The
Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor
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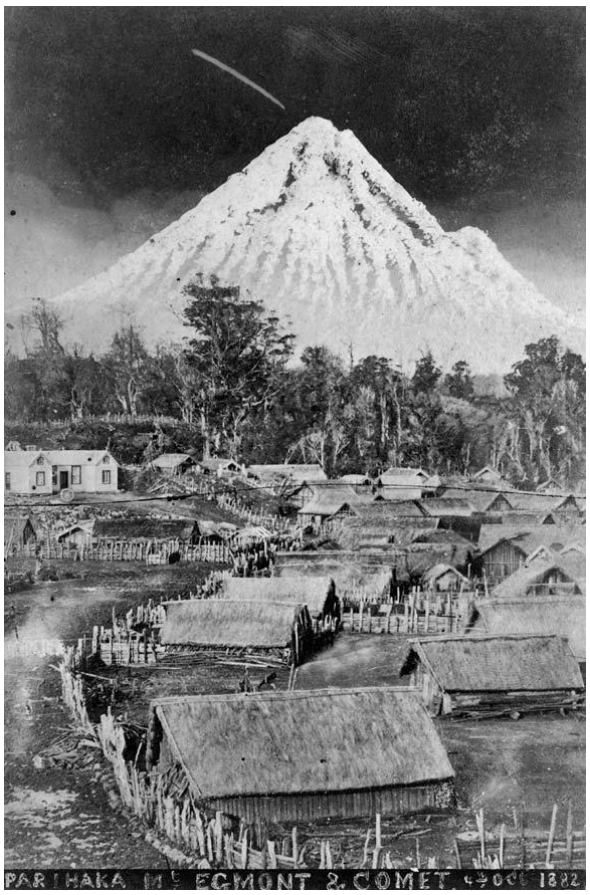
NZ's Legacy of Peace

Alistair Reece

These are troubled times. Local and global tensions are rising, and political rhetoric has become more divisive and vindictive. As experience teaches us, extremist rhetoric and even violence can be contagious. The question is whether this growing unease must inevitably lead to social and political violence, or whether there is another path we might choose — one rooted in the deeper wisdom of this land.



***Parihaka, Mt Egmont & Comet*. TS Muir, Oct 1882**

Remembering our Past

The American theologian Walter Brueggeman once wrote that if we hope to imagine a world beyond empire, we must look into 'the deepest memories' of our own community and activate the symbols that have always been the basis for contradicting the prevailing consciousness.

Parihaka was a small Taranaki village led by the prophets Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi, whose teachings of non-violent resistance inspired generations. Their message was simple and radical: Whai kororia ki te Atua, Maungārongo ki te whenua, Whakaaro pai ki ngā tangata katoa - Glory to God, Peace on earth, Goodwill to all.

In other words, the symbols of hope that we need are already here — in the stories, metaphors, and histories of this land. Fortunately, in this regard, Aotearoa New Zealand has a rich historical well for us to draw from.

As November 5, the anniversary of the invasion of Parihaka, reminds us, non-violent peaceful protest is rooted deep within this nation's whakapapa. It's important that the current push to restore our historical memory reflects this important aspect of our inheritance.

As a nation, we memorialise our response to conflict in a variety of ways. Waitangi is one of these. Anzac is another. We also now commemorate the New Zealand Wars on October 28, through *Te Pūtake o Te Riri, He Rā Maumahara*. (*The source of the anger, A Day of Remembrance*).

In 2016, when then deputy PM Bill English announced the establishment of Rā Maumahara – after much lobbying, including a 2015 petition organised by Ōtorahanga College students – he said the day recognised 'the need to acknowledge our own conflicts, our own wars, our own fallen.' October 28 was chosen because it's also the anniversary of the signing of He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni — the Declaration of Independence of New Zealand, 1835.

On November 5, 1881, Native Minister John Bryce led 1600 troops into the pā. They were met not with weapons but with singing children — Ngā Tātarakihi, 'the little crickets' — offering bread. In the days that followed, homes were destroyed, men imprisoned without trial, and women assaulted. Yet, through it all, the people of Parihaka held fast to peace.

But not all agreed with the choice. Some, including the late Ngāpuhi kaumātua Kingi Taurua, felt it overshadowed the Declaration of Independence itself. Others, like Ngāti Hine leader Pita Tipene, saw it as an opportunity to awaken the national conscience. As Te Puni Kōkiri put it: 'Te Pūtake of Te Riri is the messenger whose task is to awaken the memory and conscience of a sleeping nation.'

