

NZ Catholic

The national Catholic newspaper

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New chief executive for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Leadership coach Mena Antonio is the new chief executive/kaiwhakahaere mātua of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ms Antonio has a deep understanding of the NGO sector, including leadership in strategy, risk management, legal and financial compliance and people-management across highly regulated sectors.

Caritas board chair Keith Wedlock said that the board is excited about Ms Antonio taking the helm at Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, replacing Julianne Hickey, who served for 10 years.

“Mena has a good balance of social enterprise and social justice skillsets in governance and operational roles,” he said. “The mix of professional skills she brings to the role is complemented by a practical commitment to community-building, justice and peace. The board is confident they’ve found someone able to lead the organisation in challenging times, to lead Caritas on the next phase of its journey, and to respond in the fullness of Catholic social teaching.”

Ms Antonio becomes the first Caritas chief executive of Pasifika descent. She has been involved with Caritas in other ways, including as a board member. Her Samoan and Tokelauan heritage helped deepen connections with Oceania partners on recent Caritas assignments in Samoa and Fiji.

She said: “One memorable visit with Caritas Samoa was to Moamoa Theological College where my grandfather, from the Tokelau atoll Nukunonu, trained as a catechist. My late father, Nikolao Pali’i, was head catechist at Holy Family parish, Porirua for years. To me, this role continues the calling my parents and their parents before them heeded, to be in the service of the people we are called to serve.”

Ms Antonio has a law degree from Victoria University of Wellington, served five years in the New Zealand Army, and has 20-plus years working on and with boards and executive teams, including a time in the UK. She is well placed to bring her skills as a professional director, fundraiser, leadership coach and community engagement practitioner to lead Caritas.

A statement from Caritas noted that, in addition to her significant professional qualifications and experience, Ms Antonio believes in the value of community, and seeks to live out the principles of Catholic social teaching. She founded a charity in Masterton, bringing together leaders and teen parents through a mentoring programme aiming to build equitable and diverse communities. Her ability to create leadership events engaging some of New Zealand’s celebrated and innovative speakers has attracted significant funding support for teen parents and their children.



Mena Antonio

“Engaging the voices of women and children is critical to good decision-making to ensure all people flourish. I want to enhance this work in Caritas,” she said.

In all endeavours, she leans on the Scripture Joshua 1:9 — “Have not I commanded you? Be strong, vigorous and courageous. Be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Ms Antonio is a member of the St Patrick’s Wairarapa parish, where she and her husband Richard have raised their two daughters.

On the front cover: Icon of Mother of God and child. 17th century. See Icon exhibition story page 20.

NZCatholic

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Wellington Catholic Centre is quake-prone

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Wellington archdiocese has been advised that The Catholic Centre in Hill Street near Parliament is a seismic risk.

A newsletter from Cardinal John Dew on March 10 stated that the archdiocese was notified in February that the Catholic Centre was rated at 20 per cent of New Building Standard. A compliance rate of less than 34 per cent classifies the building as earthquake-prone under the Building Act 2004.

A peer review of the engineer’s report was expected in mid-March. The centre was initially closed for two weeks.

“The ability for staff to access the Catholic Centre had been inhibited anyway because of the protest action at Parliament,” Cardinal Dew said in the newsletter.

“As soon as we know if we have to evacuate the centre permanently we will advise everyone, in the meantime work continues from homes and makeshift offices,” he added.

“I thank the staff again for the ways they have generously adapted to new ways of working. Everyone is doing all they can so that the mission of the Church continues with as few interruptions as possible.”

NZ Catholic understands that the peer review arrived at the same conclusion as the original report.

Among the organisations that normally work in the Catholic Centre is the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference executive and the New Zealand Catholic Education Office.

A facebook post from NZCEO on March 7 stated that it has been indicated that the building is potentially unsafe.

“Given the situation, NZCEO staff will work from home, and this is likely to continue for at least the next four weeks. We are committed to continuing to provide an effective level of service for APIS and the Catholic state-integrated education sector.”

A notice on Wellington archdiocese’s facebook page on March 24 stated that the Catholic Centre was currently closed after a detailed seismic assessment indicated that the building would perform poorly in the event of a major earthquake.

The temporary office spaces for archdiocese teams that are normally based in the Catholic Centre were at several venues.

At St Peter and Paul’s Presbytery, Lower Hutt are the Church Mission team (Young Church, Family Ministries, Marriage Ministries, Parish Coordinator, Samoan Chaplaincy, Launch Out, Church Mission Director).

At Cardinal McKeefry School, Wilton, are the Catholic Schools Education Services (CSES) team and the finance team.

At Viard House are Cardinal John Dew’s team and Office of the General Manager.

All contact details remain the same with phone numbers being diverted to the new office spaces.

St Dominic’s Catholic College
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- Mia Hepburn and Reihana Knight in Yr 13, enviro leaders for 2022.
- Auditions for High School Musical underway
- Netball season has begun.

www.stdoms.ac.nz

Church land proposed as social and community housing site

by MICHAEL OTTO

The Catholic Parish of Whanganui and Palmerston North diocese have been carrying out consultation on a proposal to use 1.7ha of Church land for a \$40-\$50 million social and community housing project.

According to documents on the Catholic Parish of Whanganui website, it is proposed to use the site of Holy Family Church in Tawhero St, and an underutilised school field of St Marcellin School, for affordable social and community housing, which would reportedly see an estimated 86 dwellings built.

The development would reportedly be made up of 75 public housing units of two, three and four bedrooms, and 11 market housing units.

The project would see the parish and diocese working with developers Soho Group, in a joint venture company which would enter a long-term lease with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The parish's contribution to the project would be the land, currently valued at \$1.7million, with the parish retaining this capital in the development, being inflation-adjusted over time. The rest of the funding would come from the diocese and Soho Group.

The joint venture would receive market rent for the duration of the lease term, likely to be 25 years, but tenants would only be charged an affordable rent. This would enable the parish to be able to pay its debt within about five years, and to be in a position to maintain assets without external help. The current income of the parish is insufficient to support three churches in Whanganui, a parish meeting on February 17 was told.

"To ensure that the parish has a viable future,



An artist's depiction of the proposed development

the biggest and central church in the town, St Mary's, will need significant regular income for major maintenance in the future, which has presently been deferred," the meeting was told. The city now has three Mass centres, which are five to ten minutes apart, and congregations have become more mobile.

Another factor is that the parish has received considerable support from the Diocesan Needy Parish Fund for many years. This fund will likely not be available in the future due to diocesan deficits, the meeting was informed.

The development requires the removal of Holy Family church for the use of housing and roading access. All removable items from Holy Family church would be used in other parts of the Whanganui parish, and the parish would keep Holy Family presbytery for the use of the parish priest, as it is the only presbytery owned by the parish.

In response to questions put at the February 17 meeting, assurances were given about adequate green space still being available for students at St Marcellin School, given current numbers. Assurances were also given about the relocation of a deceased person's ashes buried at Holy Family church, at no expense to families involved.

The project would also provide a social good in helping to address homelessness and the housing shortage.

Parish priest Fr Vaughan Leslie told *NZ Catholic* that the development "is an amazing opportunity for the parish and diocese, especially as it will enable us, not only to plan for the future, but also help benefit those in our community who are unable to access affordable and healthy rental accommodation".

"Reaction has been mixed," Fr Leslie said, "but largely supportive, however, change is never easy, and we need to be sensitive to this while also being realistic about being sustainable.

Fr Leslie noted that, in late March, it was planned that the parish finance committee would hold a listening session, along with diocesan representatives, for people who have made submissions regarding the proposal.

If the proposal gets approval at parish finance committee, diocesan and episcopal/apostolic administrator levels, work on the development could start in early 2023. Submissions were invited from parishioners to the finance committee last month.

The joint venture company would also need the approval of the Holy See.

Commission glad restrictions eased not removed

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Wellington Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission responded on March 15 to an anonymous February 28 open letter, which had called on the New Zealand Catholic bishops to advocate for removal of mandates and restrictions related to Covid-19. The commission stated that it absolutely believes that the first two weeks of March were an inappropriate time for calling for reducing protection for the most vulnerable.

At the end of March, the commission noted that the current relaxation of Government-led mandates and restrictions is based on the latest public health advice, and so the commission members are comfortable that the bishops continue to be guided by this public health advice. "We are glad that restrictions have been eased, rather than being removed entirely," the commissions stated.

However, the commission added that it is concerned that passing the Omicron peak in Auckland does not mean that pandemic is over, particularly for those parts of the country just experiencing a rise in cases such as the South Island.

"We are also concerned that vulnerable members of our parishes, communities, workplaces and neighbourhoods will be left to bear the responsibility for excluding themselves from situations they regard as unsafe for their health, rather than our continuing to make collective decisions based on the common good of all. While some people may feel able to return to Mass, we are aware of others [who] feel unable to continue attending Mass.

"We also mourn the loss of loved and valuable members of our communities, with daily deaths still at a heartbreaking level."

Bishops welcome Covid restrictions easing

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Catholic bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand are relieved that the use of vaccine passes is ending, and that the restricted numbers of people allowed at Mass will be eased in time for Easter.

The Government announced on March 23 that the limit of 100 allowed with a vaccine pass at gatherings, including faith-based gatherings such as Mass, would double to 200 from 11.59pm on March 25.

Masks must still be worn indoors, but people will no longer have to scan QR codes. Vaccine passes would not be required from 11.59pm on April 4.

Until the latter date, the number of people allowed at a Mass without a vaccine-pass requirement remained at 25.

"It is really welcome that these restrictions are being eased in the middle of Lent and with Easter just over three weeks away," said the Bishop of Auckland, Bishop Stephen Lowe, Secretary of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference.

"While the bishops supported vaccine passes and similar restrictions when they were introduced last November, we said our support was based on the pandemic emergency as it was at

the time," said Bishop Lowe.

"We are well aware of the toll the emergency measures have taken, with many people experiencing serious and at times unforeseen hardships. With medical experts now telling us the Omicron wave is peaking and starting to reduce in some places, it is good to see some of these restrictions coming to an end.

"However, this is not yet life as normal. We know that the virus will continue to have an impact on the way we celebrate in our churches for a while yet. We need to remain cautious, and continue to wear masks and practise social distancing. And we will need to avoid certain ways of celebrating rituals that might make it easier for infections to spread."

On April 4, the Prime Minister signalled that the next review of the traffic light setting would take place on April 14, which is Holy Thursday.

Bishop Lowe said that he wished "to express the bishops' deep gratitude to the front-line workers and essential workers who have done so much to get our country through this pandemic so far, as well as to the Catholic Church's own ministers and faithful for the sacrifices they have willingly taken on for the sake of the most vulnerable people in society".

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NZCEO in collaboration with Gallagher

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Leading security manufacturer, Gallagher, has entered into a long-term collaborative agreement with the New Zealand Catholic Education Office (NZCEO) as a major sponsor, to help support and promote the aspirations of future generations within the Catholic and wider integrated schools' sector that NZCEO serves.

"Gallagher is a renowned global innovator and one of New Zealand's largest manufacturers of security solutions," said Brad Small, Gallagher's regional sales manager for New Zealand and The Pacific Islands.

"We have protected schools across New Zealand for more than 20 years with solutions to keep staff, students, and assets safe, and we're extremely proud to announce our partnership with NZCEO."

The state integrated sector represents 93,500 students across 334 schools, and makes up 11.3 per cent of the total student population of Aotearoa New Zealand.

"Gallagher has always been committed to building enduring partnerships with the communities we work in around the globe. We're proud of our partnerships with several sporting, arts, and community events, and a large percentage of our sponsorship dollar supports the Waikato, where our company was born, and our global Head Office is located," Mr Small said.

"We're thrilled to be starting this partnership with NZCEO, so we can support schools across the country, and protect the next generation of Kiwis. Our purpose is to protect what matters most. What could matter more than providing a safe, secure, and efficient learning environment for the next generation of New Zealanders to become great adults? That's why we've partnered with NZCEO, because we know we can make a difference. Everyone at Gallagher is committed to a better tomorrow."

As part of the sponsorship, Gallagher will work with members of NZCEO to understand the security and property needs of their schools, and provide guidance on the wider benefits of a security system beyond just opening and closing doors.

Work will involve helping members create operational efficiencies, better utilise facilities, and streamline the access of students, staff, and visitors.

"NZCEO has enjoyed getting to know the staff at Gallagher Security, and the strong value system that guides their business endeavours is something that has attracted us to this partnership," said NZCEO chief executive Dr Kevin Shore.

"The security and safety of students, staff and volunteers, and the effective use of facilities, is an area of growing emphasis for school leadership and governance in our New Zealand schools, and the innovative



Dr Kevin Shore

products that Gallagher Security has developed to meet the needs of the diversity of schools is impressive," Dr Shore said.

"Our state-integrated schools have much to benefit from these products, and NZCEO welcomes Gallagher Security to our special community," he said.

Mr Small said that Gallagher has been looking for meaningful ways to get involved with schools across the country for more than a year.

"While we can't sponsor every school individually, as much as we would love to, this partnership helps

us make a difference on a large scale — and supporting the next generation is something we're committed to as a team," Mr Shore said.

"Last year we supported the New Zealand Security Association with their mission of raising awareness for security as a career pathway, and ultimately removing the security skills shortage in New Zealand, which has been put under further strain amidst the Covid-19 pandemic."

The New Zealand Security Association used a funding grant from the Ministry of Education to run security career events at 10 lower decile schools throughout the country.

The visits were coordinated with school career advisors, and people from the industry attended and shared their career experience. Members of Gallagher's New Zealand sales team attended half of the events.

