources with a huge oil rig in the Mediterranean. These resources are partially owned by the Palestinians and denied to them.

The Palestinians have no share so long as they are divided and not recognized as a sovereign state. Is that what is behind the veto by the United States? If there was an independent Palestine state, it would have total control over its own natural resources and reap the benefits for the well-being and recovery of its own people.

—Fr Shay Cullen is a Columban Missionary working in the Philippines. Read more about his work here: www.preda.org

Dorothy Day – prophet for troubled times

Rosalie Riegler



Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker, was born in Brooklyn, NY, on 8 November 1897, one of four children. Her father was a journalist and sometimes unemployed, so the family moved often finally settling in Chicago.

The Days were not religious, but Dorothy was serious and thoughtful as a teenager. She and her sister Della received permission from their parents to be baptised in the local Episcopalian church. She later became quite secular, however, as the Christianity she found as a scholarship student at the University of Illinois did not resonate with her growing beliefs in the social gospel and a leftist political orientation.

After a sophomore year, she dropped out to become a writer, so where did she go? To Greenwich Village of course! There she spent a turbulent young adulthood, writing about social justice for leftist periodicals and drinking with the likes of Eugene O'Neill and other radicals. She was jailed for her support of women's suffrage and protested to stop the US from entering World War I. Later, she published her only novel, a thinly disguised autobiography, where she confessed to an abortion.

She was also mysteriously drawn to Roman

Catholicism and often found herself visiting the immigrant churches that dotted Lower Manhattan. Finally she settled down happily on Staten Island with biologist Foster Batterham, an anarchist and confirmed atheist.

Dorothy was overjoyed when she learned she was pregnant and it was this joy that first brought her to God. When their daughter, Tamar Therese, was born in 1927, she had her baptised as a Catholic and soon afterwards was baptised herself. In her spiritual memoir, *The Long Loneliness*, she writes that her conversion was a mystery, that she was just called by grace. In fact, I see much of her life and the lives of those she touched as products of grace.

Foster was an anarchist, so he wouldn't marry her, much less marry her in the Catholic Church, and so they parted with tears and recriminations, and she remained celibate for the remainder of her life. One of the joyful things I learned while interviewing people who loved with her is that she and Forster were again close at the end of her life and that he would visit often, as old friends do.

Dorothy battered around alone for the first years after her conversion, Tamar in tow or left with her sister Della. She felt as if she was in a desert, estranged from her secular Village friends, knowing few Catholics. In 1932, while covering a leftist organised strike in Washington D.C. she visited the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and prayed fervently that God would send her a way to unite her

faith and her life work as a writer for social justice. She returned to New York and there was Peter Maurin on her doorstep! God seemed to have answered her prayers in a pretty direct way!

Enter Peter Maurin

Peter was very different from Dorothy, both in temperament and training. He was an educated French peasant and a former Christian Brother, steeped in traditional Catholicism and well versed in the social justice documents. In long conversations, he introduced Dorothy to Catholic social thought and showed her that her lifelong desire for justice and peace had strong Christian underpinnings. In short, he gave her exactly what she needed: intellectual depth and a biblical spirituality to confirm her consistent and enduring commitment to nonviolence and the necessity of easing the plight of the poor.

Peter proposed a three-point programme by which Christians could address the problems of an out-of-control capitalist society: an informed cultural critique which he called 'clarification of thought'; houses of hospitality, where the poor would be fed and housed; and rural farming communes where people could learn to sustain themselves. Borrowing from an old IWW phrase, he 'sought to build a new society within the shell of the old', using papal encyclicals, the writings of European intellectuals and most importantly, the Sermon on the Mount from the gospels of Luke and Matthew, to give meaning to their endeavours.

