

The Catholic Worker — *spirituality or ideology?*

Jim Consedine

There is a small faith-filled Anglican parish community in the Christ-church seaside suburb of New Brighton which, despite its meagre resources, daily offers the poor and the homeless food, a hot drink, clothing options and other essential resources. I don't think they know much about ideology nor give much time to studying it. But they do know what is humanly best for the poorest. They do know what God wants and the gospel calls for, namely 'love of neighbour'.

They do what Jesus, who once walked this earth in person and now lives on in his risen presence, taught his followers to do. 'Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, look after the weakest, protect Mother Earth, and follow me by taking an option for the poor and the neglected.' They have accepted that such hospitality and outreach sit at the heart of the gospel for our time.

I have spent much of my life studying various ideologies, some a lot closer to the gospel teachings than others. Ideology can often be the fall-back position of those unwilling to open their hearts to further expansion.

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While corporate capitalism (think the US, UK, Australia and NZ) is about as far away from the teachings of Jesus as you can imagine, state socialism isn't much better. Just look at Russia and China, to mention only two giant players. Both corporate capitalism and state

socialism rely on materialism and its bastard offspring, consumerism, as their primary goal. Its sibling are greed and status, their principal driving forces. The more one accumulates, the better one is perceived to be. Both systems fail the gospel test – they fail to take account of how greed corrupts the soul and materialism cannot ever fill the heart.

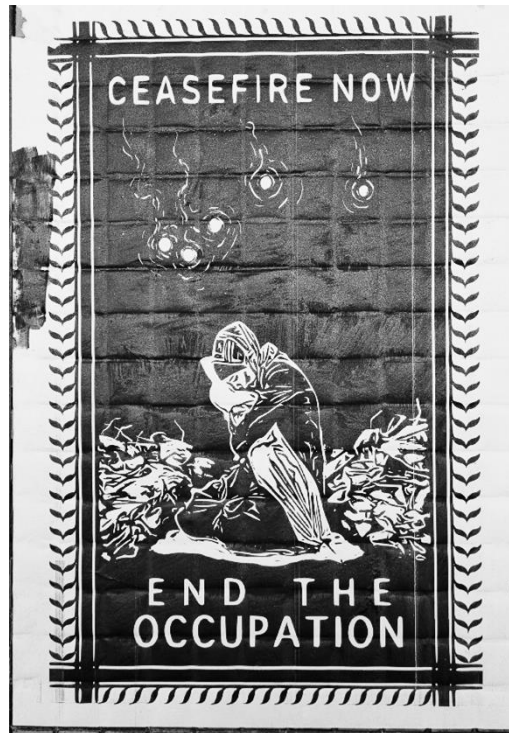
In New Zealand, we see the effects of corporate capitalism every day. To take one huge example, we hear about the 'housing crisis' which is very real and has wealthy speculators to thank for much of its development. Forty years ago, there was no 'housing crisis' per se. Getting a first home was manageable for most steady workers who were paid enough to get a house and pay a mortgage. Now tens of thousands in this country cannot afford a place to either buy or rent a suitable home.

This has led to a huge growth in poverty levels, inadequate warm and safe homes, growing homelessness and the associated lower standards of living (food, adequate healthcare, stable education) that accompany rising poverty levels.

A couple of other measuring sticks. There are many houses in affluent suburbs with only one of two occupants bigger than that some medieval English castles. We also see vehicles on our roads, so many of them bigger by half than the ones our parents drove. One suspects they are seen mostly as signs of status by their owners. Who cares about the earth warming when we can drive these huge vehicles, block up our highways and look prosperous? Bigger, flashier, more expansive is the name of the corporate capitalist game.

Ideologically bound

The thing about ideology is that it can enslave people within its parameters and not allow them in any way to think 'outside the square'. CW co-founder, Dorothy Day, saw this through learned and sometimes bitter experience as she moved from dabbling with communism, through radical feminism and socialism – and found them all



ideologies which short-changed her.

Dorothy always sought to blow the embers of those divine sparks into life through friendship and meeting the primary needs of the poor, and through creating small supportive communities among them.

After studying the gospels through the eyes of the poor and living with them for decades, she came to see that while all ideologies fall short of delivering on their promises, the practice of *personalism* – recognising the divine spark of God’s presence in everyone and honouring them for that – was closest to the teachings of Jesus, who did not judge people but rather their actions. He had friends among both rich and poor. Remember, he was buried in the tomb of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea, but mainly identified with the poor whom he saw as closest to God in their living and more open to his message.

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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.

primary needs of the poor, and through creating small supportive communities among them. She even argued every parish should have a house of hospitality for the homeless and the needy. And ‘Why not?’ is as valid a question today as it was in her time.