"We're trusted to protect over 13,000 customers, in more than 130 countries. Our solutions are used worldwide, from utilities and civil infrastructure through to government and prisons, so imagine what we can do for New Zealand schools," Mr Small said.

"If all we do is improve how long it takes schools to complete fire drills, so that children can get back into the classroom faster, it'll be a job well done. I'm sure we can do much better than that though!"

New Catholic website created as a 'welcome mat'

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

A new Catholic website has been created as a "welcome mat", taking the depth and richness of the Church's teachings to everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially non-Catholics.

The website — www.catholicdiscovery.nz — is the work of the Catholic Enquiry Centre, which traditionally used booklets and postal correspondence to reach people interested in the Church.

Catholic Enquiry Centre Pastoral Director, Fr Neil Vaney, SM, said that the website takes a new direction in communicating with

non-Catholics.

"The digital age has seen us adapt some of our approaches," Fr Vaney said. "Our traditional booklets are still popular, but modern audiences are hungry for interactive content. We also know that people are looking for spiritual guidance. We have been careful with what we communicate in the website and the language we use. It's not us just simply saying, this is who we are — we want to better highlight the peace, comfort and sense of truth that faith brings."

The Catholic Discovery website offers information, motivation and prayers for different audiences looking at choices in faith. It presents videos, podcasts, pages and links that offer an introduction to Catholicism.

Catholic Enquiry Centre engagement manager

Joe Serci said that the website offers easy-to-access information, with short articles in plain English.

"Catholic Discovery is a welcome mat to the Church," he said. "The aim is to provide interesting insights on a variety of topics. People are encouraged to contact the Catholic Enquiry Centre should they want more details, and to have an initial discussion on Catholicism."

"Globally, the Catholic Church is increasing its focus on digital communication. We know we need to develop and share content that shows the depth and richness we bring as a community."

Mr Serci invited people to visit the new website, adding that the CDC's library of articles, videos and podcasts is being added to.

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Government needs to address crises

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

In a submission earlier this year on the Government's Budget Policy Statement, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand told Parliament's Finance and Expenditure Committee to listen to local and most-affected communities to tackle ongoing crises in housing, climate change and underlying inequality that worsen outcomes for the poor.

Inequality had only increased under the Covid crisis, said Caritas, and both short-term and long-term measures were required to deal with this and the housing crisis.

More particular and localised approaches were required following principles of subsidiarity — decision-making at the most appropriate level — and participation by the people most directly affected.

Addressing the long-standing housing crisis in New Zealand, Caritas advocacy advisor on social issues Joanna Viernes said, "We need more initiatives, public and private, to build more affordable homes of different types to suit different

needs; as well as measures to ensure good use of existing stock." She also called for the "fundamental and cross-cutting right of safe, affordable shelter" to be more widely recognised in the Government's range of wellbeing objectives.



Photo: Markus Spiske on Unsplash

Caritas said that increased climate funding signalled by the Government to address the climate emergency needed to be accountable to both taxpayers and communities most in need.

"Assessment of impact needs to be based on criteria relevant to local communities," said Martin de Jong, Caritas' advocacy advisor on the environment. A similar approach is required for allocating funds, both at home and abroad, such as "clear transparency over projects, and mechanisms to ensure participation by local communities to identify needs and plan solutions, and be involved in implementation and monitoring for impacts".

In conclusion, Ms Viernes drew on Caritas' own experience in tailoring new monitoring and evaluation processes to use local and indigenous indicators that better serve the communities they work with.

Quoting Pope Francis, Ms Viernes said, "Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature."



Staff and students enjoy lunch at the new site

People still seek answers to life's deepest questions

by ROWENA OREJANA

Theology is the pursuit of answers to “the deepest questions of faith and life”, but also “at its best, an intimate conversation with Jesus”.

Auckland Auxiliary Bishop Michael Gielen stressed these points in his homily at the inaugural Mass for 2022 for Te Kupenga — Catholic Theological College on February 25.

Bishop Gielen said that the world today “is awash in uncertainty”, and people are seeking answers to life’s questions.

“They are looking for truth, for authentic witnesses, for sound reasoning. They are looking for people who have laboured in search of the truth, for people who are willing to share the fruits of their labour,” he said.

The bishop reflected that this is

not something new, as people came to Jesus with similar questions about life and faith.

“Jesus was respected for his ability to listen to people, to allow their questions and to then respond thoughtfully. In our Gospel today, he does just that, he taught them ‘as was his custom’,” he said.

In the Gospel passage where Jesus was asked about marriage and divorce, Jesus’ response showed how faith is tied up with real life.

“Our Gospel passage reminds us, both students and teachers, of the fundamentals of studying theology. In labouring for the truth through our studies, we are challenged to explore what we believe, why we believe, and how this is related to the world we live in.

“In our Gospel scene today, Jesus is clear on the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of his belief as he addresses what

Moses taught on marriage; he also knew people — the reason the law of Moses was such was because of their hardened hearts. He understood people’s ‘real lives’, how theory doesn’t always line up with practice,” Bishop Gielen said.

The bishop recalled how his Scripture professor in Dunedin, John Brook, would stress the importance for theologians to “have their Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other”.

“Theology is not just an academic pursuit; it is human one. God speaks to us both through his Word and the world around us,” he said.

Bishop Gielen also noted how, when the crowds left after Jesus’ teaching, the disciples again questioned Jesus in the “intimacy of a house”.

“Speaking to them personally, Jesus was able to develop his teaching

on marriage. Theology is at its best an intimate conversation with Jesus in the inner sanctum of our being . . . it must be based both on sound academic investigation and a deep faith,” he said.

“Our world is questioning, it is searching for people who have been courageous enough to ask the deepest questions, people who have found the fulfilment of their search. Not just an answer, but an encounter with a person, Jesus Christ, the fulfilment of desire,” the bishop said.

CTC Dean Dr John Evangelista said that there are several significant events lined up during the year that may be of interest to the public.

This includes the College Foundation Day Mass on May 13, which will coincide with the opening and the blessing of the college’s new site, St Columba Centre, in Vermont St.

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My walk with the divine office

I returned to the Catholic church in 1991 as a cradle Catholic, who fell out of the cradle and out of the Church as a teenager. I was 26 years old, and had the good fortune to fall in with a group of dedicated and enthusiastic young Catholics through the Rejoice prayer group and the first three Hearts Aflame summer schools. After a few years, I felt that I needed more order and structure in my prayer life, rather than it being based on my subjective personal energy or preferences. So that wise director Fr Ernie Milne (who helped guide a generation of young Catholics in Auckland) introduced me to the Prayer

Michael Parker

of the Church. Father Milne kindly gave me his own large print book with the four-week cycle of morning and evening prayer, and antiphons for Sundays and the liturgical seasons. He taught me about the parts of the Office and praying the psalms, and so began my journey praying Morning Prayer (Lauds) and Evening Prayer (Vespers).

The more the praying of the Office has continued, the more it has “opened out” to wider and wider vistas. In Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book “Living Together”, he writes that “those who are praying the psalms are joining in with the prayer of Jesus Christ their intercessor”.

Then there was the transcendent writing of Fr Louis Bouyer, who wrote that, in praying the psalms, we are praying the “words of God to God”. Then Saint Paul VI, who stated that Morning and Evening Prayer were the two “hinges” of

the Office, and he encouraged laity to pray some part of the Liturgy of the Hours “according to the circumstances they find themselves”. The great teaching is that the praying of the prayer of the Church is the joining of the whole Church as the Body of Christ in offering prayer and intercession to the Father — so that no-one prays the office alone.

I had the good fortune to be introduced to the Benedictine Rule by the fathers and brothers at Arcadia monastery in NSW. Seeing the link between the vertical praise of God — “Let nothing, therefore, be put before the Work of God (RB43)”, to the horizontal interpersonal reality of a 1500-year tradition of Benedictine hospitality. Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ (RB53).

Fr Milne taught me that it does not matter what is happening in your life, but to keep turning up to the office as moments during my day, so I could consciously return to God. I think the life lesson of “keep fronting up” is a good one and, apart from around three years, this has been my pattern. I see how God protects me by these constant returns to the Prayer of the Church.

Even with these enriching teachings, I struggle to match what is in my heart with the praying of the offices. Often it is a struggle to verbalise the office, and my prayer can be in competition with other interests and desires.

I still pray morning and evening prayer daily, and try to fit in some short offices (mid-morning, midday, mid-afternoon) on the weekend. The time required is not burdensome, but it can be a burden to keep going when my natural sensibilities to prayer have withered, and all that is left is the belief that I am not praying alone.

Praying the Prayer of the Church is not a static thing — there is still much I have to do, always starting again: including formation on the psalms, to study them so over-familiarity does not dull their meaning, to discipline myself not to rush; to be more reflective, Bishop Patrick Dunn said once, to take a line, a few words that speak to us from an Office and to hold it, to ponder it as prayer food given for our spirit each day.

The verse that struck me today was from Ps 118 — “You are my God I will give thanks to you, my God, I will give you praise”. I hold it, repeat it, lose it, reread it, I reflect — an echo of what is happening to me. After 26 years of praying the Office haphazardly, with God’s help I am to pray the Office for the rest of my life — this is not a resolution, but an important realisation. A realisation that it is not my work, but somehow mysteriously I have prayed parts of the Office for over a quarter of a century.

Through seasons of pain, times of elation, through some long years of travail, fatigue, dryness, through all the pressures of life — it is as if it was not something I did, but God accomplished. When I look back on this I am ashamed that I have treated this work so poorly, often rushing, perfunctory reading with limited reflection on the meaning of passages, quickly turning to other interests after an Office, instead of trying to sustain a prayer conversation.

But this prayer on my own, which has, at times, been less what I wanted in my heart, is joined with others as part of the Body of Christ offering praise to the Father. I hope, as a lay person, to pray the Prayer of the Church for the rest of my life, knowing that I do not do this alone.

Michael Parker is a Catholic from West Auckland.

Ronald Rolheiser

When did we lose basic respect for each other?

When did we lose it? When did we lose that deeply-ingrained, forever-sanctioned sense that, however much we might disagree with each other or even dislike each other, we still need to accord each other basic courtesy, respect, and politeness?

We’ve lost that, at least for the most part. From the highest levels of government to the crassest platforms on social media, we are witnessing the death of respect, courtesy, and basic honesty. Nobody, it seems, is accountable any more for even the most basic manners or for honesty. Things we used to punish our kids for doing (name-calling, ethnic slurs, taunting, lying, and blatant disrespect of another) are now becoming acceptable in the mainstream. Even more worrisome is the fact that we feel justified morally in doing it. To be seen as courteous, respectful, and polite is no longer judged as a virtue but as a weakness. Civility has died.

What’s behind this? How did we move from Emily Post to what happens today on social media? Who gave us permission, societal and sacred, to do this?

Blaise Pascal once famously wrote that “men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from a religious conviction”. Many people quoted that passage, after the September terrorist attacks of 9/11, as they recognised this in radical Islamism where mass murder was justified and deemed as necessary in God’s name.

No doubt, it’s easier to see this in someone else because, as Jesus says, it’s easier to see the speck in your brother’s eye than the beam in your own. That same false belief that gave Islamic terrorists moral permission to bracket all the rules of decency is taking root everywhere today. Why? Religious passion for what one believes is right, and the belief that one may get ugly in the cause of truth, is prevalent everywhere today, and is giving us moral permission to become disrespectful, dishonest, and discourteous in the name of truth, goodness, and God. This justifies itself as being prophetic, as armouring us as warriors for truth.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Hatred and disrespect are always the antithesis of prophecy. A prophet, says Daniel Berrigan, makes



a vow of love, not of hatred. Like Jesus, a prophet weeps in love over any “Jerusalem” which meets his or her prophecy with hatred. A prophet never brackets the non-negotiable mandate always to be respectful and honest, no matter the cause. No cause, societal or sacred, grants one an exemption from the rules of elementary human courtesy.

Many people argue against this, pointing out that Jesus himself could be very harsh with those who opposed him. Harsh he was. Disrespectful and discourteous he was not. Moreover, underneath his challenge to those who opposed him, there was always the empathic yearning love of a parent for an alienated child, not the ugliness you see today in our government circles, in social media, and in the stare-you-down hatred we often see between various ideological factions today.

The truth can be harsh and can confront us

with a very strong challenge, but it can never be disrespectful. Disrespect is an infallible sign that one is not right, that one does not have the moral high ground and that, in this instance, one is not speaking for God, truth, and goodness. To bracket the most elementary rules of love is to be a false prophet, caught up in self-interest and self-serving truth.

It is not easy to keep one’s balance in a bitter time. The temptation to slide down the ideological roof on one side or the other and please “one’s base” seems humanly irresistible. However, irrespective of which side we slide down, right or left, there always comes with this a prescribed rhetoric, a prescribed discourtesy, a prescribed disrespect, and not infrequently a prescribed dishonesty. Along with that slide also comes the self-same righteousness of those who opposed Jesus, and believed that they were justified in being disrespectful and doing violence in God’s name.

Bitter times, a milieu of hatred and lies, and finding ourselves on opposing sides from each other, tempts us towards what comes naturally: name-calling, disrespect, lack of graciousness, and dishonesty whenever a truth or a lie serves us. Paradoxically, the challenge is in the opposite direction. Given the breakdown in civility today, the call from truth and from God is to be more careful, more scrupulous, and more uncompromising than ever in the respect, courtesy, and graciousness we accord to others.

We hope to be spending eternity with each other, dining at a single table. We do not prepare ourselves, nor those we disagree with, to take a place at that table by facing off with each other with hatred, dishonesty, disrespect, and coercion, as if that table could be taken by power and violence.