Out of the collaboration of Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day grew a newspaper called *The Catholic Worker*, first published on May Day, 1933, and still coming out monthly at the original price of a penny-a-copy. And out of that newspaper grew the Catholic Worker movement, with farms and houses of hospitality providing meals and often lodging to those made homeless by the Depression. Subscriptions to the paper and the movement itself grew quickly, attracting young lay people who were aghast at the vast economic inequality they saw and who wanted to put their Christian faith to work in the here and now.

The Catholic Worker thrives today in more than 200 houses and farms (including six in NZ) across the country and increasingly around the world. The early days were both exciting and trying and that excitement and trial still persist in many of its communities. Yet somehow most of them persevere and they are mourned when necessity forces them to close. Donations of food and clothing pour in today just as they did in the early years. Then and now, Catholic Workers live in the same houses with the poor they invite to their table. They embrace a voluntary poverty, so Workers receive at most only a

small stipend.

In the early days, Workers wrote and spoke and picketed against both sides in the Spanish Civil War, against the US denial of entry to Jews fleeing Hitler, against World War II, against the civil defence drills of the Fifties, and in deep opposition to the Vietnam War. Today, CWs continue to protest not only on-going wars but also the vicious US immigration policies; racism in housing and education and the actions of the police; and the lack of environmental concern that is killing our planet. They act as allies for the indigenous people of colour as they fight against encroaching oil pipelines and for those who protest police killings.

Dorothy herself was arrested and jailed for protesting the civil defence drills of the 1950s. She was very public in her support of the many Catholic resisters during the Vietnam war and her last arrest was in support of Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers Union. In the early days, Dorothy was well known and generally accepted, with the newspaper distributed in many churches, but because she was consistent in her biblical pacifism, she lost support, and the movement was decimated during World War II, with most houses closing.

But a remnant remained, and Dorothy never wavered. Peter died in 1949 after suffering a tragic decline in his mental powers. Dorothy's spirituality deepened in the 1950s and she was well prepared to offer support to the nonviolent peace movement during the Vietnam war when she again rose to national prominence.

At the end of her life she had become an icon. Her health had never been robust and her many travels as she spread the word took their toll. In her latter years, she was confined to Maryhouse, the large Manhattan CW house of hospitality on 3rd Street on the Lower East side. There she lived surrounded by her daughter Tamar and loving Catholic Workers who cared for her and listened to her stories. Her death happened quietly, 29 November 1980, and she was farewelled from the nearby church which she had faithfully attended through the years. She lies buried in Staten Island.

Dorothy Day wrote at the end of her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*, 'It's still going on'. Indeed it is, and the Catholic Worker is still very much with us.

Rosalie Riegle, a scholar and grandmother, is a long-term CW writer and member of the Su Casa Catholic Worker in Chicago. This article (abbreviated) is taken from Hospitality, June 2020, the paper of the Open Door CW community, Atlanta, GA.

Lest We Forget

Anzac Day reflection, 2024

Sabreen Alrouh Joudeh – on Anzac Day, 25 April 2024, at Emirati Hospital, Rafah, Palestine, aged 5 days, beloved daughter of the late Sabreen al-Sakani (27) and Shukri Joudeh (25) and loved sister of the late Malak (3), all killed last week in a 2am early morning airstrike. Burial for Sabreen held same day beside her sister and parents.

Sabreen Alrouth Joudeh, a 1.4kg infant
taken after 30 weeks gestation
by C-section from her dead mother
killed by an Israeli airstrike
died overnight in Rafah

genocidal horror has been unleashed
these past six months on Gaza
this tiny piece of Palestinian land
created out of the Shoah, the Holocaust
safety promised Palestinians, death
delivered

in early morning darkness yesterday
26 killed in a missile attack
on a residential block of flats
today, 51 slaughtered in a hospital
the buildings demolished
last Sunday, 142 killed in makeshift
tents
a refugee camp packed with children
a similar story every day

daily television reports and pictures
show mayhem, utter destruction
municipal buildings, schools, hospitals,
clinics
devastated by US-supplied munitions
thousands still buried under rubble

the pain however runs far deeper
35 000 murdered by Zionist air attacks
including at least 1600 children
who will never play football, music
go to school. fall in love

today, tomorrow, next week
the world will tune in to watch
this war playing out on TV
like episodes of Coronation Street
or live football from Barcelona!

despite its thousands of peace makers
sadly Israel will become a pariah state
for generations to come
as Germany and Japan did after WWII
South Africa during apartheid

Leaving 2.4 million Palestinians
traumatised
millions left grieving
widespread famine imminent
lest we forget.
Indeed!