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 two houses of hospitality in Christchurch named after Suzanne Aubert 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

Commemorations are now held at battle sites around the country — places like Ōrākau, Rangiriri, and Gate Pā — each telling part of the story of resistance and loss. Remembering these conflicts matters. It grounds us in the hard truth that Aotearoa's prosperity was built on Māori dispossession.

But, as some at Parihaka point out, there was also another response to colonial violence — one that pointed to a peaceful future.

Remembering Parihaka

Parihaka was a small Taranaki village led by the prophets Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi, whose teachings of non-violent resistance inspired generations. Their message was simple and radical: Whai kororia ki te Atua, Maungārongo ki te whenua, Whakaaro pai ki ngā tangata katoa - Glory to God, Peace on earth, Goodwill to all.

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At a recent hui to discuss November 5 as a Parihaka commemoration day, Parihaka resident kuia Whakaarahia Tairāwhiti-Kukutai said: 'Our children shouldn't be left sitting in October 28, but understand also that there was another response to the colonial violence.'

The philosophy of passive resistance, led here at Parihaka, is a history that precedes Gandhi's first non-violent civil disobedience campaign in South Africa by a quarter of a century, and Martin Luther King's first campaign for black civil rights by 75 years — but who knows of it here in New Zealand?

For her, as for many at Parihaka, divine intervention protected the village from even greater loss. Stories still circulate of a dog urinating on a militia cannon, rendering it useless — a small miracle that's now remembered in carvings at Waahi Pā Marae in Huntly.

Among the descendants of Parihaka's faithful was Dame Tariana Turia, whose leadership in the Māori Party carried the same quiet conviction as her tūpuna. While she is rightly remembered for her courageous stand for mana motuhake, little has

been said about her deep connection to Parihaka's kaupapa of peace.

Tariana believed the nation needed to know about Parihaka, and in 2011, she introduced a private member's bill, Te Rā o Parihaka Bill, to make November 5 a national day of commemoration. She wrote:

This is a very important tono to Parliament — a request for Parliament to recognise 5 November as Parihaka Day to commemorate the peaceful resolution of conflict in New Zealand. This is one part of a long-standing campaign, to raise public awareness of the ongoing legacy of two visionary leaders Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi — and the symbol of peace associated with their name and the small Taranaki settlement of Parihaka . . .

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Throughout the illegal arrests and imprisonment, Te Whiti commanded that the ploughers should resist arrest and violence passively, saying: 'Go, put your hands to the plough. Look not back. If any come with guns, be not afraid. If they smite you, smite not in return. If they rend you, be not discouraged. Another will take up the good work.' Throughout this long, bitter invasion on the people, the spirit of non-violence prevailed.

The bill remains in the parliamentary ballot today and is now sponsored by Green Party co-leader Marama Davidson.

A tradition of peaceful resistance

The peaceful resistance seen at Parihaka didn't appear out of nowhere. It was part of a longer Māori tradition of a prophetic, spiritual response to injustice. Some might point to the ethos of non-retaliation practised by Moriori on Rekohu (Chatham Islands). But I would argue that, on the mainland, it began with the indigenisation of the Christian Gospel by charismatic leaders such as Te Ua Haumene, the Taranaki prophet who founded the Pai Mārire or Hau Hau movement.

The Kīngitanga drew on that same spirit. Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, before his coronation in 1858, advised his son Tāwhiao to go to Taranakai and seek wisdom from two enlightened men, believed to be Tohu and Te Whiti.

In this time of heightened tension, when inflammatory rhetoric and political polarisation threaten to erode trust and goodwill, it's good to be reminded that the trajectory of our historical resistance, especially in the late 19th century, was towards non-violence. Honouring Parihaka on November 5 would help us to remember and nurture that tradition.

From Taranaki, the pacifist ethos permeated through te ao Māori and continued through the 19th and 20th centuries — through leaders like Tītokowaru, Te Kooti Arikirangi, Te Puea Hērangi, and Wiremu Rātana, to name a few. In more recent times, we've seen it in movements at Takaparawhau (Bastion Point), Pākaitore (Moutoa Gardens), Waitangi, and Ihumātao. Each carried elements of that same moral vision: To stand firm without hatred, to resist without violence.

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Indeed, some people have suggested that October 28 and November 5 are natural bookends. Rā Maumahara reminds us of the cost of injustice. Parihaka reminds us of the possibility of peace. As Kīngi Tāwhiao once said: 'Ki te kore te whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi.' Without a prophetic vision, the people will suffer.

There will always be those who try to sow fear and division here, but visionary leadership that draws on the nation's historical soil could inspire a new generation and help to manoeuvre us through these fractious times.

Dr Alistair Reese is a Pākehā theologian and historian with a particular focus on social reconciliation, seeking to strengthen the relationship between Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa. He is also a farmer in the district of Tapuika, Bay of Plenty.