In the end, not everyone at that table will have liked each other this side of eternity, but everyone will be most gracious, respectful, and honest on the other side.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com Follow on Facebook www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser/

Teach us to number our days

We are hearing a lot about death at the moment. The horrific scenes in warzones arrive hourly in our newsfeeds. The Covid-19 updates from the Ministry of Health include a tally of daily deaths "with" the virus. We are used to hearing the grim news of road tolls after holiday breaks.

Joseph Stalin is said to have commented that "the death of one man is a tragedy, the death of millions is a statistic". Notwithstanding the cynicism behind this attributed remark, it is nonetheless true that, by and large, statistics don't provoke an emotional response, but personal stories of loss of life do.

Take the recent examples of the Enchanter maritime tragedy off Cape Reinga, and the inquest into the killing of Hannah Clarke and her three young children. The public saw the faces of those lost, and heard the stories of shock and grief from their loved ones. These accounts provoke a reaction that is more visceral than cerebral.

In Holy Week, Christians hear yet again the story of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. It is a story that has been heard many times before. By and large, people are not shocked by it. Has hearing this story become like reading a statistic about death? Are we not shocked at humanity's answer to God's offer of transformative love that was Jesus the Christ?

Maybe one reason that this story no longer shocks is that humanity generally tries to avoid thinking about death. That is not surprising. Our existence is good, and it is natural to fear death. However, there is a long tradition in the Church — which predates Christianity — of "Memento Mori", or the remembrance of death. As Psalm 90:12 states, "So teach us to number our days/

that we may get a heart of wisdom".

An article in *The Irish Catholic*

noted that French author and journalist Nicolas Diat related how he interviewed monks about their attitudes towards death and the end of life.

"The overwhelming impression they gave was that of humility in the face of death, acknowledging that they are encountering a foe that cannot be fought, only submitted to, trusting in God's mercy," the article stated.

Daughter of St Paul Sister Theresa Aletheia — a former atheist who left a job in Silicon Valley to join the order — wrote "Remember Your Death: Memento Mori Journal" as a guide for the spiritual practice of meditating on death.

She was asked by US Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor* what she thought of the notion that meditating on death is "morbid".

Her response was, "If it's morbid to meditate on death then it's morbid to face reality, to realise the truth of our sinfulness, and to accept the salvation that Jesus Christ has provided for us. If that's morbid, I am happy to be considered morbid, rather than to live life on the surface just because it can seem more comfortable".

Fr Aquinas Guilbeau, OP, professor of moral theology for the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies, said in a CNA article that meditating on death isn't something "macabre or depressing, but it's something hopeful and joyful, that this veil of tears is not the end of our existence, it's not the goal".

"If we live in the love of Jesus Christ and we live in the light of the Holy Spirit, there's constant preparation and help and grace and strength for that moment when we pass from this life to the next," he said.

Therefore, he added, for the saint, death isn't something to be feared, but welcomed and embraced like a sibling, as expressed by St Francis of Assisi, in *The Canticle of the Sun*, where he praised the Lord through "Sister Death".

As Trappist Fr Timothy Scott said in the same CNA article, "the theme of memento mori, remembrance of death, needs to be set within the larger theme of the memory or mindfulness of God".

The Habit



Letters

Ukraine

Remember Georgia, Chechnya, Syria, Crimea, eastern Ukraine (14,000 lost lives), the (Russian-backed) torture meted out to Belarusians in their quest for democracy last year, and the poisoning and jailing of Navalny. Ukraine surrendered its nuclear arsenal to Russia in a treaty (signed by Russia, UK and US) in 1994 with the assurance that it would be safe from attack.

Despite not joining NATO, Ukraine is attacked anyway. Where is the UN 2005 responsibility to protect and take collective action should peaceful means be inadequate?

The West has failed Ukraine, well-intended sanctions are inadequate to stop Putin, and one cannot negotiate with him. Putin must be given an ultimatum now to stop his genocide in Ukraine, and NATO must intervene slowly, strategically, but significantly, by firstly ensuring a no-fly zone. We cannot stand idle. Where is our humanity? Tomorrow it could be us.

Steve Lincoln,
Botany Downs,
Auckland.

Mandates

Agreed, it is concerning that there is a growing twilight of authoritarianism which has begun to cast its long shadow over the people of Aotearoa,

New Zealand" (*NZ Catholic*, March 27).

This relates to the law enabling the creation of "safe areas" banning protest near abortion facilities. Fear about human rights and the Bill of Rights was also felt during the mandates, which caused many people, including a number of Catholics, to feel under duress. Unfortunately, it also caused division in many other Christian families, and also in the wider community. A number of suspended doctors, nurses and midwives were affected as well, including *NZ Catholic* correspondent M. Andersen, who is a registered nurse. It appears that rumblings of protest were obvious months beforehand, but many New Zealand politicians were unwilling to hear the voices of those pleading to be heard.

Most New Zealanders want to close this chapter on this pandemic saga, and to heal the wounds of division, segregation and discrimination that it created. However, I feel that lessons must be learned so that they are never repeated. Peace can never be achieved by force: it can only be achieved by listening, understanding and trying to improve the future.

As Catholics we should never take the gift of our faith for granted, because in the face of adversity the consolation of Jesus' One True Church is all that we have left. Deo gratias!

E. Smith,
Waitakere City.

■ Abridged — Editor.

Women

I am writing to you about an anonymous letter titled "Women" in *NZ Catholic* (Feb. 13).

I am also a passionate Catholic woman, though probably twice the age of the writer. I live in Dunedin and, like the writer, would like to interact with Catholic women who enjoy and need serious discussion on our Church, and how it is faring in this troubled world.

If you think she may be interested, please pass on my name and address.

Kath Kenrick,
Dunedin.

Hands

Our Father in heaven, the creator of the universe, is still busy, and is present in even the smallest details of life.

I heard a story from the end of the Second World War when allied soldiers stationed in a bombed-out village were asked to help out. The villagers asked them to re-build a statue that had taken pride of place in the main square but had been blown-up.

They set about collecting the pieces of the broken statue and painstakingly putting it back together again. They found most of it, just a couple of pieces that could not be found, and they placed the completed work back in the main square, and covered it up so there could be a grand unveiling for the townsfolk.

When it was unveiled people were a bit shocked as their statue of Jesus had the hands missing.

Underneath, the soldiers who had worked on it, placed a sign which reads "I have no hands. Won't you please lend me yours?"

We are Jesus' partners in reaching out to our brothers and sisters.

Stephen Clark,
Manila,
Philippines.

■ Abridged — Editor.

God's love

I read Fr Ronald Rolheiser writing on "Trying not to make God look bad" (*NZ Catholic*, March 27) with interest. I believe God is love. We are all sinners as we need Jesus. The relationship we need is with God through his son Jesus.

Faith seeks knowledge to cancel all the misinformation and disinformation about God. God is not wrathful, but is loving to his sons and daughters seeking him with a contrite heart.

We maintain a monotheistic faith, and we strive to love God and serve others. We pray to God and we also seek pardon from God. Jesus reconciles our sinful selves with God.

During this Lenten period, we dwell on the Paschal Mystery where the passion of Christ, his crucifixion, death and Resurrection, sets us free to receive Eternal life. The death of Jesus conquers sins. Those who would follow Christ can get baptized. The Church's teachings give hope in Jesus for eternal life in God's kingdom.

Jackie Chong,
Thorndon, Wellington.

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Kiwis gather to pray for peace in Ukraine



Bishop Stephen Lowe, accompanied by Bishop Michael Gielen, gives his blessing at the icon of Our Lady at St Patrick's Cathedral



Cardinal John Dew leads prayer at St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral in Karori, Wellington

by ROWENA OREJANA

Auckland Bishop Stephen Lowe, who led a small group of worshippers in prayer at the St Patrick's Cathedral on March 25, stressed the need for "peace to take flesh" during this time as the possibility of another world war looms.

New Zealand Catholics were urged by their bishops to join Pope Francis in prayer as the Holy Father consecrated Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the same day (March 25).

"This year, the New Zealand bishops have asked us to go, not just to pray, but to come to their churches, to make a hikoi, a journey to their churches, thinking as they do . . . of the people that are making their journey to safety. Our churches should always be a place of safety and sanctuary. This is what this is about," Bishop Lowe told *NZ Catholic* after the prayer.

He said that the pilgrimage to their (parishioners') churches is really "the journey to the heart of Christ and also to the Immaculate Heart of Mary".

"It was by her Fiat that we celebrate today the feast of the Annunciation . . . that the Prince of Peace was conceived and took flesh among us. And we need once again for peace to take flesh within our humanity," Bishop Lowe added.

Bishop Lowe said this is not the

first time that the New Zealand bishops have asked this country's Catholics to go to their churches to pray in unity with other Catholics, citing the time of the 9/11 attack, as well as the more recent Christchurch mosque attack, as some of the events that Catholics were called to pray together.

"But this is . . . the Ukraine," he said, "nobody really believed we would see another war like this in Western Europe again. This is the tragedy. And nobody wants to see this descend into another world war. The Holy Father is right to be really concerned about this."

Bishop Lowe led devotees of the Divine Mercy in a 3 o'clock prayer of the rosary before the Blessed Sacrament, and then proceeded to the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary to pray the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Bishop Lowe said that they purposefully did not advertise a time for the rosary, to avoid having to impose a 100-person limit under current Covid-19 restrictions.

■ Covid

Archbishop Paul Martin, SM, was unable to attend the prayer for Ukraine on March 25, after those at the cathedral presbytery in Christchurch had to isolate when one of the priests tested positive for Covid-19. The presbytery household had to isolate for a week from March 24.

Pope consecrates Ukraine, Russia to Mary

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As Russia's invasion continued to devastate Ukraine, Pope Francis laid the fates of both countries at the feet of Mary in the hopes that peace would finally reign.

"Mother of God and our mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the Church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine," the Pope said on March 25, pronouncing the Act of Consecration after leading a Lenten penance service in St Peter's Basilica.

Praying before a statue of Mary that was loaned by the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at San Vittoriano on the outskirts of Rome, the Pope pleaded with Mary to "accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end, and peace spread throughout the world".

Sitting in front of the statue, which was placed before the steps of the main altar on a red platform and adorned with white roses, the Pope proclaimed the act of consecration. During the prayer, the Pope paused at several moments to gaze at the statue of Mary before continuing to recite the prayer.

"To you we consecrate the future of the whole human family, the needs and expectations of every people, the anxieties and hopes of the world," he prayed.

After the consecration, the Pope, accompanied by a young boy and girl, placed a bouquet of white roses at the feet of the statue. He then remained for a few moments, with eyes closed and head bowed in silent prayer, before stepping away.

According to the Vatican, an estimated 3500 people filled St Peter's Basilica, while 2000 people watched on video screens from St Peter's Square. Police asked pilgrims who entered St Peter's Basilica carrying or wearing Ukrainian flags to put them

away, since the event was a prayer service.

Among those present at the liturgy were Andrii Yurash, Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See. The consecration, he tweeted on March 25, is "another attempt (by the Pope) to defend Ukraine from the devil's war", referring to Russia's attacks on the country.

The Vatican announced on March 18 that Pope Francis also asked bishops around the world to join him in consecrating Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner, led a similar act of consecration at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal.

Bishops from around the world had announced special services to coincide with the timing of the consecration in Rome, even in the early hours of the morning.

Archbishop Georg Gänswein, private secretary of retired Pope Benedict XVI, had told reporters that the former Pope would join in the consecration from his residence.

In a video released before the liturgy, Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, major archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, said he would join in the consecration "because today we need very much the victory of good".

The consecration, Archbishop Shevchuk said, "means that it is never possible to make a deal, to cooperate with this evil that emerges from Russia today".

"And that is why we must pray for its conversion, for the eradication of that evil, 'so that it,' as the Mother of God of Fatima said, 'might not destroy other states, might not cause yet another world war.' We, as Christians, have a duty to pray for our enemies," he said.

In Rome, the bells of St Peter's



Pope Francis consecrates the world and, in particular, Ukraine and Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CNS Photo)

Basilica rang out after Pope Francis concluded the Act of Consecration.

In his homily during the Lenten penance service, the Pope acknowledged that the war in Ukraine, which "has overtaken so many people and caused suffering to all, has made each of us fearful and anxious".

While calls to "not be afraid" may soothe one's helplessness in the face of war, violence and uncertainty, the Pope said that "human reassurance is not enough".

"We need the closeness of God and the certainty of his forgiveness and, once renewed by it, Christians can also turn to Mary and present their needs and the needs of the world," he said.

Pope Francis said the Act of Consecration was "no magic formula, but a spiritual act" of trust by "children who, amid the tribulation of this cruel and senseless war that threatens our

world, turn to their mother, reposing all their fears and pain in her heart and abandoning themselves to her".

"It means placing in that pure and undefiled heart, where God is mirrored, the inestimable goods of fraternity and peace, all that we have and are, so that she, the mother whom the Lord has given us, may protect us and watch over us," the Pope said.

In his prayer, Pope Francis specifically asked Mary to be with those suffering directly because of the war.

"May your maternal touch soothe those who suffer and flee from the rain of bombs," he prayed to Mary. "May your motherly embrace comfort those forced to leave their homes and their native land. May your sorrowful heart move us to compassion, and inspire us to open our doors and to care for our brothers and sisters who are injured and cast aside."

Bonds of shared humanity shown in warzone

by ANNE BULLEY

The bonds of shared humanity have been on display among the carnage of the war in Ukraine.

Mike Seawright, the founder of ReliefAid, a New Zealand humanitarian (non-religious) aid organisation that specialises in delivering emergency aid to people affected by conflict, is in Ukraine overseeing ReliefAid's humanitarian response. Helped by networks from their work in Syria, he has quickly been able to get operational.