Synodality

As the institutional Church in the developed world continues to shrink in both size and influence, we could do well to learn from such experiences as the New Brighton Anglicans (and there are some other parish communities around the country who do similar outreach as well) to help add some vibrancy and life to what appear to many to be tired old Catholic structures.

New Brighton offers a model of what a synodal church might look a bit like – localised but linked to the centre, outreaching, guided but not dominated by its minister, living a gospel fuelled with compassion, justice, inclusivity, openness and holding a special sensitivity towards the poor, neglected, isolated and abandoned. It’s not perfect model but it is a good start!

A synodal church will not change doctrines but will broaden our vision as to how we go about our business of witnessing to Christ in our time. And our time may be shorter than we think.

A synodal church will not change doctrines but will broaden our vision as to how we go about our business of witnessing to Christ in our time. And our time may be shorter than we think. With the world becoming more crowded and forced migration exploding, the planet heating up and more species becoming extinct daily, the so-called free-market economic system betraying the vast majority of the world’s peoples, Pope Francis has warned that time may be short to take the radical steps necessary to prevent a catastrophe of even greater proportion injustice developing in our lifetime.

Conclusion

That should set us all thinking. We all have a part to play in saving our planet for future generations and developing the Church to meet the needs of our time. If we believe the teachings of Jesus are the way forward as did Dorothy Day in the Great Depression, World War II and the 1960s – 70s, then there is no time to waste in our generation of uncertainty, rising inequality, war and the climate crisis.

As the prophet Emmanuel Charles McCarthy teaches, ‘Christ is Risen does not mean Jesus lives on in history as Lenin lives on in his revolution. Jesus does not live on because people have faith in him and proclaim his teaching. The reverse is true. People have faith in him and proclaim his teaching because he lives.’

If we truly believe Christ is Risen and lives on in our lives, we have no option but to become involved working to improve things on our planet, in our country and our local communities. And that means social justice for all.

Editorial 1 Joyful Resistance

When I think about it, I could say it was a longing for a joyful resistance that had me join the Catholic Worker. I was born and raised in the Catholic Worker in Brisbane, Australia, on the land of the Jagera (Yuggera) and Turrbal nations. But I would say I was 21 when I joined the movement of my own accord.

Growing up I had always thought I would live a CW life, one of voluntary poverty, community and service to the poor, while living simply myself. But it was in the same way that all children may imagine their lives to look like their parents.

When I was nine, we moved from the centre of Brisbane and a busy house of hospitality to live semi-rural on 2/1-2 acres where my parents worked hard to build a life filled with renewable or waste-based energy systems as well as gardening and practicing non-violent civil disobedience. At 17, freshly graduated from high school, I had returned to my beloved city centre.

I enjoyed university life, enjoyed being a teenager of the West even with the angst that comes with that life. However, I had always remained slightly uncomfortable about the state of the world, my society, the privileges I enjoyed on the back of colonisation and capitalism. Although I had grown up with a modelled idea of resistance to these things, I couldn't see a clear path to it.

Slowly I started to make decisions to try and lessen the negative impact of my life and find more meaningful connection: no meat, go barefooted, get rid of my cell phone, stop buying things. My guilt was never satiated, my little resistance left me wanting more.

I was visiting St Francis Farm here in Aotearoa when I began to see a path where my desire to live a 'good' life that minimised damage to people and planet met with my desire to be lifegiving, to somehow dip into the current that flows through all living things to have fun, to create and resist. Twelve years later, here I am living on the land, with a Land, our three daughters and his family, our community.

Palestine resistance

And now I am re-inspired by people whose homeland is invaded and whose people are being murdered and starved. Over the past ten months, since October 7th massacre and the ensuing retribution by Israel, I have heard a number of Palestinians speak. Their pain is evident and also their passion. Their love of their people, culture and land so strong despite, in some cases, three generations of exile. What shines through when we have heard their history is the unwavering resistance to death and despair. The resolve I hear spoken of is life. To live in fullness for Palestinians is to resist. How beautiful! how achingly sad, but how beautiful.



Eli Land working the land

I am told that for many years the people of Gaza would hold non-violent protests every week, where they would dress in their finest and walk to the wall that surrounds the world's largest open-air prison and holding posters of Martin Luther King Jr, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. They would sing, dance, get married on stages, because to live is to resist.

To celebrate in the face of huge oppression and violence is to show that the Great Source of Life is present and cannot be squashed from you regardless of the relentless nature of your oppressors. I am speaking of the time before when your oppressors began literally to squash the bodies of your children beneath concrete.