Editorial 1 Blessed are the Peacemakers

For 36 years, the Catholic Worker has been planting the seeds of non-violent direct action for justice and peace among people in Aotearoa. So it was with a certain amount of pride and great joy that we greeted the news that one of our young Catholic Worker whanau, Samuel Leason, aged 18, was one of three Kiwis aboard the first flotilla trying to get aid into Gaza in the final days before the truce in early October.

He was one of more than 400 peacemakers from around the world intercepted illegally within international waters by the Israeli military, arrested, detained for several days and finally deported out of the war-zone area. The Israeli war machine was having none of this interference into their genocidal operations in Gaza.

Nor was the New Zealand government. Flying on the coattails of the Trump Administration, they lambasted the flotilla people as troublemakers, who, according to Foreign Minister Winston Peters, 'should pay their own fares home.' Which they did.

Few if any believe anything that the Israel or the US Governments say these days in relation to their war intentions. They treat the rest of the world as imbeciles with no brains or intelligent thinking. The worldwide corporate media is their propaganda machine despite still having many journalists of integrity writing for it. The golden calf of big money rules.

Sam Leason comes from a large CW community in Otaki and was raised in a family of nine by CW parents, Adrian and Shelley Leason, on their small farm. Adi has been an activist for generations and as he proudly told the *Sunday Star-Times* (19 Oct), 'it seems the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.' More than a decade ago in 2008, along with CWs Sam Land and Peter Murnane OP, he did a Ploughshares disarmament action at the Waihopai spy base outside of Blenheim. They were arrested, charged, tried and acquitted of all charges, using the 'moral necessity' or' greater good defence' successfully at a week-long jury trial.

The Leason farm provides living space for between 30 – 40 people, many of them homeless or unwell. Shelley is the power behind the throne and holds it all together, Adi its more public face and a creative lifeforce to be reckoned with. He is also a teacher and has been helping his students build tiny houses at school to take home with them at term's end. Talk about creative teaching! As he told the newspaper, 'We belong to a weird little community called the Catholic Worker. It was founded in the 1930s by Dorothy Day in New York city. It is now a worldwide network of farms and homes that are open to people who need them. That's our life and it is both wonderful and crazy.'

'The flotilla was an expression of sublime madness. But that rich deep feel for humanity for someone you will never meet is the essence of what human kindness really is. That is what loving your neighbour is really all about.'

In a world dominated by the principalities and powers the scriptures warn us about, to see young people challenging them non-violently head-on is enough to warm any heart open to justice, peace and love.

To watch this action of such committed people ready to put their bodies on the line in the face of Israeli genocidal aggression is both humbling and heartwarming.

—Jim Consedine

Editorial 2 Lest We Forget

Eighty years ago, Europe was liberated from the scourge of Nazism by Allied Forces. This liberation included the closure of the two largest concentration camps in occupied Poland, Auschwitz and Birkenau.

These camps had become the sites of mass murder on an industrial scale. Over 1.1 million people, most of them Jews, were murdered there between 1941 – 45. Victims had been transferred in overcrowded trains, often after being deceived into believing they were beings relocated. Upon arrival, most were immediately selected for death and sent to death chambers disguised as showers. Their bodies were later burned in crematoria. Tens of thousands were later forced into slave labour, starvation, disease and brutal medical experiments.

Auschwitz – Birkenhau stands today as memorials, reminding the world of the horrors of genocide and the vital importance of remembering history to prevent such atrocities happening again. But do we ever learn?

I remember vividly, on a cold snowy afternoon, visiting Auschwitz 20 years ago with a Polish friend. There was virtually no one else visiting the camp that day because of the weather. After a tour of the camp and having seen the now quiet ovens, we took the opportunity to rest upon a bunk and celebrate the Eucharist in one of the dormitories where 60 years earlier, hundreds had spent their last days before

extermination. It was a deeply moving and sobering time as we remembered both the victims and perpetrators of this barbaric behaviour. We prayed, never again in our time!

With genocide happening again in Gaza and an horrific similar situation unfolding in Sudan, we ask, what has the world learned from history? One thing we have learned is the desire for power and subjugation and control is as alive and well as ever, that racism never sleeps. It simply takes on new forms using the same basic rationale. We have learned again that with modern more sophisticated weaponry seemingly readily available, greater numbers than ever are dying. And we have confirmed that major weapons manufacturers have no conscience and believe only in making money from whomever.