"We arrived two weeks ago not knowing what was going to happen, and knew nobody on the ground," he said.

"Now we have the networks in place, we are starting to deliver medical supplies, food and water, and shelter materials for people living in bomb damaged buildings."

With cities levelled, infrastructure is damaged, and there is no electricity, gas or running water. Supply chains are broken, leaving hospitals in need of medical supplies and people short of food.

As temperatures still hover around freezing, people in damaged buildings need materials to patch up their windows and doors, along with other necessities like thermal blankets, water containers and solar lamps.

One of the first people to join the ReliefAid team in Ukraine, was Rodion.

"On February 24, I woke up around 5am to the sound of explosions in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. Turning on the phone and TV, I immediately learned that the war had begun and Russia had attacked Ukraine.

"The first day was like a blur, all the people randomly tried to do something, but no one really understood what exactly should be done. By the end of the day, I decided I needed to take my family to a safe place, and we decided that it would be Lviv."

Rodion and his family are in Lviv, but not out of harm's way. There are regular air raid alerts, and bombs have fallen on the outskirts of the

city. He worries for friends in other parts of the beleaguered country.

"During this time, I have kept in touch with my friends from Kyiv and Severodonetsk, the city where I was born and grew up. They have sent me photographs of the aftermath of bomb and rocket explosions in the yards of the houses where I walked as a child, and the destruction of the houses of my friends, where I spent a lot of time. There are photos of burnt apartments that are located just 20 metres from the home of my grandmother, who is still there," said Rodion. "She is forced to hide in basements and shelters."

"Behind my house the church has been damaged. It is the largest church in the city, in which people sought shelter. It was under attack and now, even in this form, it serves as a shelter for people and volunteers."

■ Churches

Across Ukraine, churches are being used as collective centres for people who have lost their homes, and meeting places for volunteers to co-ordinate aid deliveries to those most in need. Mr Seawright said that their welcome bells provided him with a moment of quiet reflection.

"On Sunday morning in Lviv, I was walking towards the train station, where there is a constant stream of people arriving from across Ukraine, exhausted, traumatised and desperate to get their families to safety. Overnight air raid sirens gave little sleep. In stark contrast, suddenly church bells pealed out across the city and time paused as I stood and listened. It was a moment of reflection and reminder to all that, within Ukraine and across the world, people are united in praying for peace."

In Lviv, where Mr Seawright, Rodion and ReliefAid's partners are working tirelessly to deliver aid, they are bolstered by the resilience and fortitude they see around them.

"It is difficult to describe how you feel when your world is being destroyed, but the only thing I know for sure is that Ukrainians are very brave and united and, when the whole world supports us, we will overcome any difficulties" said Rodion.

While ReliefAid is on the ground in Ukraine, Mr Seawright said that there are ways to help here in New Zealand.

"Talk to your MP and advocate for a diplomatic resolution to the conflict. Donate what you can to aid organisations like ReliefAid operating within Ukraine. Ukrainians are working hard to help themselves but they can't do it without international support."

More information can be found on their website: <https://www.reliefaid.org.nz/>

For enquiries email: communications@reliefaid.org.nz



The street where Rodion's grandmother lives



Mike Seawright in Ukraine



Rodion's damaged church



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Pope apologises for treatment of Indigenous in Canada, promises to visit

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Expressing “sorrow and shame” for the complicity of Catholics in abusing Indigenous children in Canada, and helping in the attempt to erase their culture, Pope Francis pledged to address the issue more fully when he visits Canada.

“For the deplorable conduct of those members of the Catholic Church,” the Pope told Indigenous representatives on April 1, “I ask for God’s forgiveness, and I want to say to you with all my heart: I am very sorry”.

Representatives of the Métis National Council, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Assembly of First Nations, had asked Pope Francis for an apology for the Church’s role in running residential schools in Canada, but they asked that he apologise in Canada.

The Pope responded to that request as well.

Saying he was impressed by their devotion to St Anne, the grandmother of Jesus, the centrepiece of the popular Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage, scheduled this year for July 25-28, Pope Francis told them, “This year, I would like to be with you in those days.”

The Shrine of St Anne, on Lac Ste. Anne, is located in central Alberta, not far from Edmonton.

Gathered in the frescoed Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, representatives of the Métis, Inuit and First Nations shared their prayers, music, dance and gifts with the Pope.

The Pope had held separate meetings on March 28 with representatives of the Métis and Inuit, and met on March 31 with delegates from the Assembly of First Nations. They were accompanied by six Canadian bishops.

Addressing all the delegates and their supporters at the end of the week, Pope Francis recalled that several delegates compared their communities to branches, growing in different directions, buffeted by wind, but still living because they are attached to the trunk and the tree’s deep roots.

“Your tree, which bears fruit, has suffered a tragedy which you told me about in these past few days: uprooting,” he said. The normal transmission of language, culture and spirituality from one generation to the next “was broken by colonisation,

which, without respect, tore many” from their homelands, and tried to force them to adopt other ways.

Catholics could not use trying to evangelise the Indigenous as an excuse for running the schools, because “the faith cannot be transmitted in a way contrary to the faith itself”, the Pope said.

The Gospel calls Christians “to welcome, love, serve and not judge”, he said, and it is “a frightening thing” when, in the name of that faith, Christians act the opposite.

“Through your voices,” he told the delegates, “I have been able to touch with my own hands and carry within me, with great sadness in my heart, the stories of suffering, deprivation, discriminatory treatment and various forms of abuse suffered by many of you, particularly in residential schools.”

Pope Francis said it is “chilling” to think of how much thought and effort went into designing and running a system aimed at instilling “a sense of inferiority” in the students, and the attempt “to make someone lose his or her cultural identity, to sever their roots, with all the personal and social consequences that this has entailed and continues to entail: unresolved traumas that have become intergenerational traumas”.

“I feel shame — sorrow and shame — for the role that a number of Catholics, particularly those with educational responsibilities, have had in all these things that wounded you, in the abuses you suffered, and in the lack of respect shown for your identity, your culture and even your spiritual values,” he said.

Those values were on display during the meeting in the Apostolic Palace, which began with representatives offering their prayers.

First Nations Elder Fred Kelly, wearing a feathered headdress and offering a prayer in Nishnawbe and English, prayed for the gifts of “love, kindness, respect, truth, kindness and humility from the one Creator”.

Métis Elder Emile Janvier, a residential school survivor, recited his prayer in Dene-Michif, asking the Creator for healing of “the hurts of the past”, and for strength in moving forward “in forgiveness and reconciliation.”

Marty and Lizzie Angotealuk, members of the Inuit delegation, led



Kevin Scott, a First Nations dancer, performs for Pope Francis in the Vatican’s Clementine Hall (CNS Photos)



Adrian Gunner, representing the Assembly of First Nations, presents Pope Francis with snowshoes made of black ash with caribou sinew and artificial sinew

the singing of the Lord’s Prayer in Inuktitut.

■ Meetings

During the individual meetings earlier in the week, elected leaders of the groups asked Pope Francis for a formal apology for the Catholic Church’s role in suppressing their languages, cultures and spiritualities and, particularly, for the Church’s role in running many of the residential schools that were part of the Canadian government’s plan of forced assimilation, and where many children were emotionally, physically and sexually abused.

The leaders also asked Pope Francis to go to Canada to make that apology, and requested his help in getting access to more of the school records, so a full history of the schools could be written and so the children in unmarked graves could be identified.

But the major part of the private meetings with the Pope were devoted to the survivors of residential schools telling their stories.

Pope Francis thanked the delegates for “opening your hearts and for expressing the desire to walk together”, and he assured them that he brought all of their stories to his prayer.

And, he said, he looked forward to learning more about them and meeting their families when he visited their lands, but, he said, pointing to the Inuit, “I’m not going in winter”.

Thanking the Pope for agreeing to go to Canada, Bishop Raymond Poisson of Saint-Jérôme, Quebec, president of the Canadian bishops’ conference, told Pope Francis, “We are ready today to help you pack your bags!”

The recent history of the Catholic Church, he said, “is marked with the stigma of mistakes and failures to love our neighbour, in particular toward members of those nations who have been present in Canada for centuries”.

An acknowledgment of the Church’s failures makes “our desire for reconciliation” even stronger, he said. “Our presence here is a testimony to our commitment for one another and to each other.”

Pope Francis gave each delegation a bronze olive branch as a sign of peace and reconciliation, according to the Canadian bishops’ conference.

The Assembly of First Nations gave the Pope a liturgical stole, beaded with orange crosses, and a pair of snowshoes made of black ash with caribou and artificial sinew.

The Métis National Council gave him a memory book, with the stories of Métis residential school survivors and a letter from Cassidy Caron, council president.

The Inuit gave the Pope a cross carved from a baleen of a bowhead whale and riveted to a piece of sterling silver, and a pouch made from sealskin with an ivory button.

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Theologian says mercy key to understanding Pope

by ROWENA OREJANA

To understand the papacy of Pope Francis, one must look at it in the light of the Father's Divine Mercy.

This was the reflection shared by Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College moral theologian Fr Bernard Teo, CSsR, at a Zoom talk held on February 25.

Pope Francis, who celebrated his eighth anniversary as Pope on March 13, signalled his intentions to be a reformer as soon as he was appointed Pope by using the name of St Francis, according to Fr Teo.

"Never in the history of our Church had we ever had a pope by the name of Francis. I just got this gut feeling that . . . we are coming in for a wild ride with this pope," he said, explaining that St Francis was called the great reformer of his time.

Pope Francis' first act of compassion came a few weeks later when, during Maundy Thursday, he washed the feet, not of 12 cardinals, but 12 prisoners.

"His priority was to bring attention to the little people, those who are ignored or are thought of to be best left forgotten, as they are an embarrassment to establishment circles. And he intends to bring into prominent focus and into public consciousness all those who suffer in one form or another," Fr Teo said.

Fr Teo noted that Pope Francis gave strong clues about the direction where he wants to take the Church as chief pastor.

Pope Francis touched on the two main issues that the Church is grappling with: doctrinal fidelity and structural changes.

Fr Teo said the changes that the Church has seen in Vatican II had

often resulted in division from the top of the hierarchy to the pastoral communities, even extending to the families.

He said Pope Francis has called on pastors to be bold and unafraid in proclaiming the Gospel in new ways, even as we remain faithful to our traditions "with a capital T".

"He believes that the Word of God, the message of God, is a living message, capable always of reinventing itself to meet the challenges of the times," he explained.

In Pope Francis' interview with Fr Antonio Spadaro, SJ, Pope Francis said, "I dream of a Church that is a mother and shepherdess. The Church's ministers must be merciful, take responsibility for the people, and accompany them like the good Samaritan, who washes, cleans and raises up his neighbour. This is pure Gospel. God is greater than sin. The structural and organisational reforms are secondary — that is, they come afterward."

■ Debates

Fr Teo said that Pope Francis called on pastors not to be small-minded and bogged down by rules as "the dogmatic and moral teachings of the Church are not all equivalent".

"Pope Francis has shown an appreciation of the passionate and sometimes divisive debates around doctrinal orthodoxy that is still pre-occupying the Church. While these are no doubt important, he expressed the view that settling doctrinal questions alone will not touch the hearts or move the wills of the people," Fr Teo said.

"Preoccupation with these issues without proper resolution that converts hearts at the same time would



Fr Bernard Teo, CSsR
(Photo: Te Kupenga CTC)

lead to a wounded and tired Church. And this is what we are experiencing in the Church in the different parts of the world."

"In other words, how we proclaim the Gospel message is not just in doctrine, but first, the person of Christ and his message."

Fr Teo said that there is a powerful symbolism in Pope Francis' canonisation of St John XXIII, who instigated huge structural changes within the Church, and St John Paul II, who pulled back on those changes. Both were canonised on April 27, 2014.

"What is the meaning behind this? Pope Francis is giving a clear message to the Church: we need to change. It is in the nature and experience of the Church in her history to change and to evolve," Fr Teo said.

"But then, he said, not any kind of change or change for the sake of change; the change must be faithful to the tradition handed down to us."

After the canonisation of the two popes, Pope Francis declared a Year of Mercy.

"What he (Pope Francis) is doing is . . . he is going back to the very theme of what Jesus came for: it is about the love of God revealed in Christ for all people in the difficult human condition. In the person of Jesus and his work, mercy is a pure gift of grace and the message of hope, of life, of renewal and of conversion, because he was sent to bring us home to the heart of the Father who first loves us," Fr Teo said.

Following the declaration of the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis' numerous official statements and magisterial teachings consistently emphasise mercy in the face of global human suffering.

"I believe Pope Francis, by bringing back this theme of mercy, is putting the Church back on mission that is truly faithful to our Gospel mandate from Jesus Christ," he said.

Like Jesus, Fr Teo said, Pope Francis is always challenged by people.

"Like Jesus, Pope Francis' insistence on grounding mercy at the heart of the Church's message and activities, has also exposed the hearts of many believers. He (Pope Francis) asks us to raise difficult questions about who we believe God to be. I suspect that he has also exposed that, in the midst of so much belief, there is also so much unbelief in the Church," Fr Teo said.

Fr Teo said he believes Pope Francis is taking people on the right path in giving Divine Mercy the prominence it deserves.

Opening Curia posts to laity, Pope is implementing Vatican II, experts say

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A Vatican office led by a cardinal or archbishop has no more authority than one led by a layperson, because all offices of the Roman Curia act in the name of the pope, said experts presenting Pope Francis' new constitution on the Curia's organisation.