Nonviolent Living

Here on the whenua, we grow food and children, and we are trying to instil earth and children within each other because growing your own food is to resist the powers of corporate control. We are mindful that our children's family has been here only 45 years and our Māori neighbours for many centuries before, noting that our colonial past is not so different in essence to Palestine today.

With that always on our minds we sink our children's hands into the soil, and we hope they feel the vibrations that are God and ground beneath us for our survival. By depending on the ground beneath us for our survival we hope that our own indigenous cells that once knew a connection to the seasons are re-awakened, and they learn that we depend on the earth not as a resource but as a living entity. By becoming like peasants may our children learn to joyfully resist.

We have not long harvested our olives, pressed the oil, pickled the fruit and always on our minds were the Palestinians whose groves are being burnt, who have been cut off from trees that have been in their families for generations, even centuries, who may only have ever heard tell of them because they have lived in exile with no right of return.

As our children swing in the trees and our hands roll the olives and as we fill our bellies with the thick flowing liquid, we dream of a free Palestine where children, play, argue, complain about not wanting to pick olives and eat food grown in the ground that is safe. And we pray that we too can resist with as much hope and life as do the Palestinians.

Marissa Dowling is a member of the St Francis CW Farm community in Whirinaki. This is reprinted from their CW paper Bread and Roses, June 2024.

Editorial 2 Funeral Choice

One of the Corporal Works of Mercy taught by Jesus was to bury the dead. He taught it in the days when communities observed rituals which all had access to respectful funeral rites. Alas, those days are long gone as capitalism has screwed life systems more and more to suit those with money and resources. The result is that funerals are getting more and more expensive, many out of the reach of ordinary people

Recently at the CW, one of our friends, Marama, died rather suddenly. She had been a regular coffee visitor for 25 years along with her partner, Dean. After supporting her in her dying, with presence and prayer, we decided to offer her partner a homespun CW funeral. We don't normally offer funerals per se but she was one of us.

We followed the essential principles of Funeral Choice. Firstly, we recognize that the funeral is the community ritual of the living, not a task to be done. Secondly, we talked about it first, so all attending were prepared for a funeral service slightly different. And thirdly we appointed someone to oversee arrangements

and make sure the basics were followed. These are all manageable jobs able to be done by laypeople if one prepares.

Upon her death, we bought a casket from a local community group (\$800), were kindly loaned a van and a driver by the St Vincent de Paul Society to transport her body, and we brought her to the CW, where, after prayers, she lay overnight. The following day, we held a beautiful service for her and many friends and then drove her to the cemetery for burial (grave \$3500). All up, the funeral cost about \$5000. (Another friend had died the previous week, and his family paid \$15000!)

It is noteworthy that when the CW first started helping families with funeral arrangements back in 1991, burial plots in Christchurch cost \$355, cremation \$400. A funeral grant for the needy (which hasn't kept pace with inflation) is available from Work and Income (WINZ) to help cover the costs but needs to be applied for.

—Jim Consedine

Bread not bombs

Tony Magliano

According to a 25-year analysis of global conflicts and arms transfers conducted by the World Peace Foundation (WPF) titled 'Who Arms War?' all of the largest arms exporting nations continue to sell their weapons to countries even after wars start. It's akin to pouring gasoline on a fire.

Of the 32 wars of this century that the WPF analysed, all but one received weapons from the leading arms exporting nations – US, Russia, France, UK, China, Germany, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Ukraine, and Spain – even when serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses were clearly on display.

US weapons to the Israeli government's ongoing bombing of civilians in Gaza is current tragic example. Rivers of mostly innocent civilian blood doesn't deter the ongoing shipments of instruments of death.

Where there's a huge profit to be made, and power to be gained, any serious consideration of morality is virtually non-existent among the arms exporting countries. And to a lesser degree it is important to note that some less affluent nations are also involved in the deadly arms business.

Corporations that are profiting the most from the immoral business of weapons production and sales are the US companies Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, BAE Systems (U.K.), Norinco (China), AVIC (China).

The non-violent alternative

If weapons production and subsequent weapons sales were to end, wars and armed conflicts would virtually come to a halt. Wars can't be waged without weapons. And think of all the good that could be done, both domestically and globally, if we ever come to our senses and transfer the vast amounts of money spent on weapons of war to building instruments of peace.

Imagine seeing all that money being used to ensure that every single person on the planet would receive basic human services like adequate food, decent housing, clean water and sanitation, health care, education, life-enhancing jobs with a living wage. And with these huge funds we could totally and quickly move from dirty fossil fuels to clean energy for our health, the health of our common earth home, and the health of future generations.

But very sadly, this wonderful scenario is not on the radar screens of most rich and powerful individuals, corporations and nations. As dioceses, parishes and individuals we need to tirelessly urge national leaders to finally move away from war preparation and warmaking to nonviolent peace-making.