—Jim Consedine

Around the Traps

Death of Noel Consedine – Jim’s brother Noel Consedine died after a long illness on 3 April 2024, during Easter week. He was 78. A man of firm faith, after nine years as an ordained priest in the Christchurch diocese, Noel married Veronica Higgins and become a mentor and father to her three young children. Noel spent much of his working life as the HR manager at G.L.Bowron and Son in Ferrymead, Christchurch. After a wonderful vigil, Jim said in his eulogy to a packed Sacred Heart church in Addington at his requiem mass, ‘Noel maintained his priestly pastoral care role right through his working and family life. At a certain level, he was always a priest. And a wonderful family man.’ This was attested to by the more than 400 who attended. May he now rest in peace.

Pope celebrates Holy Thursday Mass with women prisoners

Pope Francis celebrated the Mass of the Lord’s Supper in the women’s section of the Rebibbia correctional facility in Rome on Holy Thursday afternoon. After the Mass there were touching scenes as the wheelchair-bound Holy Father washed the feet of twelve prisoners, gathered in an outdoor area of the prison with guards, chaplains and officials.

In his brief off-the-cuff homily, the Pope focused on Jesus’ Last Supper on the eve of His Passion. He said that during the meal, Jesus humbled Himself to wash the feet of the disciples. By doing so, ‘He makes us understand what He meant when He said: ‘I did not come to be served, but to serve’. ... That humble gesture teaches us the path of service.’

Vatican News, 28 March 2024

Anzac vigil – On Anzac Day, 25 April, a group including several Catholic Workers gathered at the Cenotaph war memorial in Cathedral Square in Christchurch and laid a wreath for the more than 35 000 Palestinians, (including 16 000 children) who had been slaughtered by Israeli troops in the previous six months. It was a solemn occasion, addressed by John Minto, national chair of Palestinian Solidarity Network Aotearoa, who spoke of the history of the marginalization of the Palestinian people since 1948, and the establishment of the Jewish state on Palestinian soil. Jim Consedine read one of his poems *Under the Rubble* about the death of children through the recent bombings and led the gathering in silence and prayer, before we finished with waiata.

Christian solidarity with Palestinians – In mid-Lent in Christchurch, a 40-metre-long banner inscribed with 10,001 names of Palestinian children killed in Gaza, formed a visual expression of Christian and community solidarity and a call for justice in peace, in an ecumenical Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage. On Saturday, 9th March, starting at 8am at Rangiora, about 75 people joined for

portions of the 36km walk via Kaiapoi and the Al-Noor Mosque in Riccarton. It concluded at the Anglican Cathedral in central Christchurch.

The distance symbolically mirrors the walk from Gaza City to Rafah, the route Palestinians have been forced to walk as a result of Israel’s military assaults and forced evacuations. Several Catholic Workers joined in the walk or part of it. Besides a ceasefire, marchers also called for humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza, release of all hostages, an end of occupation of Palestinian land and called on the NZ Government to allow family members of Gazans living in NZ to be given humanitarian visas.

Similar solidarity marches were also held in another eight countries and 63 cities around the world, including Auckland, Hamilton, Whanganui and Wellington.