"Whoever is in charge of a dicastery or other organism of the Curia, does not have authority because of the hierarchical rank with which he is invested, but because of the power he receives from the Roman Pontiff and exercises in his name," said Jesuit Father Gianfranco Ghirlanda, the canon lawyer who helped draft the document.

The constitution, "Praedicate Evangelium" ("Preach the Gospel"), was published in Italian by the Vatican on March 19, and experts involved in its development, including Father Ghirlanda, spoke at a Vatican news conference on March 21.

The document, emphasising that the Curia supports the pope and local bishops in the Church's mission of evangelisation, said that, because every baptised Christian is called to be "a missionary disciple", the reform of the Curia also needed to "provide for the involvement of laymen and women, including in roles of governance and responsibility".

"If the prefect and the secretary of a dicastery are bishops, this must not lead to the misunderstanding that

their authority comes from the hierarchical rank they have received, as if they were acting with a power of their own and not with the vicarious power conferred on them by the Roman Pontiff," Father Ghirlanda said. "The vicarious power to carry out an office is the same, whether received by a bishop, a priest, a consecrated man or woman, or a lay man or woman."

Replacing "Pastor Bonus", St John Paul II's 1988 constitution, the new document opens the leadership of all but two offices of the Curia to laypeople: the prefect of the Supreme Court of the Apostolic Signatura, the Church's highest court; and the president of the Council for the Economy.

Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, who served as secretary of Pope Francis' international Council of Cardinals from 2013 to 2020, when much of the work on the constitution was being done, told reporters that the Pope's decision to open most leadership roles in the Curia to laity was one way in which the document attempts to put into fuller practice the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and, specifically, its focus on the dignity and responsibility of the laity.

"For me personally, Marcello Semeraro, this is something beautiful," he said. "To put at the head of a dicastery, and not only on its staff, a member of the lay faithful — this is an important fact."

Father Ghirlanda told reporters



Jesuit Father Gianfranco Ghirlanda, a canon lawyer and former rector of Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University, speaks at a news conference to present Pope Francis' document, "Praedicate Evangelium" ("Preach the Gospel"), for the reform of the Roman Curia (CNS Photo)

that, by opening Curia leadership roles to laypeople, Pope Francis clarified a matter that had been debated by canon lawyers since the Second Vatican Council. The new constitution, he said, "confirms that the power of governance in the Church does not come from the sacrament of orders, but from the canonical mission" given to the person.

"Obviously, there are and will be dicasteries where it is more suitable to have laity — for example the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, because it is a sector where they live and have more experience - and others where perhaps it is less suitable, but there is no established exclusion, just good sense."

At the same time, Father Ghirlanda said, the constitution "does not abrogate canon law" or the hierarchical structure of the Church, which, for

example, reserves the celebration of the sacraments, the office of pastor, and the judgement of other clerics, to priests and bishops.

Bishop Marco Mellino, the current secretary of the Council of Cardinals, told reporters that the idea is not simply to name laypeople to more offices, but to evaluate the needs and responsibilities of the specific dicasteries and find appropriate people to lead them.

The constitution, Cardinal Semeraro said, specifies that the choice will be based on the dicastery's "particular competence, power of governance and function".

"So, it cannot be just anyone," he said. "But I would add, this 'not just anyone' goes also for a cleric, a religious or a layperson. The fact that I'm a bishop does not mean that I can be competent in leading a dicastery."

Court approves death row prisoner's prayer request

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The US Supreme Court has ruled in favour of a Texas prisoner who wanted his pastor to pray aloud over him, and place his hands on him in the execution chamber.

Although the 8-1 decision specifically focused on the case of prisoner John Ramirez, it also will likely impact the cases of other death-row prisoners with similar requests.

Chief Justice John Roberts, who wrote the majority opinion, said: "It is possible to accommodate Ramirez's sincere religious beliefs without delaying or impeding his execution".

Ramirez — sentenced to death for the murder of a convenience store clerk in 2004 — had asked that his Southern Baptist pastor be able to lay hands on him and pray aloud with him during his execution.

When the Texas prison system rejected his request, Ramirez challenged it in court, saying the state was violating his religious beliefs.

The lower courts sided with the

state, saying the prison system has a compelling interest to keep executions safe and orderly. Then, just hours before his scheduled execution last September, the Supreme Court granted a temporary stay and agreed to hear the case, which the justices did in November.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court said that the US Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit was wrong to deny Ramirez's stay of execution, and it handed the case back to lower courts for further consideration.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who dissented, said he would have dismissed Ramirez's claim because the prisoner did not exhaust other possibilities before filing suit. He also said that tools to protect religious liberty can be "wielded abusively".

"And few have a greater incentive to do so than death-row inmates," he said.

Roberts wrote that there was reason to view Ramirez's request as sincere, noting that asking to have "his pastor lay hands on him and

pray over him during the execution" are traditional forms of religious exercise.

"There is a rich history of clerical prayer at the time of a prisoner's execution, dating back well before the founding of our nation," he added.

He also noted that he did not see how "letting the spiritual adviser stand slightly closer, reach out his arm, and touch a part of the prisoner's body well away from the site of any IV line, would meaningfully increase risk".

During oral arguments, it was not clear how the court would rule in this case, as some of the justices questioned if allowing the prisoner's request would open up other appeals or impose a safety risk.

Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St Joseph of Medaille, who is a long-time opponent of the death penalty, tweeted on March 24 that she was proud to have been part of an amicus brief siding with the prisoner.

"There was no legitimate reason for Texas to restrict these dignified,

prayerful actions in the execution chamber," she said, adding that she was glad the court agreed.

Last fall, she tweeted that she and the other spiritual advisers and former corrections officials in the brief "believe that the Texas execution protocol violates basic principles of human dignity and religious liberty".

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops, joined by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, filed an amicus brief in this case, that said the role of spiritual advisers to prisoners "is of particularly grave importance at the moment of death".

Such guidance, the brief said, is "constitutionally protected from government interference".

The bishops said that, for the state to allow Ramirez spiritual assistance, does not "render his execution a just act" or essentially give a blessing to it, adding that the state "should act with justice by sparing Ramirez's life. If it will not, it should allow him to seek the mercy of God at the moment of his death".

Nicaragua expels the Vatican ambassador

MANAGUA (CNS) — The Vatican called Nicaragua's expulsion of the Vatican ambassador "grave and unjustified", as the rift deepened between the Catholic Church and the government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

In a March 12 statement, the Vatican said the Nicaraguan government "has decided to withdraw the consent (welcome) for Archbishop Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag, apostolic nuncio to Nicaragua since 2018, imposing him to leave the country immediately after notifying him of that measure".

The statement continued, "Such an order is incomprehensible since (Archbishop Sommertag) has worked tirelessly for the good of the Church and the Nicaraguan people", which included serving as a witness in a national dialogue between the government and opposition, and working to free political prisoners.

"Convinced that this grave and unjustified decision does not reflect the sentiments of the

deeply Christian people of Nicaragua, the Holy See wishes to reaffirm its full confidence in the pontifical representative."

The expulsion of the nuncio highlights the difficulty of the Church-state relationship in Nicaragua, where the Catholic Church has sought reconciliation amid political turmoil, and come under attack for offering support to political prisoners and their families.

Ortega's government has branded Church leaders "coup mongers" and terrorists, while it suffocates civil society and stamps out all opposition. The government offered no explanation for expelling the nuncio.

The Nicaraguan newspaper *Confidencial* reported a string of incidents, suggesting difficulties in the months leading up to the expulsion.

In one example, the newspaper noted that Archbishop Sommertag flew to Rome on January 10 rather than attend Ortega's inauguration that same day. Ortega won the November 2021 election

— denounced internationally as a sham — after his main opponents were arrested and imprisoned.

The nuncio in Nicaragua traditionally has been honorarily seen as the dean of the diplomatic corps, but that designation was stripped by the government in November after Archbishop Sommertag used the term "political prisoners", according to news reports.

His role in Nicaragua was never easy, as he drew criticism from all sides. Critics of the Ortega regime expressed disappointment in him not being outspoken, a role church observers say a diplomat should not be expected to perform.

The Nicaraguan University Alliance, a student organisation, issued a statement on March 12 crediting Archbishop Sommertag with helping win the release of more than 500 political prisoners.

The alliance also credited the nuncio with helping the families of those prisoners gain access to their imprisoned loved ones, and improving the deplorable conditions in which they were held.

Pope removes Puerto Rican bishop from office

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has "relieved" Bishop Daniel Fernández Torres of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, of the pastoral care of the diocese, the Vatican announced, without providing an explanation.

The Vatican's brief announcement on March 9 added only that the Pope had asked 79-year-old Bishop Álvaro Corrada del Río, retired head of the neighbouring Diocese of Mayagüez, to serve as apostolic administrator.

Bishop Fernández, in a statement posted on the diocesan website, said, "I feel blessed to suffer persecution and slander for proclaiming the truth."

The bishop also said he had been asked to resign, but refused to do so.

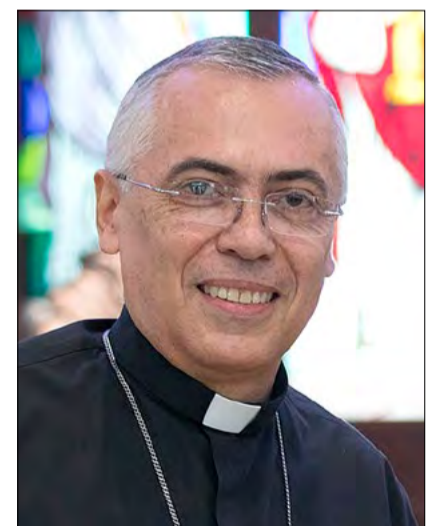
Bishop Fernández has long defended the traditional family and, publicly distancing himself from the position of the president of the Puerto Rican bishops' conference, opposed a bill that would have banned "conversion therapy" for homosexuals. But he has been best known recently for his support of people who conscientiously objected to the Covid-19 vaccine, although the Puerto Rican government required many people in health care and the public sector to be

vaccinated.

In fact, in August when the Puerto Rican bishops' conference drafted a "pastoral instruction on the moral importance" of getting the vaccine, they were forced to begin the document saying, "We, six of the seven Catholic bishops of Puerto Rico who make up the Puerto Rican episcopal conference, deem it appropriate to express ourselves collegially on a matter that, while it could have been a sign of great hope for humanity, sadly has become controversial: the issue of vaccination against Covid-19."

In his statement on March 9, Bishop Fernández told the faithful of the diocese, "It is not for me to explain to you a decision that I cannot explain to myself, although I regret it with the patience of Christ for the good of the Church".

The bishop also said, "I regret very much that, in the Church where mercy is preached so much, in practice some lack a minimum sense of justice. No process has been initiated against me, nor have I been formally accused of anything. Simply, one day the apostolic delegate (Archbishop Ghaleb Moussa Abdalla Bader) verbally communicated to me that Rome



Bishop Daniel Fernández Torres (CNS Photo)

was asking me to resign".

The Pope's action, he said, means "a successor of the apostles is now being replaced, without even undertaking what would be an obligatory canonical process to remove a parish priest".

Still, Bishop Fernández said that he reaffirmed "my communion in the Catholic faith, with the Pope and with my brothers in the episcopate, in spite of my perplexity in the face of an incomprehensible arbitrariness".

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Pope indicates he has not spoken directly to Putin

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM MALTA (CNS) — Once again, Pope Francis avoided speaking directly about Russian President Vladimir Putin and instead focused on condemning war as a cruel and inhumane act that “goes against the human spirit”.

During a conversation with journalists on April 3, on the flight from Malta to the Vatican, the Pope was asked if he had spoken to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“The things I have told to the authorities on all sides are public,” the Pope said. “I have not held back any of the things I have said.”

He also revealed that the last time he spoke to Putin was when the Russian president called to express well-wishes for the New Year.

Despite numerous reports of alleged war crimes committed by Russia, Pope Francis continued the long-held Vatican tradition of not condemning one side in a war.

Most recently, a series of photos released online showed the aftermath of atrocities committed in Ukraine, including numerous Ukrainians who were seemingly executed.

Unaware of the images before the news conference, Pope Francis said the information was further proof that “war is a cruelty”.

“It is the spirit of Cain,” the Pope said. “I am willing to do everything that must be done, and the Holy See, the diplomatic side, is doing everything. We cannot make public everything that we do, but we are” doing

all that can be done.”

While reiterating that a possible trip to Ukraine was “on the table”, the Pope said it remained uncertain.

“I say with all sincerity I would like to go. The willingness is always there, there isn’t a ‘no,’” he said. “If it can be done, I must do it. This is all up in the air.”

However, Pope Francis told journalists that a meeting with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill is in the works.

“We are thinking of doing it in the Middle East,” the Pope said.

Pope Francis also addressed concerns about his health. During his visit in Malta, the Pope was seen walking slowly due to leg pain, and often would remain seated while riding in

his popemobile.

“My health is a bit capricious,” the Pope said. “I have this problem with my knee, that creates problems in terms of walking. But it is getting better.”

The Pope has suffered for several years from sciatica which, according to the Mayo Clinic, can cause sharp pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from the lower back through the hips and down each leg.

In 2020, the Pope did not preside over the end-of-the-year prayer service or the New Year’s Mass in St Peter’s Basilica due to sciatica.

“We’ll see if it (knee) goes back” to normal, he said. “But we don’t know how the game will end.”

Meeting migrants, Pope warns civilisation risks being ‘shipwrecked’

HAL FAR, Malta (CNS) — Saying civilisation itself risks foundering because of apathy and selfishness, Pope Francis insisted that migrants and refugees must be treated with care and kindness and recognised as brothers and sisters.