It is bread, not bombs, that humanity is hungry for. All people of faith in the God of peace who are in any way connected with the arms industry should seriously pray and think about leaving the business of making weapons. It is truly the morally right thing to do.

Better to have far less money and more peace of soul.

Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist.

Vigil behind Bars – CWs in prison

Susan Crane and Susan van der Hijden

JVA Rohrbach prison, Germany

Here in Rohrbach prison we are awakened by the sounds of doves and other birds, giving the illusion that all is well in the world, until other sounds, keys rattling, doors being shut, and guards doing the morning body check, bring us back to reality.

We are sitting in a prison cell, 123 km from Büchel Air Force Base, where around 20 US nuclear bombs are deployed. At the moment, the runway at Büchel is being rebuilt to accommodate the new F-35 fighter jets that will carry the new B61-12 nuclear bombs that were designed and built in the US.

The planning, preparation, possession, deployment, threat or use of these B61-bombs is illegal and criminal. The US, Germany and NATO know that each B61 nuclear bomb would inflict unnecessary suffering and casualties on combatants and civilians and induce cancers, keloid growth and leukaemia in large numbers, inflict congenital deformities in unborn children and poison food supplies.

‘We have no right to obey,’ says Hannah Arendt.

Criminal lawbreakers

Although our actions might seem futile, we understand that it is our right, duty and responsibility to stand against the planning and preparation for the use of these weapons. They are illegal under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which both Germany and the US have signed and ratified, and under the Hague Convention, the Geneva Convention and the Nuremberg Charter.

During the international peace camps in Büchel (organized by the GAAA, which consists of, among others, IPPNW, ICAN and DFG-VK; the German War Resisters League), we, together with other war resisters, and with the help of many supporters, went

onto Büchel Air Force Base to communicate with the military personnel about the illegality and immorality of the nuclear bombs. We also wanted to withdraw our consent and complicity to their use.



Susan Crane (L) and Susan van der Hijden (R) at Büchel air base

The judges who sentenced us for these actions made a decision to follow some laws and ignore others. It is common sense, and we all know, that even the law against trespass can be broken when life is endangered.

The judges and prosecutors, as well as the guards in prison, treat us respectfully and politely while at the same time sticking to laws and rules that are unjust and cause suffering. The biggest crime in their eyes is to upset the ‘order’, even though the order is set up to be criminal.

We wake up every day with determined joy to continue our ‘vigil behind bars’. A joy constrained by knowing that the other women here have pain, from being separated from their family and children or from constant physical or psychological difficulties or from being locked in a cell all day with nothing to do.

We are only able to ‘vigil behind bars’ through the immense support of people making sure our Catholic Worker houses can continue, people sending us cards and stamps, organizing visits and money for phone calls, remembering us in their prayers, doing press work and those that continue fighting the death dealing warmakers in the world.

Blessings to you all!

Susan Crane is serving a 27-month sentence, and Susan van der Hijden a 15-month sentence, for their nonviolent nuclear disarmament actions at Büchel air base.

bursting with gratitude

written on my 80th birthday

what can one say
towards the tail end of a life
filled with blessings, challenges
unexpected gifts
a garden to poke around in

a lifetime of meaningful ministry
awaking each day
to friendship with the poor
laced with fun, good humour
full of aroha, heartache, hope

about family bonds, relationships
stalwart friends in faith and whanau
the gift of an Italian kidney
joyfully given, gratefully received
still firing on all cylinders

on being part of parish communities
struggling always to be better
to make sense of things
witness the good news
be fruitful, faith filled

of the wonder of life itself
mystery that it is
every day a blessing
love always the source, the fuel
the light and the shade

what can one say
about an ever-expanding heart
bursting with love and gratitude
for our Creator Spirit, except
grazie, grazie, grazie

—*Jim Consedine*

catastrophe

as Palestinian genocide unfolds
American weapons a primary cause
apocalyptic screams
echo around the world
reports from Gaza as consistent
as jaywalking in Queen Street

immaculately attired war criminals
hands dripping innocent blood
orchestrate free-range killings
from the safety of high-rise offices
attacking everything within range
hospitals, schools, clinics, markets
bowing daily at the altar
of militarism, war, racism, big money

unlike duck shooting season
no restrictions on bag limits

—*Jim Consedine*



Around the Traps

80th birthdays – On 2nd August, Jim Consedine, one of our founding members 35 years ago, turned 80 years of age, much to his surprise. He declared a public holiday but nobody noticed, so instead the CW organised a gathering on the day after. More than 40 turned up including many of our friends from the locality. With hot food supplied by Jim’s catering niece, Ruth, we held a lovely party to celebrate the occasion. Patrick O’Connor and Francis led the concluding singalong. We took the opportunity to celebrate Rex Knight’s 80th as well. Rex is one week older, a longtime friend and former classmate of Jim’s, and is a regular helper at our CG mailout. *Ad multos annos*, Jim and Rex!