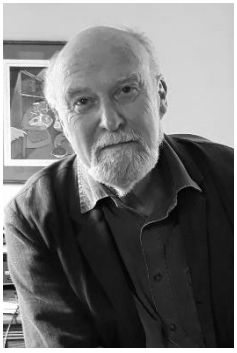
This tells us that demonic evil never rests and is just as alive and active in our time as it has ever been. It tells us that the message of Jesus of love, justice and liberation is more needed now than ever. If only Christians actually believed this and lived it.

Many do, of course, and shine line like stars in the darkness of our murky times. But too many pay only lip service to their faith, to the teachings of the Gospels and to the non-violent Jesus, whom they profess to follow.

—Jim Consedine

Genocide by Starvation

Ian Linden



Protests from authoritative sources at the horror in Gaza are growing. A number of professors in genocide and holocaust studies, a handful Jewish, are now condemning as genocide the conduct of Netanyahu's government and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). There has been reluctance to do so. The majority have not come to this conclusion.

The memory of the Holocaust plays a unique role in Jewish and Western consciousness. It became a constitutive element of Zionism, a rationale for the State of Israel's policies towards Palestinians. There has been disbelief that a State, treated by the West as its outpost in the Middle East, could countenance and undertake ethnic cleansing using methods accused of being genocidal.

A high legal bar

The legal bar for genocide in international law, beyond war crimes and crimes against humanity, is very high: clear intention, no other plausible explanation for actions whose sole purpose is Genocide.

The 15 July *New York Times* carries an essay by Dr Omer Bartov, an Israeli-American Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brown University, Rhode Island. Professor Bartov was a Company commander in the 1973 Yom Kippur war. Brown University is amongst the top ten, Ivy League, universities in the USA. He describes how he came to the 'inescapable conclusion' that 'Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians'. He cannot be dismissed off-hand.

Bartov expresses concern for the future of Israel and the Palestinians and fears wider consequences of what is now happening in Gaza and the West Bank for the 'culture of Holocaust commemoration and the politics of memory, education, and scholarship'. He emphasises the importance of Holocaust museums as 'models for the representations of other genocides'. This reminded me of moving encounters between Holocaust survivors and survivors of the Rwandan genocide in the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, Beth Shalom, near Laxton in Nottinghamshire, a centre founded by two Christians. Bartov fears that the Holocaust, because of manipulation by the Jewish State, will lose its universal importance for humanity and become an ethnically 'specific pre-occupation'. Such worries do not seem out of place.

Not just Putin's war in Ukraine but Netanyahu's destruction and killing in Gaza, their spurious explanations, are normalizing the abandonment by States of moral restraints in war and the weakening of respect for international law. Attacks on the UN, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the sanctioning of their officials, are authoritarian tactics.

In the UK

The UK is not immune to the zeitgeist. The recent proscription of Palestine Action under the 2000 Terrorism Act raised eyebrows as well as questions. The legality of proscription is determined by judges. No jury who might, as in past cases, acquit for criminal damage needed. No national consensus on the matter. And protest against the proscription is de facto criminalized with many arrests, with

implications for any organisations whose members take to the streets or undertake direct action for a cause.

Severe damage to property meant to ' influence government' or 'intimidate', falls within the expansive scope of the Act designed to protect national security. Palestine Action activists allegedly used a converted fire-extinguisher to spray red paint onto the turbines of two Voyager refuelling aircraft at an estimated cost of £7 million. A judge decided this fell under the 2000 Act. But the obvious threat is the failure of security at RAF Brize Norton whose management should be called to account.

Israel's sophisticated propaganda and lobbying by AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) have contributed to Western governments' failure to curb the IDF's conduct. And American policy positions knock on to allies such as the UK, Australia and to a lesser degree the EU. Germany for understandable reasons has been highly supportive of Israel though France, and UK Foreign Minister, David Lammy, have been willing to go beyond asserting Israel's right to self-defence to roundly condemning IDF's actions. As antisemitic incidents increase nationally, popular protest is closely monitored for hate speech. Whilst the language and tone of Western governments' support for Israel has shifted markedly, American military support notably has not been withdrawn.

Christian leaders respond

Until recently Christian leaders' reactions to Israel's actions, with the exception of the World Council of Churches, were mainly limited to encouraging reconciliation whilst expressing compassion for the people of Gaza. Jon Sobrino, the Basque Jesuit theologian, in the 1980s called Salvadorians a 'crucified people'. On 22 July Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, echoed his religious language: 'He [Christ] is there crucified in the wounded, buried under the rubble and yet present in every act of mercy'. After a tank shell hit Holy Family Church in Gaza causing three deaths and several injuries, Pope Leo called again for an end to the 'barbarity of this war'.