In the shipwrecks that lead to thousands of migrants drowning in the Mediterranean each year, “we see another kind of shipwreck taking place: the shipwreck of civilization, which threatens not only migrants but us all”, the Pope said on April 3 at a meeting with about 200 migrants at the John XXIII Peace Lab in Hal Far in Malta.

Imagine, he said, “that those same people we see on crowded boats or adrift in the sea, on our televisions or in the newspapers, could be any one of us, or our sons or daughters”.

“Perhaps at this very moment, while we are here, there are boats heading northward across the sea,” he said. “Let us pray for these brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives at sea in search of hope.”

The day before the meeting, the Pope said, there was the report of a rescue of four migrants off the coast of Libya. More than 90 people were reportedly on the boat; only four did not drown.

The Pope spoke after listening to two migrants describe in harrowing detail how they finally made it to Malta.

In his talk Pope Francis asked, “How can we save ourselves from this shipwreck which risks sinking the ship of our civilisation?”

The answer, he said, is “by conducting ourselves with kindness and humanity”, and by regarding people not as statistics, but as “what they really are: people, men and women, brothers and sisters, each with his or her own life story.”

The Acts of the Apostles says that when St Paul was shipwrecked on Malta, he and his fellow passengers “were treated with ‘unusual kindness.’ Not merely with kindness, but with rare humanity, a special care and concern that St Luke wished to immortalise”.

“Let us respond to the challenge of migrants and refugees with kindness and humanity,” the Pope said. “Let us light fires of fraternity around which people can warm themselves, rise again and rediscover hope. Let us strengthen the fabric of social friendship and the culture of encounter, starting from places such as this.”

Earlier in his visit to Malta from April 2-3, Pope Francis said that the Mediterranean nation’s great spiritual and pastoral traditions must serve as a road map to the future for the Catholic Church, rather than a relic commemorated with “received traditions, solemn celebrations, popular festivals and powerful and emotional moments”.

“We need a faith built upon and constantly renewed in the personal encounter with Christ, in daily listening to his word, in active participation in the life of the Church and in authentic popular piety,” the Pope said on April 2 at a prayer service outside the Ta’ Pinu National Shrine. “The crisis of faith, apathy in religious practice, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic, and indifference shown by many young people toward the presence of God; these are not issues that we should ‘sugarcoat’, thinking that, all things considered, a certain religious spirit still endures,” he said.

The Church, he said, should “be centred on witness and not certain religious customs” and should also go out and proclaim the Gospel rather than “be a closed circle”.

ue of love was also shown in “not making the other person an object, not using him or her or humiliating him or her”.

Cardinal Marx added: “LGBTQ+ people are part of creation and loved by God, and we are called upon to stand against discrimination.” He also said, “Those who threaten homosexuals and anyone else with hell have understood nothing.”

At Mass celebrating the 20th anniversary of “queer services” in Munich, the cardinal had apologised for “discrimination”. He promoted an “inclusive Church”.



Pope Francis departs by catamaran for Gozo from the Grand Harbour in Valletta, Malta, on April 2 (CNS photo)

German cardinal calls for change

HAMBURG, Germany (CNS) — Munich Cardinal Reinhard Marx has called for a change in Catholic teaching on homosexuality, reported the German Catholic news agency KNA.

“The catechism is not set in stone. One may also question what it says,” Cardinal Marx told the weekly magazine Stern in an interview published on March 31.

“Homosexuality is not a sin. It corresponds to a Christian attitude when two people, regardless of gender, stand up for each other, in joy and sorrow,” he said. The val-

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The struggle of endometriosis

by MINA AMSO

It can take an average of up to nine years and five doctor visits before a formal endometriosis diagnosis could be made for a woman in Aotearoa, a recent national study has found.

The study, which looked at 800 participants, the largest of its kind in New Zealand, has revealed that women's quality of life is severely impacted due to endometriosis, coupled with a delay in diagnosis. Women's education, career, sex life, whānau relationships and mental health are among most affected.

Pukekohe resident and St Patrick's parishioner Shannon Hadrup knew the pain of endometriosis.

"For me, the pain was right up there. It would be to the point at times where it was so bad, I'd feel like I did want to pass out or I did want to faint. Or I'd come over with a cold sweat and the shakes because the pain was so great."

Endometriosis symptoms began during Ms Hadrup's late teens. Now a mother of three, she clearly recalls her journey. It started with usual period pain, which she said needed extra pain relief. But, as the condition progressed, a lot of the symptoms from which she suffered were more bowel- and intestine-related.

"I had a lot of bloating, diarrhoea, and constipation, which led me to go and see a GP. Then I went through various procedures to try and get to the [cause] of it and find out why I was having those sorts of symptoms."

The tests couldn't find anything conclusive, and doctors diagnosed Ms Hadrup with irritable bowel syndrome [IBS], which seemed to be the only possible diagnosis at the time. She would endure endometriosis pain for the next five years, before it was properly diagnosed.

"Endometriosis and associated

pelvic pain are often dismissed or not taken seriously," said Dr Mike Armour, senior author of the study and a senior research fellow in reproductive health at NICM Health Research Institute, Western Sydney University.

"We know that diagnostic delay for endometriosis in Aotearoa is reducing over time, attributed to a combination of improving menstrual health education via programmes like the menstrual education (meTM) programme in schools, more advocacy, and greater awareness by health professionals — but swift access to appropriate healthcare support is crucial."

Currently, women suffering from endometriosis symptoms are waiting around two years before being fully diagnosed.

■ What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis is an often painful disorder in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of the uterus — the endometrium — grows outside the uterus. Endometriosis most commonly involves the ovaries, fallopian tubes, the tissue lining the pelvis and the intestines.

Ms Hadrup felt that there was more to it than IBS. The medications would treat diarrhoea and constipation, and it helped a bit, but she felt that the symptoms would go on for months on end, and she believed there was more behind it.

"I was eating really well and I was following a really healthy diet and I didn't feel like I should still be getting these symptoms, because I was trying to adhere to the irritable bowel syndrome guidelines."

"It was more than just pain. It was a feeling of awful discomfort that you just did not feel right in your stomach and abdomen area; it's a feeling that many women with endometriosis attest to."

The pain and discomfort kept



Shannon Hadrup

going. Ms Hadrup, 41, said that the doctor she was seeing at the time told her that they did all the tests they could and there was nothing more to find out. It was then that she changed doctors and things started to change.

"The [new doctor] had just been doing some reading on endometriosis which was really timely for me." Having read all her medical notes, the new doctor decided to refer Hadrup to Fertility Associates at Ascot Hospital.

The specialists and doctors there told Ms Hadrup that the only way to diagnose endometriosis was to have laparoscopic surgery, a procedure in which the surgeon gains access to the stomach through the belly button, without having to create a large incision in the skin.

She was told she may wake up after surgery having the endometriosis [if any] removed. This was long awaited good news for Ms Hadrup.

"That was quite a lot of information to take in. That the surgery is

not just about going and investigating, but they could actually end up removing endometriosis if they find it. So, you had to give consent for all these things to happen. I had really just had enough of struggling with what I felt was something else, so I said yeah let's do it, let's sign up for the surgery," she recalled.

She remembers waking up from surgery that day and sensing something was different. Something was removed. She felt bandages on her body, and thought "whatever the cause of discomfort and bother has finally been removed". She knew that they found something and that her recovery had begun.

"Most people might be thinking 'oh no this means it's endometriosis'. But I felt relieved that finally I've got a diagnosis and now I can move on," she said. The doctors found endometriosis tissues in her stomach. She later recovered from her first surgery, had another surgery and has recovered since from her symptoms.

Deborah Bush, Endometriosis New Zealand founder, pelvic pain coach and consultant, said that one in ten women in New Zealand suffer from endometriosis, and more needs to be done to mitigate their suffering.

"We strongly encourage healthcare practitioners, policy-makers and health services to take urgent action," Ms Bush said. "Implementing the 'Clinical Pathway for the treatment and Management of Endometriosis in New Zealand', launched in 2020, is one clear way to immediately improve health outcomes for all those living with endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain."

Ms Hadrup's journey of living with endometriosis led her to pursue further studies in naturopathic medicine, in the hope of helping other women going through the same condition. She now homeschools her children while studying and working part-time.

Family Matters

Helen Luxford



Time for self in families. Do we need to take "time out"?

In busy family life and parenting, it is easy to feel like you've lost yourself. We spend our whole lives focused on the kids, but what do we want and what do we need? The role of a parent is to self-sacrifice, put your needs second to that of your children and spouse and the family unit. The kids sometimes say "I don't want to", for example, when asked to empty the dishwasher — and I could easily reflect on how many things I don't want to do but I do them without really questioning it for the vocation of motherhood.

There is lot around about self-care at the moment. That you have to fill your own cup to be able to attend to others. A bit like the airline safety video showing that, as an adult, you have to put your own oxygen on first before you put on your children's. If you lose oxygen, then you are not going to be any good to anyone. The same is true if we don't get enough sleep, eat well enough,

keep fit and feed our souls, then we won't be able to look after our family.

When the children were at a Catholic primary school, and I had lots of maternity leave, I used to find it pretty easy to access weekday Mass. The kids had a monthly school Mass and, when you have three kids at school, that is three weeks a month with class Masses to go to! There was always the opportunity to pop in to church to pray after dropping off the children or before picking them up. I would relish those quiet times of prayer and food for the soul. With the children at a state school, I definitely find that church and prayer time less accessible.

Catching the train to work, I would often say the rosary, and with driving to work mostly now during Covid, I've noted that is a prayer time I have missed. I have tried podcasts of the rosary, but it's not the same — I can't hold the rosary beads and attend to

the rosary in the same way when I'm driving. I find now that the occasional time I get out for a walk by myself has become rosary prayer time for me.

To fill my bucket as an introvert, I need quiet time, alone time. Reading a book, sitting outside in the sun, going for a walk, doing some exercise. For the last 12 years of mothering, I have seen these things as luxuries and privileges, and not things I needed to help me be a good calm mother. I have come to see that making sure I get quiet prayer and reflection time, reading a book time or exercise, is actually really vital to keep me balanced and calm. Fitting these things in with all the demands of family life is definitely challenging.

I haven't been on a retreat for far too long. The last live-in retreat I went to myself was a silent retreat at the Tyburn Monastery and it was wonderful. It was pre-children and I still recall it as such a blessed and

deeply spiritual weekend. We have tried to organise one of us to go on retreat, but they have never worked out. I feel we need to make this a priority for each of us to go on one in the next 12 months. We have done a Marriage Encounter, which was a profoundly beautiful weekend, and I highly recommend that to any married couple, irrespective of your age and stage in life.

Be making time for ourselves, and making our needs a priority, including our spiritual and prayer lives, we can be an example to our children to help ensure they remain balanced and focused on the holy and sustaining aspects of life.

Psalm 46:10: "He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God'".

Helen Luxford is a physician, working part-time. She is a parishioner of St Michael's, Remuera. Together with her husband Michael, they are raising their children in the Catholic Faith and reflecting on the challenges and joys that brings.

British comedy at its best

by NEVIL GIBSON

In the years following World War II, British audiences flocked to a series of comedies that lifted spirits to offset the travails of peacetime austerity.

They had also tired of wartime propaganda and morale-boosting messages that had little to do with improving their lives.

The Ealing Studios in West London became synonymous with plucky heroes who challenged authority, be it not reporting a boatload of whisky that washed up on a remote Scottish island (*Whisky Galore!*, 1949) or the citizens of Pimlico in London declaring themselves part of Burgundy, and therefore no longer subject to British tax (*Passport to Pimlico*, also 1949).

Often some ingenious dose of illegality was involved — such as a gold bullion heist in which the bullion is smuggled in souvenir Eiffel Towers (*The Lavender Hill Mob*, 1951) — or an inventor's fabric that resists wear and stain is suppressed by vested interests (*The Man in the White Suit*, 1951).

A less well-known one is *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (1953) in which volunteers take over their local passenger train service, against the opposition of a bus company, to prevent a government-decreed closure.

Big name actors added to these comedies' appeal, such as Alec Guinness, Stanley Holloway, and Joan Greenwood. Later, Peter Sellers took this eccentric humour to extremes in *The Mouse That Roared* and *I'm All Right, Jack* (both 1959).

Other attempts to revive the Ealing ethos did not fare so well. More ideologically minded directors Kenneth Loach and Mike Leigh supplanted the battler-against-the-system comedy with heavy-handed social justice messaging, while some remakes



Jim Broadbent stars in the movie *The Duke*

Movie Review

lacked modern relevance.

The Duke (Transmission) is a far more successful effort, and the last by South African-born director Roger Michell, who made his name with *Notting Hill* (1999) and who died last year, aged 65.

The plot is taken from a long-forgotten crime committed in 1961 — the theft of Goya's painting of the *Duke of Wellington* from the National Gallery as a protest against the BBC's broadcasting fee.

Newcastle-based campaigner Kempton Bunton (Jim Broadbent) had long objected to the fee, saying he only watched commercial television. When he obtained the stolen portrait, he hid it at his terrace home, hoping to force the government, with the support of the *Daily Mirror* newspaper, to spend the reward money on free licences.

It's a slick and witty production, from the script by Richard Bean (*One Man, Two Guvnors*)

and Clive Coleman, to the reliable acting of screen veterans Broadbent, and Helen Mirren, who plays his exasperated, but loyal wife. The supporting cast is also excellent.

The humour is abetted by Bunton's literary aspirations to be a playwright — he bombards the BBC with scripts that are "more Chekov than Shakespeare", and pens doggerel in anonymous letters to the Home Secretary, "Rab" Butler (Richard McCabe), who exclaims, "The man's a bloody poet! Perhaps we can lock up W.H. Auden at last!"