—*CathNews*, 15 March 2024

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released a report on Monday indicating that global military spending surged to a record \$2.4 trillion in 2023, marking the ninth consecutive year of increases. This rise comes as the international community grapples with Russia’s ongoing assault on Ukraine and escalating military actions in Gaza, contributing significantly to what SIPRI describes as war-related expenditures reaching an all-time high. The United States remains the largest military spender by a substantial margin, allocating \$916 billion to its military budget in 2023, a 2.3% increase from the previous year. This figure accounts for 37% of total global military spending.

—*Nation of Change*

US arms flood Israel – The United States has quietly approved and delivered more than 100 separate foreign military sales to Israel since the beginning of the Gaza war last October., amounting to thousands of precision-guided missiles, small-diameter bombs, bunker busters, small arms and other lethal aid, US officials told Congress in a recent classified briefing. Besides massive infrastructure demolition, including hospitals, schools and medical clinics, Israel’s war had killed more than 30 000 Palestinians and injured more than 80 000.

Taken together, the weapons package amounts to a massive transfer of firepower at a time when senior US officials have fallen short on their appeals to limit civilian casualties, allow more aid into Gaza and refrain from rhetoric calling for the permanent displacement of Palestinians. Israel, like most militaries, does not routinely disclose data about its weapons expenditures, but in the first week of the war it said it had dropped 6000 bombs in Gaza.

Washington Post, 6 March 2024

Obituary

House of Grace CW
April 11, 2024

Dear Friends,

Many of you know that **Bishop Tom Gumbleton (Tom)** died on Thursday, April 4th in Detroit. He was 94. For us, and for the House of Grace, Tom Gumbleton was not only a partner, but also a beloved friend and spiritual mentor. While this news did not come as a total shock, the reality of losing someone so important to our path and critical to our work has deep and profound impact.

We write with hearts full of sadness but filled with deep gratitude for his presence in our community and our lives. Tom believed in healing. He did that through his powerful witness to peace and his ongoing thirst for justice.

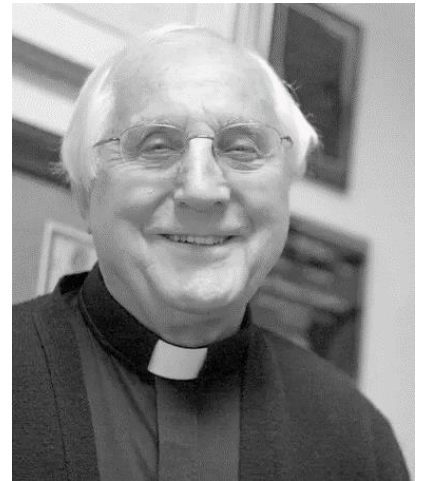
A primary incarnation of that belief was his partnership with us in founding the Kay Lasante Clinic in Port Au Prince, Haiti. Over the past 20 years, we have worked closely with Tom and the community in Haiti to keep this clinic open and thriving. Even in the midst of extreme political turmoil and unimaginable violence, the clinic keeps doors open as it can. Along with us, the community in Haiti feels Tom's loss acutely.

Tom accompanied the clinic with constant presence. He was present at the founding of Kay Lasante and present to visit Fr. Jean Juste, their parish priest, when he was unjustly imprisoned. Tom was there to offer him the anointing of the sick shortly before Fr. Jean Juste died. He was present during the devastating earthquake to continue to nurture the clinic's growth. It is in part due to his conviction and relentless hope that the clinic has become what it is--a beacon of caring and compassion for that community.

Yet our work and collaboration with Tom Gumbleton has much deeper roots. He was a tireless supporter of the House of Grace and the broader Catholic Worker movement. He worked with us as part of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, Pax Christi, and the anti-war movement. He brought the gospel message of love to all he did. He was passionate about peace and uncompromising about justice.