The respected Catholic weekly, *The Tablet,* published a detailed article denouncing the IDF and Israeli government by peace negotiator and former priest, Oliver McTernan (5 July). But its title *Israel's Existential Choice* played into Israel's propaganda that it is fighting for its very existence. The Hamas massacre of 7 October was a barbarous response to repression but neither the belligerent nor less bellicose wings of Hamas represent, if the words have any meaning, an existential threat to Israel. The IDF, with its US military support, could and did reduce Gaza to rubble and successfully waged war on multiple fronts: in Lebanon, Yemen, Iran and Syria.

McTernan touched on the deliberate starvation of Palestinians trapped in Gaza 'while we argue over the niceties of whether or not it is right to use the word 'genocide'. Understandable frustration, but in international law States have to intervene to prevent Genocide. Hence President Bill Clinton's careful avoidance of the term during the Rwandan Genocide.

On 15 July at the General Synod in UK, Anglican Archbishop Hosam Naoum of Jerusalem described the US-Israeli Humanitarian Foundation's four feeding centres, open one hour a day, deathtraps for the hungry, as reminiscent of the Hunger Games movies. Hundreds of well-run UN distribution points around the besieged territory were banned by Israel. Gangs now steal food deliveries.

In December 2023, the South African government filed an 'Application of the Convention of the Prevention of Genocide' in the UN's Hague International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel - strongly supported by civil society groups. The International Criminal Court (ICC) later issued warrants for the arrest of Netanyahu, Yoav Gallant, Minister of Defence, and a Hamas Commander, Mohammad Deif. The UK says it would do so despite strident opposition from the USA which is not a member. And on 23 July, a Brussels court ordered the Flemish authorities to block components for Merkava tanks being shipped from Antwerp to Israel and banned further such exports - four NGOs filed the case.

Naming the horrors

Bloggers only have words at their disposal carrying at best the modest might of reason and emotion. Two lines taken from a South African poet, Umar Willis, come to mind. 'Let the skies belong to the birds again. Not to the metal wings of death'.

Naming the horrors in Gaza raises several questions: of language, morality, justice and law. Notwithstanding, States appalled at further 'unacceptable' or 'intolerable' acts must urgently impose more effective sanctions on Israel. Hard-won restraints on the savagery of war, and much more, is at stake.

Professor Ian Linden is Visiting Professor at St Mary's University, Strawberry Hill, London. A past director of the Catholic Institute for International Relations, he was awarded a CMG for his work for human rights in 2000.

Around the Traps

Homelessness in NZ rises – One in every 1000 people in New Zealand lives without shelter, according to the latest Salvation Army report. The report highlights other alarming trends, including 14 in every 1000 people live in housing considered uninhabitable and that 57 000 women are experiencing homelessness. The survey involved frontline housing and homelessness organisations from across the country.

The Press, 31 July 2025

The Common Good – As you will see from this edition, Jim has recovered enough from his hospital surgery to return to editing this edition. He has had to shift to Nazareth House, a retirement home in Christchurch run by the Sisters of Nazareth, into which he has now happily settled. He is in good heart, though somewhat frailer, still able to get about and is still regularly present at the CW liturgy on a Wednesday night. His postal address is P O Box, 33135, Christchurch 8244, ph 022 0300248.

Head buried in bank vault – 'This climate change is the greatest con job ever perpetuated on the world in my opinion. All these predictions made by the United Nations and many others, often for bad reasons, were wrong. They were made by stupid people that have cost their countries fortunes and given those same countries no chance for success. If you don't get away from this green scam, your country is going to fail. '

—Donald Trump speaking to UN General Asssembly, 23 September 2025

Gaza genocide condemned – Two prominent Israeli human rights organisations have released reports concluding their government's actions in the Gaza Strip amounted to genocide. B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights – Israel said they analysed Israels conduct in Gaza and the rhetoric of Israeli political and military leaders and concluded there had been deliberate intent by Israeli decision makers to target the whole population of Gaza, rather than strictly combatants. Their stated aim was to destroy life for the Palestinian people and the enclave's health and civilian infrastructure as part of a 21-month campaign. 'With a heavy heart, we state this is genocide,' they conclude.

The Press, 31 July 2025

the mystery of life

a recent funeral
following 60 fruitful years
teaching in the classroom
a principal, sports coach
lover of the poor
senior member of her Order
a life well lived
by any standard

these past eight years
growing dementia
everything blocked out
vacant, no response

what means such suffering?
a question of huge proportion
buried deep within
the mystery of God
not showing itself clearly
leaving me wondering

—Jim Consedine

A Bitter Taste to Chocolate –Tearfund NZ, which is campaigning to have modern slavery laws introduced into NZ, has called 'child labour the chocolate industry's worst kept secret.' Their best estimate is that 1.5 million children were engaged in child labour on cocoa farms in West Africa. 'There is child labour in your chocolate, every piece you eat,' Professor John Dumay told a recent forum on modern slavery held in Auckland.