Although Bunton is eventually caught, and put on trial, the outcome is an expression of faith that the ordinary citizen, through the jury system, can triumph through the judicious use of legal loopholes and an Oxford-educated barrister (Matthew Goode).

Rating: Mature audiences. 96 minutes.

CLIPS

Diana's Wedding (*Dianas Bryllup*) (Limelight)

This is a curtain-raiser for the Scandi Film Festival, 10 movies from the Nordic lands of the "nearly perfect people" screening in five centres from April 21-May 1. Middle-class Norwegian parents (Marie Blokhus and Pal Sverre Hagen) get married on July 29, 1981, the same day as Princess Diana and Prince Charles. Director and co-writer Charlotte Blom draws parallels as well as contrasts over the next 40 years. The Norwegians bicker so much it eventually drives their daughter, also called Diana, out of the house, and even threatens her decision on whether to get married. But miraculously the parents remain together, which isn't the case with their close neighbours, who also have a daughter of Diana's age. This is a family comedy with hard-edged comment on the wider effects of argumentative parents. Rating: Restricted to audiences over 13. 88 minutes.

It Snows in Benidorm (*Nieva en Benidorm*) (Rialto Distribution)

Spanish writer-director Isabel Coixet is on her home territory, though her best work is set in America (*Elegy*, *Learning to Drive*) or Britain (*The Bookshop*). She is not enamoured of Benidorm's evolution from a quiet seaside town, that in the 1950s attracted the poet Sylvia Plath, to a tawdry imitation of Las Vegas, catering to binge-drinking British holidaymakers. The plot, while having thriller potential, wanders in the same dozed state as Timothy Spall looking for his missing brother. The locals are equally charmless as Spall's mission widens to include a nightclub performer, failed property developments, corrupt police, and unpaid debts. Spall's character doesn't make it easier by speaking little Spanish, but expecting everyone to speak English, making his task futile, as well as giving the audience little respite. Rating: Mature audiences. 117 minutes.

Deep Water (Amazon Studios)

British director Adrian Lyne, now in his 80s, is best known for his flashy, adult movies such as the remake of *Lolita*, *Indecent Proposal*, *9 ½ Weeks*, and *Fatal Attraction*, made in the 1980s and 1990s. His last movie, *Unfaithful*, was 20 years ago, so his choice of a 1957 Patricia Highsmith thriller, first adapted in France in 1981, is sadly astray of the times. (It has also been nine years in the making.) The plot concerns a rich husband (Ben Affleck), who tolerates his wife's affairs, until he doesn't, with murderous consequences. French law once made such murders permissible, and the culprits often got away with it. But in modern-day Louisiana that's unlikely, and Affleck doesn't convince otherwise. Neither does his wife (Ana de Armas), whose parental behaviour makes the Norwegians mentioned above look like angels. Covid-19 dashed Lyne's hopes of a big screen release, while fans of Highsmith's novels, which include *The Talented Mr Ripley* and *Strangers on a Train*, will be upset by the mystifying change to the ending. Amazon rating: R18. 115 minutes.

Life of Jesus has fascinated filmmakers for decades

JESUS CHRIST MOVIE STAR by Phil Hall. BearManor Media (Orlando, Florida, 2021). 163 pp., US\$22. Reviewed by NANCY ROBERTS (CNS)

The life story of Jesus Christ has fascinated filmmakers for more than 100 years. It's not surprising that more movies have been made about Jesus than about any other subject, but the variation among these portrayals is stunning.

We see the classic, miracle-performing Son of God in epics such as "The Greatest Story Ever Told" (1965) with its all-star cast of Max von Sydow as Jesus and Charlton Heston as John the Baptist. This film achieved success as "an intellectual epic that carefully unfolded the power of Jesus' ministry", writes the author of "Jesus Christ Movie Star", Phil Hall.

At the other end of the spectrum is the snarky microbudget satire, "The Divine Mr. J.," released in 1974. The universally panned film portrays Jesus as "a cigarette-smoking womaniser who consults with an astrologer and gives in to his mother's demands to turn water into wine for her personal consumption".

The movie only saw a very brief

light of day because it featured 10 minutes of the young Bette Midler as the Virgin Mary, Hall notes.

This highly informative and entertaining book spans both decades and international locales, starting with cinema's pioneering days in the late 1890s in France, Bohemia, Australia and the United States.

These earliest Jesus-centric films, which Hall calls "gruellingly primitive" by modern standards, were astonishing to audiences of the late 19th century.

The next major advance was the creation of Jesus-centric feature films, starting with 1912's "From the Manger to the Cross".

Hall writes engagingly, giving many interesting details about the films he discusses. We learn that the producers of "From the Manger to the Cross" used local rural people as extras, and that to portray the divine infant, they relied on the baby of a traveling Western couple.

Another strength of the book is its inclusion of film history context. Until the 1960s, Hall writes, "the cinema depiction of Jesus followed a consistent standard: the

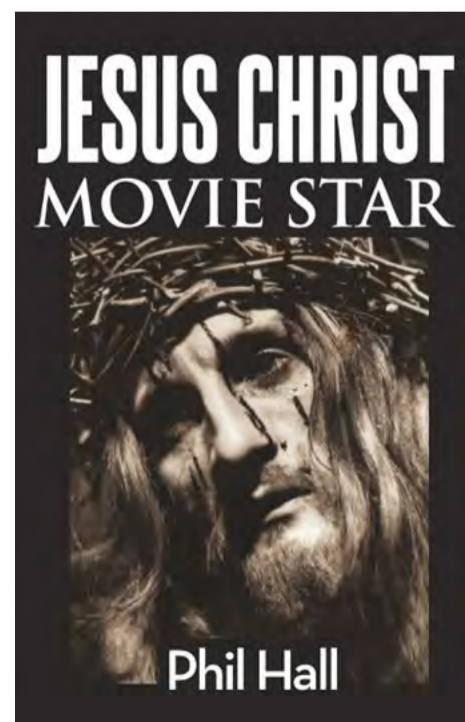
long-haired, bearded, white-robed figure of Renaissance paintings".

The 1960s saw a more free-wheeling approach, with many films depicting Jesus quite differently from earlier portrayals. Sometimes this new edginess was successful, "while in many films the attempts at irreverence . . . lapsed into vulgarity or puerility".

In the 21st century, "among the most eccentric Jesus-centric films ever made" is Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" (2004), which told the story of Jesus' final hours in harshly explicit realism. Jewish leaders' charges of antisemitism only seemed to enhance interest in the film, which cost \$30 million to make and grossed \$612 million.

These are only a handful of the myriad films that Hall covers. He describes his book as "a culmination of two very different passions in my life: the celebration of all things cinematic and my Christian faith." Anyone interested in film history — especially religious cinema — will find it hard to put down.

Nancy Roberts is a journalism professor at the State University of New York at Albany.



We are here: ▼ Palm Sunday

THE CHURCH YEAR

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Easter time

Ordinary Time

Unite ourselves to the mystery of Christ crucified

Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

Central to these readings is a profound sense of what God's plan was for us all, and the way it would be brought to fulfilment.

Isaiah's suffering servant text provides for us an insight into the mission that God had in mind. Its goal is clearly stated. It requires great commitment to God. What is more, it demands that this servant be prepared to endure whatever the body might be subjected to. His resolve is to be utterly obedient to the Lord God's Word. That is something signalled by setting his face like flint, so as to anticipate what lies ahead.

With Paul's Christ hymn from Philippians

as our second reading, we hear a suggestion of supreme commitment to a divine initiative, like that of Isaiah. Both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ work together to bring about a great healing event for all humanity. That Jesus is born in human form and submits to death on a cross shows us exactly what was necessary for our salvation. That sublime sacrificial act set in train a worldwide call for the divine plan to accomplish its desired goal.

In Luke's version of the passion narrative there is a recurring theme that sits well alongside the texts from Isaiah and Paul. For, at reg-

April 10: Palm Sunday. **Readings:** 1. Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm: 22; 2. Philippians 2:6-11; **Gospel:** Luke 22:14 - 23:56.

ular intervals, it is Jesus' kingship that comes to the fore. So whenever the topic arises, we are reminded that Jesus' earthly mission was about showing us the superior nature of God's kingdom, that is as willed for the world's inhabitants. The Lord's passion and death therefore points to the one true source of power that must rule everything.

These are biblical texts that prompt reflection on belief in the extraordinary tale of Jesus' life and death. They assist us to unite ourselves to the mystery of Christ crucified.

Joyfully celebrating the fact that Christ is risen

The Scriptures proposed for this special day of festivity appropriately record the early Church's professed aim to faithfully proclaim the reality of Christ risen from the dead.

The verses from Acts make it clear that the apostolic leadership of the early Church has as its mission the proclamation of Jesus' Resurrection. Their very testimony narrated here provides the necessary evidence for those who are yet to hear about the Resurrection. Announcing news of it is surely intended to attract more and more people to believe in and promote a heartfelt celebration of the event. Obviously of great significance in this text is the role of those who have personally witnessed the reality of the Resurrection and go

about proclaiming it.

Today two brief texts, one from Colossians and the other from 1 Corinthians, are second reading options. Both present a particular perspective from which to consider the fact that Christ is risen. Either reading serves to offer the believing listener a point of entry into the festive spirit that the Resurrection calls for.

Again, having the option of reading from either John or Luke as this Sunday's Gospel provides a choice that, whichever one is chosen, will work well after the other readings. For both evangelists record a comparable range of details, and feature a similar cast of characters who witness to the Resurrection. What is of key

April 17: Easter Sunday. **Readings:** 1. Acts 10:34,37-43; Psalm: 118; 2. Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; **Gospel:** John 20:1-9 or Luke 24:1-12.

significance in both accounts is the fact that the named characters are remembered as true witnesses to Christ risen.

In our response to these Easter Sunday biblical texts, we can confidently say that they invite us to be keen and willing participants in the early Church's proclamation of the Lord's Resurrection. And on account of the testimony of the original witnesses, we duly join them in joyfully celebrating the fact that Christ is risen.

SAINTED GLASS



Next week is Easter week. There were too many windows to choose from initially — Last Supper, passion, crucifixion, Resurrection. There is no Resurrection without the passion and crucifixion, of course. In the end, the joy of the Resurrection won out. So here is the beautiful depiction in the Nativity Anglican Church, Blenheim, of the angel telling the three women who had come to anoint Jesus' body that "He is not here, He is risen" (Matt 28:1-10). They left the tomb "afraid yet filled with joy".

I hope that you will be filled with joy as you celebrate the Resurrection this Easter. — Glen McCullough

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Esther story has historical elements

JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The story related in the Book of Esther is generally held by scholars to be historical fiction, but elements of the tale could be based on fact.

The Persian King Ahasuerus chooses the Jewish Esther to be his bride because of her beauty, thereby breaking with tradition. However, his grand vizier convinces him to kill the Jews in Persia, after Esther's cousin and guardian Mordechai refuses to prostrate himself before the vizier. But Esther informs the king about the true story, so the king reverses the order and allows the Jews to kill their enemies. The story is held to be the justification for the Jewish holiday of Purim.

A recent article in The Jerusalem Post stated that most scholars link King Ahasuerus with the Persian King Xerxes I. King Ahasuerus is also mentioned in the books of Ezra and Daniel.

By the time Xerxes ascended to the throne, The Jerusalem Post article stated, the Persian Empire was at its height, and extended from India to Ethiopia and parts of Sudan — as in the story of Esther, Ahasuerus is said to have ruled over 127 provinces from India (Hodu) to Kush, generally taken to be the Upper Nile Valley region.

According to the article, the story of Esther would have taken place in the third year of Xerxes' reign in 483 BCE, said Dr Yigal Bloch, curator of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem.

"This doesn't mean the story is real, but it gives a chronological anchor for when it should have taken place," he said.

Bloch said it was common for people from the empire to serve as courtiers in the king's court, so Jews would have also easily been a part of that group, as Mordechai is described.

The names of Xerxes' main wives are

Bible News

known, said Bloch, and there is none recorded thought to be Esther, though he added that one such name could have been among his secondary wives.

In a podcast with the Jewish People Policy Institute promoting her 2020 book, *Esther Unmasked*, Dr Tamar Eilam Gindin, a researcher at the University of Haifa's Ezri Centre for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, noted that, though the story of Esther is only documented in the Bible, a similar story is documented of the succession to the throne of Xerxes' father, King Darius, including the danger of an imposter king wielding power.

Xerxes I is noted for having his forces build a bridge across the Hellespont near Gallipoli, but then failing to defeat the Greeks in a famous campaign.



Esther before Ahasuerus by Artemisia Gentileschi (Wikimedia Commons)

Cullinane stained glass windows finally home

by SUE SECONI

Two stained glass windows are now permanently home in the library at Cullinane College in Whanganui, having been removed twice since being donated for the first St Augustine's College chapel 67 years ago.

"The library is at the heart of the college. It is a well-used space and provides opportunities for the students to see them," said principal Justin Harper.

These stunning glassworks were gifted in 1955 when modifications were made to include a chapel in St Augustine's College, which was then situated on the corner of Cameron Terrace and Campbell Street. The window depicting St Peter Chanel was donated by the then Old Boys of the school, and the St Augustine window by the Misses Burke, sisters of a parish priest of St Mary's, Whanganui, Fr Michael Joseph Burke, SM.

When this wooden building was demolished, the windows were carefully stored, until being reinstalled in the new St Augustine's College chapel which opened in 1967 in Peat Street.

They were again put in storage because the building redevelopment schedule required this chapel be pulled down, when St Augustine's College and Sacred Heart College were combined to form the new co-educational Cullinane College in 2003.