Microplastics are everywhere – New widespread NZ research shows that microplastics are omnipresent in nearly every ecosystem and organism, a reflection of the more than 400 million metric tonnes of plastic produced each year. They are airborne, in your home, food, organs, testicles, sewage, teabags and T-shirts, Fiordland, Antarctica and Steward Island, dolphins, the deep-sea floor and dirt. Health risks from microplastics include increased heart attacks and bowel cancer.

Among other things, they suggest that people could prioritise products they buy as to how essential they really are/were, and also suggest reducing unnecessary laundry, as large amounts of microfibrils are released with every wash.

—*The Press*, 12 July 2024

Susan Crane in prison – I first met Catholic Worker Susan Crane, 80, who is currently serving 27 months in prison in Germany for her nonviolent peace witness at a nuclear weapons base, in 1999. I was in the US on a restorative justice promotion trip and had heard through CW friends that she was in prison for nonviolent peace witness I was keen to visit and knowing her deep

faith and the barbaric US prison system pretty well, I secreted two consecrated hosts from the mornings CW mass in the fob pocket of my trousers to avoid their disclosure. After a pat down from prison guards who failed to explore the fob pocket, I was admitted to an outside prison yard and spent a wonderful hour with Susan. There with great joy as we shared stories and holy communion together. It’s one of the more memorable experiences of my life and ministry!

—*Jim Consedine*

Record-setting heat – A streak of record-setting heat that began last year has now persisted across the globe for more than a year. May 2024 was the 12th consecutive month during which average global temperatures surpassed all observations since 1850, and probably any extended period for more than 100,000 years. During this time, temperatures rose an average of 1.6C above pre-industrial levels.

This unprecedented stretch of warmth prompted an urgent call by the UN to ban fossil fuel companies from advertising and encourage the public to stop using their products.

—*The Press*, 7 June 2024

Human Trafficking Growth a trillion-dollar industry – Interpol says human trafficking and scam compounds in Southeast Asia are worth more than US\$3 trillion in illicit revenue a year. The industry emerged from Cambodia’s south coast during the Covid-19 pandemic, where Chinese syndicates honed their criminal enterprises with impunity. These crime rings have revolutionised an industry that turns ordinary citizens into slaves.

—*CathNews*, 25 May 2024



Submission – Local Government Amendment Bill

From the Catholic Worker Movement (Ōtautahi)

We appreciate the opportunity of submitting a response to the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

We do so on behalf of the Catholic Worker Movement (Ōtautahi), a branch of a world-wide organisation of the same generic name. We believe justice built on love to be the foundational essence of God and the teachings of Jesus. As Catholic Workers, our lives are dedicated to the poor by way of providing hospitality, advocacy and justice for them, giving them a voice whenever most needed.

Over recent decades considerable strides have been taken to address some of the structural discrimination enacted against Māori in the 184 years since colonisation and the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi, our founding document. There is a long way still to go. From a social justice and Gospel perspective, incremental steps continue to be essential.

We are very deeply disturbed by the current Bill before the House of Parliament which we believe contravenes basic principles of justice in that it will further marginalise minority groups, especially Māori. Despite having a populist flavour, it contains content almost totally negative in relation to the place and state of Māori in Aotearoa, particularly in relation to guaranteeing their representation on decision-making bodies as a Treaty partner.

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This Bill is deeply offensive by not having consulting Māori about its substance before it came to the House. This is yet another breach of the Treaty in which Article 2 guarantees Māori, as a Treaty Partner, the right to be represented and to participate in decision-making in good faith.

We can't think of any other freely chosen partnership where one partner makes all the major

decisions without consulting the other. Imagine how long a marriage would last if one partner in the contract always had the controlling decision on major matters! The divorce courts would be working 24/7!

The most iniquitous aspect of this Bill requires polls to be binding. Polls make sense to Pakeha, who in this country have the majority of votes all the time.

Māori decision-making has never revolved around polling members and going with the majority. That is simply not their way. It is a very Euro-centric way of doing things, guaranteeing a favourable result against minority views.

Here at the Catholic Worker where we have met weekly to pray and reflect for more than 30 years, we fail to see how the already existing options, Sections 19H and 191 of the Local Electoral Act 2001, cannot be utilised if need be, to set out options for reviews and further debate if that is what is sought.