Sunday-Star Times, 16 November 2025

Michael French, a long-time benefactor and supporter of the Catholic Worker and *The Common Good,* died 15 May 2025, aged 80, after a lengthy illness. Mike served as our pro-bono legal advisor for three decades and was a frequent presence at the mail-out. At his huge funeral at Sacred Heart Church, Addington, Jim described him as 'a man with a huge heart bursting with love, compassion and a strong sense of justice.' Thank you, Mike, for being one of us for so long. RIP.

Summer nights and scarcity

Dorothy Day

23 August 1940.

In summer it is hard. Everybody goes away on vacations and those who can't go away are sending others away. Students have finished paying expenses for one year and are looking forward to paying expenses for another year at school. Nobody has any money, especially those who want to help, who are the most generous.

I don't know how we could make out if it were not for the free vegetables we are getting this summer. Free rolls and cakes too. We go on paying for our coffee, sugar and milk, and a great supply of bread, 250 pounds a day. And of course we have to buy meat. Once in a while we can get a supply of fish from the Fulton Market, a barrelful at a time, and then the cleaning takes place in the back yard, and if it is fish with roe in it we fry up the roe and there is an afternoon tea-party with fish-roe sandwiches, everybody prowling around like cats, licking their chops.

It is fun cleaning the fish in the courtyard between the houses. A long table is brought out and everybody who can find a knife joins in. We have to cook the entire barrelful and everyone has to eat as much as he can. It would be dangerous to keep it, as our icebox never seems to get very cold. The difficulty is to get fat to fry the fish. It takes a lot of lard to fry a barrelful. But oh, the smell while it is cooking! It is enough to reconcile one to the other smells which hang over the backyard for a few days after.

Meat is a scarcity, however. Once this summer we had a ham which a kind friend brought in. And even slicing it very small it was hard to make it go round to one hundred and twenty-five people. None of the fellows who were cooking in the kitchen had any. I came up at the tail end of the dinner. Stanley Vishnewsky had finished the spiritual reading, 'In the Footsteps of Saint Francis,' and was sitting down to a meatless plate. The boys had saved a piece for me and there was applesauce and mashed potatoes besides. Oblivious to Stanley's lack I was digging in with great enjoyment.

It is incidents like this that break your heart, sometimes. There is never enough food to go around. The pots are always being scraped so clean it is a wonder the enamel doesn't come off. There never is anything in the Electrolux ice box we bought for fifty dollars from the baker around the corner, five dollars down and five dollars once in a while. He gives us a lot of free bread and rolls, too.

Meals are so important. The disciples knew Christ in the breaking of bread. We know Christ in each other in the breaking of bread. It is the closest we can come to each other, sitting down and eating together. It is unbelievably, poignantly intimate.

A good supper

Last night we had a very good supper. John Kernan and Duncan Chisholm have charge of the kitchen and Shorty is the sous-chef. They also have as assistants John Monaghan and Jim O'Hearn. They take charge of the lunch and dinner every day, and another staff, under Peter Clark, takes charge of the eight hundred on the bread line each morning. These hot days nobody wants anything but bread and coffee, and the bread is pumpernickel or rye, good and substantial.

I read some place, I think it was in one of these ten-cent-store children's books on 'Wheat,' that the gluten in wheat is the nearest thing to human flesh. And it was wheat that Christ chose when He left us His presence on our altars!

Lunch is always simple, a huge vegetable soup and bread. We make about twenty gallons, and it does a thorough job of heating the kitchen these broiling days.

Supper is more elaborate—sometimes we say 'dinner.' Last week, thanks to a Long Island farmer and the priest who sent him to us, we had a good vegetable supper—potatoes, beets, carrots, cabbage. We had to buy the potatoes off him at seventy-five cents a bushel, but the rest came free. By Sunday we had run out of cabbage and carrots so we had potatoes and beets. As it was Sunday, we had got fifteen pounds of chopped meat, at fifteen cents a pound, and made a meat loaf. There was a goodly amount of bread mixed with it.

Gravies

John is a genius at making gravies. I doubt the Waldorf-Astoria has better gravies than we do. It was so good a meal, and everybody was so hungry, not having eaten all day, what with the heat, that I became consumed with anxiety as to whether the food was going to stretch for all. The back court seemed to be full of men and women and there were even some children. One woman had walked all the way down from Fifteenth Street with her two-year-old to have a hot meal. Her gas and electric had been turned off and she could not cook. She is on relief and never seems to catch up, she says.