His presence touched our own house. Everyone in our household remembers his rising at

5:30 AM every day to sit and pray. At the House of Grace, he offered retreats and presided at liturgies-- particularly memorable is one at St. Malachy's



Church, where he vehemently denounced the war in Iraq. He worked with Voices in the Wilderness and House of Grace to call for an end to the sanctions in Iraq, traveling with us to break the embargo and bring medicines to suffering children.

Perhaps most precious was his balanced, hopeful witness. Tom was never just all work. He spoke about the middle way. He loved a good laugh, a good movie, and a good meal. He loved baseball and going to games. He took care of his body the way he took care of his spirit. He made time to swim at least three times a week.

In the midst of his busy days and concerns for the hurting world, he loved the opportunity to relax. More than anything, he loved to sit quietly, have a cup of coffee, and read.

Tom knew and lived within God's boundless embrace. In one of the last conversations we had, Johanna asked him: 'Tom, what are you doing?' 'I am just sitting here letting God love me.'

It is a beautiful thing to know that the embrace of God has carried him home. As we share our loss with you, however, somehow it also kindles our hope and our resolve for the work ahead. Never giving up. Being faithful to what is demanded in order to bear the light. Tom embodied this work, and now we carry on. He taught us so well. He was, and we are, deeply grateful for your faithful support and participation with House of Grace.

In peace,

Johanna Berrigan, Mary Beth Appel and Katie Huynh

***The Trust Fall* - Julian Assange, documentary, 2 hours. Reviewer – Jim Consedine**

Speaking truth to power is something many of us would like to think we would do fearlessly. The reality is we probably wouldn't because of the consequences. One who did and has paid an enormous personal price is Julian Assange, an Australian tech wizard, geeky in interests but brave beyond belief in real life.

His story is pretty well known. He is the founder of Wikileaks which sought to shine a spotlight on the nefarious doings of governments and corporations by leaking some of their secrets to the wider public. In 2010, Julian leaked a classified video of a US war crime in Afghanistan where unarmed civilians were falsely identified as terrorists and shot in cold blood from a helicopter as they fled seeking safety. In the background, air crew could be heard laughing and making racist remarks as they swooped in to kill.

This release of information led to a public uproar around the world, and the subsequent release of thousands of secret war documents highlighting the brutality of American war engagement. The US Government vilified him at home and abroad and made him a target for possible kidnapping and assassination. Despite not being an American citizen, it is desperate to get him behind bars where he faces up to 175 years in prison.

Julian was arrested in London in December 2010, falsely accused of rape in Sweden (later withdrawn), remanded on bail and fled for asylum to the Honduran Embassy in London, where he remained until a change of their government some years later, after pressure from the US and a giant IMF loan, meant he was forced out.

He was immediately arrested by London police and has been remanded in the maximum security Belmarsh Prison in London ever since. He continues to spend 23 hours daily in solitary confinement, suffers constant psychological torture and is slowly dying. He is now a shadow of the man who entered prison.

The documentary highlights the background to the Wikileaks release of material showing thousands of war crimes by US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were published by The New York Times and The Guardian (UK). It takes us through a variety of situations involving him prior to his current remand incarceration. The US Government call him a high-tech terrorist. The progressive media worldwide hail him as a martyr for press freedom. The film

highlights what a puppet of the US the UK has become.

This is an important though lengthy documentary which could have benefited from being shorter and more compact. Having said that, it is a moving story of the courage of one man (dare I say a Jesus-type figure?) threatening the whole rotten corrupt political system that creates and allows wars to take place regardless of the cost, with little or no public accountability. Or scrutiny. Think Israel and the genocide in Gaza against Palestinians, and you get the picture. Look it up on YouTube.

I recommend it to all who care about justice, free speech and the future of our world.

***The Outlaw Ocean – Crime and Survival in the Last Untamed Frontier* - Ian Urbina, 2019, Penguin Random House, UK, 546 pages. Reviewer: Jim Consedine.**

One of the great privileges I enjoyed following my posting in 1985 as parish priest to St Joseph the Worker parish, Lyttelton, was to become port chaplain with Stella Maris, the international Catholic chaplaincy to seafarers. This awakened within me a fascination with the workforce who regularly called to discharge cargo, passengers, or fish at our docks. I had no idea what an immense worldwide industry fishing was nor the history of many who came to port as crew off foreign fishing vessels.