The re-introduction of polls will do nothing to improve race relations in Aotearoa. Rather it will stir up a hornet nest of discriminatory behaviour, racism and social unrest and further inflame already somewhat tense social relations. This we can well do without.

We need strong Māori representation around local council tables. Justice demands this. Too often we have not had this in the past and as pointed out earlier, failed to en flesh Article 2 of the *Treaty of Waitangi*.

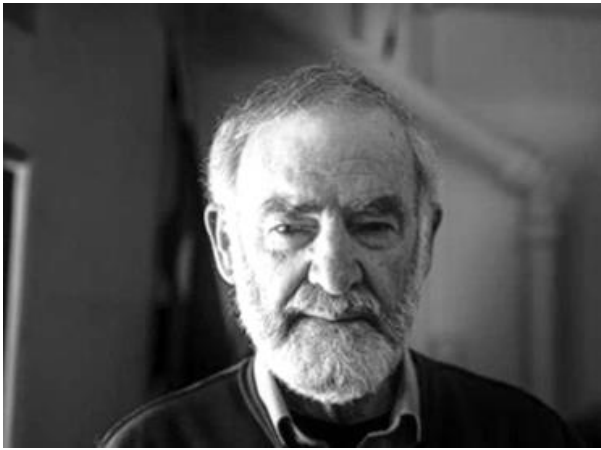
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This is a structural matter that cannot be addressed through polls and popular vote, where public media, including huge amounts of virulent social media commentary, are already tilted to negate minority outcomes.

With respect, we urge the Parliament and this Committee to attend to the matters raised and discard the offensive content.

Living by the Spirit of truth

Peter Murnane OP



Every day, massive floods of information flow around us, inviting us to choose which samples to consume. Those who publish this information claim to be telling us what is happening in the world, but in our wiser moments we remember to question whether they are offering us the truth.

From experience, we know that the loudest voices belong to persons and institutions whose enormous wealth lets them fill the pages of newspapers, or radio and television channels. Their stories enhance their own image and increase their profits.

Truth and lies

The daily news may give us the basic facts about a plane crash or a court trial, but when it comes to the truth about why a war is being fought, or about global warming, we need to be more cautious. In fact, we can identify several areas where the mainstream media in our ‘western’ nations consistently distort the truth about our world.

Lie number one

One basic lie which is quietly promoted is that ‘White’ people are of more value – are more important – than ‘people of colour’. More column-space and air-time is given to the death of a few ‘White’ people than the death of hundreds or even thousands of Blacks, Asians or Palestinians.

Refugees from those populations are seen as a problem, usually treated callously. They’re not usually treated as the victims of wars provoked by our ‘White’ nations, or of famines resulting from the global warming caused by centuries of our industrial activity.

We assume that we have a right to plunder ‘Third World’ resources, as we earlier took the land of non-Whites. We even justify that theft, whether it happened in North America during colonisation, across Australia after 1788, in Africa during the 19th century, or in Palestine since 1948. In the latter case, mainstream media mostly ignore or conceal the genocide which now is completing

that land theft, and demonises those – such as tertiary students – who dare protest against it.

Lie number two

Another fundamental untruth almost completely overlooked is that the ‘growth’ of every nation’s GDP cannot continue. This is because every resource on earth – fresh water, iron, oil, gas, forests; even our capacity to capture sunlight – is limited.

Although some resources – coal – are more abundant than others, our civilisation will not survive unless we change to a world economy based on genuine re-cycling.

Lie number three

A third basic lie spread by (most) media is their denial of the rapidly approaching but unpredictable ‘tipping points’ that will soon be triggered by the heating of our planet. Resulting from several centuries of our burning fossil fuels and building cities, these tipping points may come in various ways.

They may involve the irreversible melting of ice-caps and glaciers; the sudden extinction of inter-dependent species – including rain forests; or the altered flow of ocean currents and jet-streams.

Although national leaders talk together regularly, and politicians make promises, none has so far had the will to stop the ruthless greed of fossil-fuel merchants. They won’t even admit the elephant in the room, the disaster that is rapidly approaching.

The Holy Spirit

But at Pentecost we reflect on the Holy Spirit, which is mentioned hundreds of times in the pages of the New Testament. This Spirit moves people to speak in prophesy – Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist.

The Spirit overwhelmed the adult Jesus at his baptism, driving him out into the desert and then leading him on his mission. By the Spirit’s power he healed people and drove out demons. He told his followers that they can call on the Spirit within them when they were attacked for speaking the truth. John’s later gospel calls it the Spirit of Truth (14:17, 15:26, 16:13), and reflects how we can each receive this divine Spirit.