Little Billy ran around the dining room disrupting things between bites, so we moved mother and child out to the kitchen to finish their meal so the line could go on. We can't seat more than twenty-five and there have to be six sittings. I had finished early and begun hovering over the pots on the stove. John kept counting the men on the line. 'Thirty-six more to go,' he groaned as he sliced down the last of the meat loaf. Soon he was putting the scraps in the gravy and began contemplating that.

'Get me the gravy-stretcher,' he called to Shorty; and Shorty, always willing, began to scurry about the kitchen, proffering him one utensil after another. (I one day asked Shorty if he had any relatives, and he said mournfully, 'I had a mother once.')

Finally it dawned on him that it was a bit more hot water John wanted to stretch the gravy with, and he brought it. Then a bowlful of boiled potatoes was discovered and they were peeled and dumped into the frying-pans. John believes in having things nice.

'Eighteen left to go,' Monaghan said as he leaned out the window and looked. And then suddenly five more women, from the Salvation Army hotel on Rivington Street, came in and threw our calculations out again. (Women are always served first and the men step to one side to let them get by.)

'Eight more coming up,' and by this time the mashed potatoes were gone and fried potatoes were being dished up. Thank God there was still plenty of good gravy, and there were some chunks of meat in it too. Not a speck came back on the plates. They were all wiped clean with bits of bread.

And then the last one was served, and there was exactly one helping left! The dishes were being done as we went along, the pots were all cleaned, and there remained only the tables to swab off and the kitchen and dining room to sweep, and we were done.

The one helping was put away in the icebox (and Julia came in around ten and had not eaten since lunch); and then everyone went out of the hot house to the street, where all the neighbours sit in rows along the house-fronts and along the curb and there are card games going on all the long evening.

Outside the kitchen

Down the street the children had turned on a fire hydrant and flung a barrel over it, a headless barrel, and the water cascaded into the air thirty feet like a fountain. The sound was pleasant and so were the cheers of the children as they rushed through the deluge. Little boys paddled 'boats' in the rushing curb-streams. Shopkeepers deflected the water onto their sidewalks and began sweeping, and mothers moved their baby carriages out of the flood. All the little children got their feet soaked.

Down the street came a singer with his accordion and the happy sound of Italian love songs accompanied the rushing sound of our sudden city streams.

John and Jim of the kitchen sat and rested and there was a look of happy content on their faces. They are both jobless and are volunteers in the work of our Catholic Worker community; there is war in the world and they are faced with conscription and little else in the way of security for the future. But it was a fine happy evening and it had been a very good meal.

Dorothy Day is a cofounder of the Catholic Worker, the author of The Long Loneliness and hundreds of newspaper articles and essays. Her cause is currently being considered for beatification.

Reviews

Once I settled into retirement at Nazareth Care in Christchurch, I suddenly had unexpected spare time on my hands enabling me to watch a few good movies and read more.

In that time, I have seen two great New Zealand movies – *Pike River*, and *Prime Minister*. *Pike River* sets out in graphic detail the raw courage and tenacity shown by two remarkable women, Sonya Rockhouse and Anna Osbourne, in challenging those in power who did not want the truth exposed as to the cause of the disaster and the cover-up that followed. It stars Robyn Malcolm as Sonya and Melanie Lindsay as Anna, who both give wonderful performances. I thought this was a stunning movie highlighting tenacity, huge love and an abiding passion for justice.

Prime Minister is a surprisingly good docudrama highlighting events around the leadership of Jacinda Ardern and the events she had to lead the country through politically in her time as PM. The 2019 Christchurch mosque attack was the most difficult by far and her empathetic handling of that has inspired many around the world.

The Covid lockdowns were her biggest challenges politically, as she entered unknown territory. She showed huge courage in taking what were for many unpopular steps in closing the border and having to cope with the vitriolic onslaught of hatred both online and publicly. It all took its toll and in the end, 'the tank was empty', as she famously said announcing her retirement. Both are must-see NZ movies!

Who is my neighbour?

Peter Murnane OP

Pharmaceuticals are Australia's third largest export to the USA, after meats and metals. The narcissistic US president has recently threatened to impose a 200% tariff on these exports, trying to force medicine manufacturers to move to the USA. This move threatens the Australian system of subsidising many medications for the benefit of poorer people. In the USA, a country controlled by wealthy corporations, such subsidies, or even an effective government-run health system are condemned as 'socialism'.

Trump's threat is an example of the unjust economic structures that dominate the world. Governments and corporations extract resources such as minerals and timber from poorer nations, and minimise the wages of their own workers, funnelling profits upwards to increase their own wealth and power. Even the World Bank, a tool of the wealthiest countries, does this. When it lends to poorer, indebted countries, it demands 'structural readjustments', such as lessening their 'public spending' on social welfare systems, at the expense of their poor.