I had little knowledge at the time that more than 56 million seafarers work globally on unregulated, unpoliced fishing boats, and an additional 1.6 million on freighters, tankers and other types of merchant vessels. While the latter have some union protection in some parts of the world, the former live and work at the whim of the captain and are often treated cruelly, paid minimal rates if at all, and often suffer all sorts of abuse at the hands of their captain and senior crew.

Ian Urbina, an investigative journalist with *The New York Times*, spent four years at sea with a variety of reporting assignments culminating in this fascinating book. It's a big but riveting read which rips away the callous, murderous facade of corporate capitalism and shows convincingly that much of this US\$160 billion industry is built on forced labour with its associated violence and widespread violation of basic human rights.

It lays bare the bones of what this seemingly innocuous industry does to poor desperate mainly Southeast Asian men who are enticed to sign on and then trafficked, sold and enslaved aboard these

vessels. Many never see land nor families for months and even years at a time. Crime at sea is endemic on many of these vessels with virtually no consequences for perpetrators and no redress for victims. I'd hate to think how many seafarers have been 'lost' at sea at the hands of unscrupulous captains.

This book shows Urbina to be a brave journalist who often confronted hardship, danger and trying conditions to get aboard numerous vessels in a variety of situations to report what he witnessed and

Letters

114/8 Sydenham Rd,
Mt Eden,
Auckland 1024

To Jim and the *Common Good* team,

My mother Kathleen Douglas (now deceased) introduced myself and Taranaki Quakers to your magazine. It has been informative, well-reasoned and provocative, and it is sad the print edition is so expensive to post. However, it is good to know it will continue online. I find your organisation inspirational. I also appreciate getting to know your Pope better through your magazine and am inspired by his spirit of peace and forgiveness. Thank you.

Liz Bridgeman

Lower Hutt,
Easter Week.

Dear CW,

Big 'thank you' for the current *The Common Good*, much of which I find very interesting – the editorials, poems and Around the Traps. Please accept a small donation to the cause and have a blessed Easter. Prayerfully,

John Sellars

Catholic Worker
Ocean View,
Queensland

Hi David Nelson,

Hope you are well. It took me a while to get my head around your fungibility article (CG108). But I have to respectfully disagree with the ideas (if I have understood them properly).

I am afraid asking Palestinians to leave is one of the very definitions of genocide. Why not ask the Israelis to leave? (I am not suggesting that of course.

what he was told. What he found horrified him and left him determined to get some of the stories of these men out into the public arena. Now, every time I see a can of tuna in the supermarket, I wonder where it came from and whose blood it contains.

The title *The Outlaw Ocean* is an apt name. Like the American Wild West 200 years ago, the sea truly remains the last untamed frontier.

Hitler did ask the Jews to leave before WW2 and a lot did. At least one shipload of Jews sailed up and down the coast of the US before the war asking for asylum and were refused tragically. I think the Egyptians are refusing the Gazans because they realise it would be genocide. I know Australian Aboriginals have an attachment to 'country' as they call it that is pretty important to them. Maori may be the same.

I think the ability to relocate without trauma is a very modern western concept, and maybe not a good one.

All the best

Jim Dowling

David Nelson responds: Thank you for taking the time to write to me and think about my article. It is an idea that I think more people should consider, I do agree with what I've written but I hold on to it loosely. I could be convinced otherwise.

I think most people would agree with the core of the article which is just observing that when people intrinsically value something which is non-fungible conflict seems more likely. I mention Gaza, Ukraine, Indigenous rights and divorce as examples of this principle but there are many other examples. The question is what do we do with this observation?