At our present time of grave world crisis, it must be obvious to anyone believing in God, that God’s Spirit is not the exclusive property of any one faith tradition or clergy. On the contrary, we each need urgently to call on this tremendous gift within us, using the Divine power it gives to unite our human family and to heal our fragile planet.

Peter Murnane O.P. is an Australian-based Dominican Friar and author and long-time supporter of the Catholic Worker, who lives and works among the poor and marginalised in Sydney.

The growing threat of nuclear war

Miles Doyle

Among the many issues that don't get the attention they deserve on newspaper front pages and in presidential debates, one in particular stands out as both especially urgent and inexplicably neglected: the growing threat of nuclear war. In June, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) reported that global spending on nuclear weapons surpassed \$90 billion in 2023, a 13 percent jump from the previous year and a new all-time high.

The United States drives this spike, spending \$51.5 billion in 2023, or approximately \$98,000 per minute, on its nuclear arsenal and infrastructure. This total is more than eight times the combined spending of eight other nuclear-armed countries, including China and Russia. Over the past five years, since ICAN began its research, the United States has increased its spending by 45%.

Under the pretext of 'modernizing' its nuclear triad, the United States is running a new arms race, stockpiling more nuclear weapons than at any time since the Cold War ended. In 2015, Barack Obama initiated a ten-year, trillion-dollar program to upgrade the country's nuclear arsenal and delivery capabilities. Though the Trump administration abandoned most other Obama-era initiatives, it continued this particular program and, in August 2019, withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty—an agreement with Russia limiting short- and intermediate-range missiles and missile launchers.

More recently, Pranay Vaddi, senior director for arms control at the National Security Council, proclaimed a 'new era' for nuclear arms in which the United States would deploy nuclear weapons 'without numerical constraints.' Speaking at the Arms Control Association, Vaddi said 'the prospects for strategic arms control are dim,' noting that New START, the last remaining treaty between the United States and Russia limiting strategic nuclear weapons, will most likely expire in 2026 without replacement.

The US spends approximately \$98,000 per minute on its nuclear arsenal.

Meanwhile, China has increased its nuclear arsenal from 400 to 500 warheads and is on pace to have 1,500 warheads by 2035. In May, Russia deployed tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus in response to promises from NATO countries to furnish Ukraine with new weapons, including long-range missiles. Belarusian president Aleksandr Lukashenko, a key ally of Vladimir Putin, warned of a nuclear apocalypse if Russia continues to be pressured by the West. 'One careless word, one movement could cause armed conflict up to the use of nuclear weapons,' Lukashenko said in a public address.

Following Russian military exercises in Belarus, Putin travelled to North Korea, where he met with Kim Jong Un and revived a mutual-defence pledge between the two countries. This pledge will likely help North Korea realize its own long-held nuclear ambitions and increase Russia's use of North Korean military equipment in Ukraine.

'There is one path—and one path only—that will vanquish this senseless and suicidal shadow,' United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said earlier this year. 'We need disarmament now.' But Guterres also acknowledged that the world's nuclear states have shown no interest in even slowing down this accelerating arms race, let alone stopping it. 'States possessing nuclear weapons are absent from the table of dialogue,' he ruefully noted. Until the United States re-engages these other countries in arms-control and non-proliferation negotiations, the threat of nuclear annihilation will continue to grow.

In January, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists reset its famous Doomsday Clock to ninety seconds to midnight, the closest the clock has ever been to nuclear Armageddon. It is time for this issue to take its rightful place at the centre of our debate about foreign policy.

—Reprinted from *Commonweal*, 12 July 2024.

Obituary Helen Dery Woodson

Helen Dery Woodson, Catholic peace, justice and anti-nuclear activist, mother and grandmother, died this past December. An only child, she was welcomed to the world 80 years earlier, by her mother, Helen Dery and father, Carl Strauch. Helen's parents also had many adopted children, most with disabilities.

In the early 1980s, while raising her family in Wisconsin, Helen started the Gaudete Peace and Justice Centre and its newsletter, *Harvest of Justice*. She became involved in nuclear weapons protest, sometimes being arrested. After conviction for the 1984 Silo Pruning Hooks Ploughshares action, she took part in with three others at a nuclear missile silo in Missouri, spending 27

years in prison for that and subsequent actions. She has the distinction of being the longest jailed nuclear resister.



Helen was released from prison for the last time on September 9, 2011. She 'retired' from protest activities and lived a quiet prayerful life in Kansas City, Missouri.

Helen is survived by her children and grandchildren, friends and many around the world who continue to be inspired and encouraged by her actions for a nuclear-free future.