The famous story of Jesus in the gospel of Luke (Ch 10), about the 'good Samaritan' is in stark contrast to this unjust worldwide economic system. The simple story tells of a person beaten up by robbers and left lying on the road. Jesus had just answered a lawyer's question by telling him that our most important obligation is to love God and our neighbour. His story of the victim illustrates this teaching. Two people with high social standing – priest and Levite - cross the road to avoid contact with the assault victim, whereas a foreign stranger, a despised Samaritan, goes out of his way to help the distressed man.

This story is not some minor segment of Jesus teaching. Matthew's Gospel (Ch 25) puts it even more strongly in the story of the Last Judgement. Every one of us, it says, will be assessed on whether we helped people who were hungry, needed clothes; were sick or in prison.

Our worldwide capitalist financial system is clearly working in the opposite direction. It neglects the people who need our special care. In Jesus' time it was the widespread slave and peasant classes who were exploited for the comfort of the wealthy. Today it is the millions in Asian factories who produce our clothing, electronics and other 'necessities'. Even more expendable are those forced to become refugees by the wars planned by us wealthy nations to ensure that wealth continues to flow in our direction.

By an amazing selective blindness, we who are comfortably off often fail to notice that because of this system, every ten seconds a child dies of hunger somewhere in the world – about 9,000 child deaths every day. But we are continuously and deliberately distracted by trivial or distorted news pouring from the mass media, and even more now by social media.

Worse still, the churches, which should be using most of their energy and resources to criticise and change the structures which so oppress and starve the poor, almost never speak strongly about the systemic social sins which cause their daily suffering.

NZ-born Dominican friar Peter Murnane OP, a long-time supporter of the Catholic Worker, now works in Sydney among the poor.

Letters

Christchurch
August 2025

Dear Jim,

Water is essential to life. If a people is denied access to its water resources, their very survival is threatened. Rivers and aquifers do not respect borders. Access to these resources could provide opportunities for people with different cultures to know and respect each other, to share water for the benefit of all. Or they could lead to warfare. I hope the current situation in Asia, the building of a mega-dam, has positive results for all.

In the 1930s under the British Mandate, the Israeli water company Mekorot was established and given exclusive right to explore and exploit water resources. Then after the '67 war, Mekorot was given control of water resources in Gaza and in the West Bank. Mekorot provides West Bank 'settlers' with pipe-driven water. Conversely, Palestinians have to buy expensively priced water.

I'm trying to make the point that the Zionist project has always been to rid 'greater Israel' of Palestinians. One of the tools used has been to strive to prevent Palestinians access to enough water for survival. In 2015 the UN declared that Gaza would be uninhabitable in less than 5 years, because of Israel's deliberate destruction of access to drinkable water!

Israel should have been challenged and shamed and condemned decades ago, long before the gruesome, nightmarish genocide taking place today.

Yours faithfully,
Lois Griffiths
Christchurch

2 August 2025

Select Committee,
Parliament Buildings,
Wellington

This is my personal submission on the proposed changes for the **East and South Chatham Rise (ESCR) orange roughy (ORH 3B) fishery**, which is now on the brink of collapse.

I have worked with seafarers and port workers for decades in Lyttelton. I know from personal experience how many lives depend on sustainable fishing. Like me, most port workers are concerned at the diminishing state of their fisheries.

Orange roughy are a unique, slow growing species of deep-sea fish that have been decimated by the New Zealand fishing industry and weak regulation. Orange roughy congregate on seamounts and are caught via bottom trawling. I know bottom trawling is highly destructive, wiping out orange roughy numbers and also destroying the deep-sea habitats they depend on.

I share the concerns of marine experts who are calling for a closure of this fishery so that roughy, and the habitats like seamounts, that they depend on, can recover. I support the strongest measures that will ensure orange roughy thrive.

I don't think option three - '60% catch reduction and partial closure' - goes far enough. Only closing the ESCR fishery completely, alongside a ban on bottom trawling on vulnerable seamounts and similar features, will protect orange roughy for the future.

Kind regards,
Rev Jim Consedine
Lyttelton

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

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Essential Practice

If love is the soul of Christian existence, it must be at the heart of every other Christian virtue. Thus, for example, *justice without love* is legalism; *faith without love* is ideology; *hope without love* is self-centeredness; *forgiveness without love* is self-abasement; *fortitude without love* is recklessness; *generosity without love* is extravagance; *care without love* is mere duty; *fidelity without love* is servitude. Every virtue is an expression of love. No virtue is really a virtue unless it is permeated, or informed, by love (1 Cor 13)

Fr Richard P. McBrien