Perhaps where some people would disagree is in using our limited resources to advocate for giving people in conflict more options rather than putting all our resources to support one party to achieve their non-fungible values at the expense of the other party. The conflict in Gaza is a classic example. Activists seem to primarily direct their efforts to advocate for Palestinians rights. I didn't say this in the article but in my view this was a promising strategy to try in the early days but it seems to have stagnated at this point.

I want people to realise there are other ways we can help the Palestinians and advocating to give them more options such as more open immigration policies seem to me to be a more effective strategy at this point. This would also allow Palestinians to choose between their intrinsic values, between their safety or their ownership of ancestral land. I'm not saying that

Palestinians should pick one over the other but I am saying they should have the chance to choose for themselves. This seems pragmatic to me.

Another aspect where people might disagree is in my suggestion that we as individuals go in the direction of placing more intrinsic value in fungible things and place less value in non-fungible things. This can definitely be taken too far but my guess is that it would benefit most people to move in this direction.

I definitely respect people's autonomy in deciding where that balance is in their lives. It has benefitted me to be challenged in this way and I think everyone, not just those in conflict, would also benefit from this. If a significant fraction of the population did shift in this direction I think conflict would be less common. Would that be worth the cost? I think so but could be convinced otherwise.

South New Brighton,
Christchurch

Kia ora Jim,

I've noticed a bunch of electricity supplier ads recently and it's well worth comparing prices. I'm with Contact – have been for many years. My January 2024 bill was \$68.43 for 129 KwH (40-day, Low user, 89 night.) My bill in January 2023, was \$50.93 for 146

KwH (52 day, 94 night rate.) That's an increase of \$17.50 for using 17 KwH less, 34.36% in 12 months without factoring in the lower Kw figure, five times the rate of inflation, which peaked at 7%.

You may well say my power usage is very low, and I'd agree; it takes conscious effort. Individual commitment is needed to combat climate change, buying and selling Carbon Credits won't do it, it's Corporate Bingo. \$17.50 is not a lot. 35%, though, is daylight robbery, especially when, adding insult to injury, Contact have warned that there are substantial price increases ahead for 2025 because of increased operating costs. I'd say they've done pretty well at a time when consumers nationwide have been squeezed financially for essentials.

The NZED operated within a paradigm that said the country's electricity supply was an essential service, and that prices should be held at an affordable level for all, that low usage should be rewarded and would keep the demand for increased generation at a minimum (preserving our rivers, burning less fossil fuels and putting off a need for atomic power). Since the neoliberal 'reforms'; though, privatization, the panacea for all ills, has resulted in an ethos seeking ever increasing sales to reward shareholders, most of whom are overseas Corporates, with perpetual growth.

Yours faithfully,
Rex Knight

addiction

dealing with addiction
a bit like being tossed
into the pitch-black ocean
midnight in Cook Strait
engulfed in swirling waters
no rescue in sight

flaying amidst this turmoil
battered and bruised
cross currents ripping
tearing us in all directions
screaming for help, rescue
for the pain to go
where does hope lie
a buoy to grasp, to float with?

it all seems overwhelming
almost catastrophic
until we learn to trust
the Other
reaching out willingly
joining forces
for the duration

—*Jim Consedine*

Poem for stillness

He stirs his tea with a gun barrel
He solves the puzzle with a gun barrel
He scratches his thoughts with a gun barrel

And sometimes
he sits facing himself
and pulls bullet-memories
out of his brain

He's fought in many wars
but is no match for his own despair
These white pills
have left him so colourless
his shadow must stand up
to fetch him water

We ought to accept
that no soldier
has ever returned
from war
alive

—*Garous Abdolmalekian (born 1980 in Iran)*

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

The Common Good

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Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of leaders...and millions have been killed because of this obedience...Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jails are full of petty thieves... (and) the grand thieves are running the country. That's our problem.

~ Howard Zinn