Helen Woodson – *Presente! Requiescat in Pace.*

Reviews

Teilhard: visionary scientist. 1 hr 58 min, PBS, available on YouTube, Reviewer: Jim Consedine

This film is an amazing introduction to the life and times of one of the greatest prophetic voices in the history of the Church, the famed French Jesuit priest and palaeontologist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

It gives a readily accessible account of his times and lifelong work of reconciling faith and science and proving how complementary they were rather than opposites – as was the presumption of the Church at the time. He taught that matter and spirit were two parts of the same essence, a view now widely held as an evolutionary universe continues to expand – and remains unfinished even now.

It gives thinking people a pathway to understanding our evolving universe within a framework of divine process (and not outside Church doctrine) which he called cosmogenesis. This cosmic energy he saw in matter and all created things as a spiritual force of love moving all of creation towards what he called the Omega Point, where all will come together in the Risen Christ.

Pope Francis is a great student of his teachings and Teilhard's influence shows frequently in the writings of Francis, especially in *Laudato Si'*, the pope's 2015 encyclical on the care of the planet and the environment.

That Teilhard suffered for his insights would be a gross understatement. The Church, like all institutions, marginalises its prophetic voices despite being founded on the Jewish prophets of old and the greatest prophet of them all, Jesus the Christ. Teilhard was exiled several times by his superiors, forbidden to write, publish or speak in public, posted most dramatically to China in the 1920-30s to 'silence him' during a time of huge political unrest within that country. Ironically, it was in China he did some of his most important work unhindered by his almost total rejection back home.

He loved the feminine side of being and was aided emotionally and spiritually by three women in particular who became close friends during his life. He realised early on in his evolutionary journey that the feminine aspect of life was complementary to the male and in making one fully human, and vice versa.

Letter

JVA Koblenz
Simmerner Str. 14a
56075 Koblenz, Germany

Dear Jim,

So good to get your letter, but alas I am unable to read your poem or article on the Cosmic Love of the Eucharist. We can only get actual letters from you to me in the mail. Perhaps if you wrote on the back of the

A loyal Jesuit priest-scientist to the end, eventually he ended up in New York, where he died suddenly on Easter Sunday, 11 April 1955. Such was his marginalisation that in a city of several million Catholics, only 10 people attended his funeral. Because the Church didn't want his material published, he bequeathed his works to one of his women friends who published them to widespread acclaim upon his death.

This is a stunning story well presented here and worth spending time looking up on YouTube.

Bursting with Gratitude, Jim Consedine, Ploughshares Publications, August 2024, 70pp. Available from the Catholic Worker, P O Box 33134, Christchurch, 8244, cost \$20 (incl. postage). Reviewer: Rex Knight

This is Jim Consedine's second book of poems, similar in size and content as his first, *Syrian Boy and other poems* (June 2019) and published to commemorate his 80th birthday. The fifty poems recorded here reflect Jim's desire to promote a relevant spirituality for our times and his ongoing passion for social justice. These aims he achieves with directness and clarity which often makes them compelling reading.

His dozen poems on the evil of war and those on the genocide in Gaza are particularly poignant. Three in particular stood out for me – *Lest we Forget*, written this year on Anzac Day, *God is Weeping*, which needs no further explanation, and *Under the Rubble*, about children dying after bombing raids.

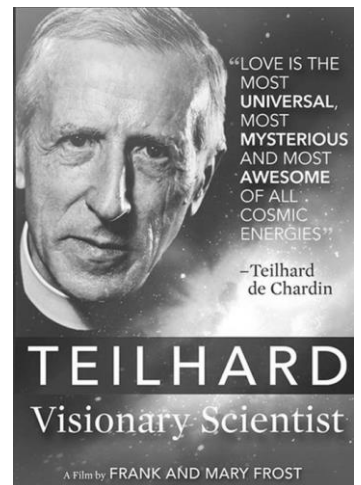
This is a wonderful collection of his latest work and reflects Jim's spirituality and passion for social justice. The photos by Cathy Harrison and Maria Fresia are illustrative brilliant images. This book would make an ideal Christmas present.

article it would get by the robotic censors.

The prison is a fortress. Women are locked down for 21-22 hours daily. There is no programming. Women with many issues including trauma and so on, locked up alone all day long. It doesn't seem like a good solution to me. But we are hearing about Gaza peace vigils from all over the world. That's exciting.

Thanks for writing – peace,

Susan Crane



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Mass on the Altar of the World

‘Since once again, Lord, I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself beyond these symbols, up to the real majesty of the Real itself. I will make the whole earth my altar and on it I will offer you all the labours and sufferings of the world. I will place on my paten, O God, the harvest to be won by this renewal of labour. Into my chalice I will pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this day from the earth’s fruits.’

—Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*