"The windows are a link to the legacy of Cullinane College. An acknowledgement of the past journey of our college," said Mr Harper.

The cabinet was specially designed by old boy John Fearn, and funding came from the Palmerston North Diocesan Catholic Charities Allocation Committee.

These taonga will be officially blessed at a later date.



Cullinane College's head girl Faith Solomona and head boy Nathaniel Daley with the two stained glass windows

Images 'packed with history about Christianity'

◀ Continued from page 20

The figures in the icon are also always named, because "you have a relationship of trust and mutual communication there, and you can't be talking to the wrong person".

■ A saint for a need

Devotional imagery became popular in the fourteenth century among pilgrims and religious travellers who also wanted icons in their homes.

"All the Orthodox cultures have a tradition of private veneration in the home. Icons were their primary way of doing that. In times of political stress or all sorts of displacements, you might not have a church, but [you] have an icon to pray to at home," Dr Matthiesson explained.

"The exhibition looks at how people relied on icons in an age of belief, when there [were] not many forms of support and help that came to you."

Sick people with no access to medicine, for example, would pray to the healing saints, Cosmos and Damian. When looking after farm animals, one might have icons of St Florus and Laurus, who look after animals. And when one is a seafarer, one would keep an icon of St Nicholas.

"And then there are saints like Elijah in Northern Russia, who seem to have some control over thunder and fire . . . very important when your lives depend on crops," she said.

There are also icons of St Paraskeva, or the Friday Saint, who looks after marketplaces and women in childbirth, among other things.

"You can't always pray and ask for trivial help from Christ, and Mary, the Mother of God. You go to these other figures who look after these other human needs", Dr Matthiesson said.



St George and the Dragon, circa 1500, Crete

■ Warrior Saints

Also included in the collection are Saints Nicholas and George, who are some of the most popular icons, after Jesus and Mary.

They are also called warrior saints for their fierce defence of the faith.

"Many of these saints packed a punch. They have a benevolent side, but they had an inflexible side that could withstand torture, punishment and could actually rise to violence if need be," she said.

Saints like Demetrius and George are shown on horses with spears.

"[They are] spearing [the] infidel or the pagan king or the dragon. All of these figures that they slay are metaphors, of course, of paganism or anti-Christianity. At various times, the dragon may be a metaphor for the Ottoman empire or, in an Ethiopian icon, it may be a metaphor against the kings who are persecuting (Christians)," she said.

Dr Matthiesson said there will also be a wall that would feature martyrs, like the icon of Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, soldiers who died for their faith.

This icon comes from Crimea, which is a sore point between Ukraine and Russia in the recent conflict.

"In the 17th and 18th centuries, those martyrs became popular all over again, because there were people being martyred in the Ottoman territory and they were called neo-martyrs," she noted.

"It's like history repeating itself. Possibly, there will be more neo-martyrs to come. This icon has always stayed quite popular whenever there's persecution."

■ Sacred space

The exhibition will be housed in six rooms within the Auckland gallery.

The first room introduces the public to the sacred space of the Orthodox church, which includes the icon screen and the royal doors. The sacredness of the space will be heightened with music.

Each room contains some very rare and extremely old examples of iconography.

"These images are absolutely packed with history about Christianity, and how it was embraced and used and spread through the cultures of ordinary people across vast parts of the world," Dr Matthiesson said.

The exhibition runs from April 15 to September 18. Details on admission prices and information related to Covid-19 Protection Framework settings can be found at www.aucklandartgallery.com



Dr Sophie Matthiesson

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HONOURING LIVES FOR GENERATIONS

Sister Lyra's first profession celebrated

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

On March 12, Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand celebrated the first profession of Sister Lyra at St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral in Karori, Wellington. According to a facebook post by Ngā Whaea

Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, Cardinal John Dew was the presider at the Mass. Sr Lyra's profession of vows is for 3 years. "We warmly welcome Lyra as a vowed member of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand", the post stated.



Sr Lyra (Photo: Facebook)



Tu Kahikatea Award recipients 2022 with Bishop Stephen Lowe

Awards recognise youth and young adults

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Tu Kahikatea Awards recognising the gift that youth and young adults are to the Catholic Church in Auckland diocese were presented by Bishop Stephen Lowe at a Mass at Sacred Heart church, Ponsonby, on March 27.

In the community life category, the award recipients were Talitha Anne Pereira (Takapuna), Raewyn Tan (Pakuranga), Alice Sung (Pakuranga), Timothy Lim (Pakuranga), Lisa Emmanuel (Glenfield/Encounter North Shore) and Veilomani Tafa (SVdP).

Vincent Jing-Wei Phua (Devonport) received the award in the prayer and worship category.

Award recipients in the justice and service category were Kevin Lio (SVdP) and Jackson Barker (SVdP). In the pastoral care category, Evangeline Moverley (SVdP) received an award.

Three young people who received awards, but were unable to attend the ceremony, were Lindsley Toh (ACYAC — justice and service), Dominic Malgeri (Evangelion — catechesis) and Joselle Vicente (Takapuna — leadership development).

40 YEARS AGO

FOCUS ON MĀORI ISSUES

The National Catholic Commission for Evangelisation, Justice and Development is to establish a working committee to research Waitangi Day.

The commission also decided at its bi-annual meeting in Wellington this month to ask the bishops' conference to associate the Catholic Church with the National Council of Churches' Programme on Racism.

Both moves followed a whole session at the EJD meeting devoted to discussion on the Māori land issue. The session was led by Mr Rob Cooper, chairman of Auckland's EJD commission, and himself a Māori.

The national commission's new working committee on Waitangi Day will have an all-Māori membership and, subject to the agreement of Wellington's EJD Commission, it will be under the chairmanship of Mr Manuka

Henare, who heads the EJD secretariat in the archdiocese.

Said EJD's episcopal chairman, Bishop Brian Ashby: "In the course of the debate, commission members were given many precious insights into the Māori way of thinking — and the quite different attitude our society must adopt, if it is to take that way of thinking seriously."

As a result, the motion establishing the working committee on Waitangi Day emphasised that its terms of reference be submitted to the committee members, "who will deal with them in terms of the Māori ethos".

During the debate which led to the commission's moves on Māori land and racism issues, a call was issued for the Church to become a sign for the whole Māori community.

— *Zealandia*, April 18, 1982



Papal Prayer

The Pope's universal prayer intention for April: For health care workers.

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

CAPTION CONTEST



Write the best caption for this photo and win a \$30 Countdown voucher. Send in your ideas by Tuesday, April 19 to Caption Contest 634, NZ Catholic, PO Box 147000, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144. Or email: design@nz-catholic.org.nz Please include your postal address so that your prize, if you win, can be sent to you.

The winner of the Caption Contest from issue 632 (right) was **L. White, Auckland**.

Some other suggestions were:

"Elephant mouth-to-mouth!" — **Joan Leonard, Auckland**.

"OK! I get it — I should wear a mask! No need to trumpet it!" — **Colleen Hanratty, Levin**.

"Be with you shortly, I'm just making a trunk call." — **Kevin McCormack, Wellington**.

"Let us see who can trumpet louder?" — **Russell Watt, Auckland**.

"No worry, it's just a trunk call." — **Peter Foster, Auckland**.

"See if my trumpet is louder than yours!" — **Ron Ingram, Hawera**.



Pachyderm plants one on a pecker

"I blow elephant's trunk-et, not my own." — **Elias Martis, Auckland**.

"Hello operator, I would like to make a trunk call to the Vatican please." — **Linda Jennings, Auckland**.

Custos hopes Holy Sepulchre cooperation can be example

JERUSALEM (CNS) — As restoration and conservation work began on the pavement stones of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, custos of the Holy Land, said that he hoped the cooperation among the three custodial churches in the project would serve as an example for all Christian churches and communities.

“There is always great significance beyond the material (aspect),” Father Patton said on March 14 at a joint inaugural stone-lifting ceremony at the church. “We are looking at something worse than the pandemic now, with a war between two Christian countries, so our cooperation here acquires greater significance, and I hope we can show how important cooperation is.”

The start of this second phase of restoration work in the church is very important, he said, following the restoration of the Edicule, revered as the tomb of Jesus, in 2016-2017. That project was directed by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, and was conducted by an interdisciplinary team from the National Technical University of Athens.

An October agreement between the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate entrusted the Custody of the Holy Land with undertaking the current pavement restoration project.

The three churches are the historical custodians of the church, according to the 1852 Status Quo agreement that regulates the ownership of spaces in various holy sites.

“We hope the whole world will be able to see and understand that this has been done in understanding and mutual cooperation and love,” said Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem.

Following an in-depth study in 2019, the project was delayed because of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The two-year restoration project will take place in stages, while allowing for religious celebrations, pilgrimages and tourists. In addition to the restoration — and, when necessary, replacement of pavement stones — the project will also include any work needed to maintain the safety and stability of the Edicule, and the updating of electrical, water, mechanical and special fire prevention systems.

“I think we all have to face a lot of history; we have to manage this and translate the history to modern day and make it functional,” said Daniela



Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, custos of the Holy Land, joins Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem and Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian in removing the stone, to start the project to restore the floor of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City (CNS photo)

Russo, who will be leading the restoration team from the La Venaria Reale Conservation and Restoration Centre of Turin, Italy. “We have to try to conserve the history, as well as renew all the apparatus while maintaining the Status Quo. We all have to work together.”

The size and weight of the stone slabs also present a challenge, she said.

Francesca Romana Stasolla, professor of Christian and medieval archaeology at Sapienza University in Rome, will lead the archaeological excavations, which will be conducted for the first

time during the project. Stasolla said the multi-coloured pavement stones range in age from the third century to modern times.

The current church building dates back mainly to the Crusader era and was consecrated in 1142. It was built on the remains of the Roman temple built by Emperor Hadrian in 136, and of the church built by Roman Emperor Constantine in 335.

“This is a very important historical work,” said Stasolla. “We will have to work day by day and see what we uncover.”

NOVENA

ST JUDE, glorious Apostle, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor has caused you to be forgotten by a great many, but the true Church honours and invokes you as the special patron of hopeless cases and things despaired of. Come to my assistance in this great need, that I may receive the

consolation and succour of heaven in all my tribulations, necessities and sufferings. Thank you for the many blessings received during my recent request for your help. I promise you O blessed Jude to be ever mindful of this favour and will never cease to make your name known, loved and invoked. **A.G.**

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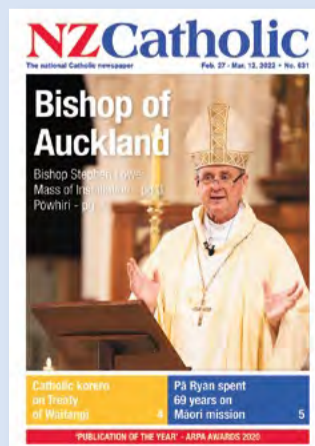
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Icons feature in rare exhibition

by ROWENA OREJANA

As the Catholic world observes Good Friday, the Auckland Art Gallery is quietly opening "Heavenly Beings: Icons of the Christian Orthodox World", an exhibition that introduces the tradition of the devotional art of the Christian Orthodox faith.

The exhibition features 118 icons, dating from 1350 to 1800 AD. It includes devotional arts created by iconographers from Crete, Russia, Greece, Italy, Palestine, as well as Ethiopia.

Auckland Art Gallery senior curator of international art Dr Sophie Matthiesson worked on putting the exhibition together, with the help of Art Gallery of Ballarat director Gordon Morrison.

"It has been 40 years since an ambitious icon exhibition has been held in this country. And there would probably never be another one in our generation because they are so hard to put together," Dr Matthiesson said.

The icons are mainly from the collection of former Australian Ambassador John McCarthy, who collected the icons "with a great eye and great respect for faith traditions, and the beauty that those traditions produced". Two of the icons in the exhibition are from the Dunedin Public Gallery.

■ The eyes have it

Generally, the figures painted on icons are facing the front. The emphasis is on their eyes rather than their bodies because the eyes are the faithful's access to the heavenly



Nativity, circa 1600, Crete (Supplied)

realm.

"They do not have to look realistic. They do not have to look like they live in the here and now because they exist outside time and place," Dr Matthiesson said.

She explained that, to make the figures three-dimensional, "is kind of a crude idea, because we are trying to get to the essence of holiness, which is about non-materiality".

She said the paintings of the saints are "very ascetic", because they have a holiness that transcends the needs of the body, like the need for food.

"Their thinness and gauntness are evidence that they live the life of the spirit. They don't rely on food. They can exist in silence for years on end. They can live in solitude. They can turn their backs on the earthly world and focus on higher things. And so that is another source of inspiration for people. It teaches resilience and faith," she said.

Some of the faces are turned three-quarters because, when displayed, they are turning towards Christ, who would be at the centre.

► Continued on page 17

WIT'S END

Given that the time for hot cross buns is approaching, here are some baking jokes:

I used to have a great joke about baking, but then I ruined it. I should never have left that pun in the oven!

People are so sad I'm not entering the parish baking contest this year. Even their cakes are in tiers.

Baking is a weird profession. Loafing on the job can get you a raise!

What ingredient is essential when baking a Star Wars cake? Bicarbonate of Yoda.

I have a super secret baking recipe for bread. Unfortunately, it's on a knead to dough basis.

I forgot to buy baking paper. Looks like my meal will be foiled again.

In the April 24 issue:
Oberammergau
Passion Play Resumes

SUPPORT A SEMINARIAN

Jesus left His Church the gift of the **priesthood** to ensure the **faith was spread** and the **sacraments were brought forth** to **nourish** and **bring life to His people**.

Photos © Ismael Martínez Sánchez / ACN



"If I were to meet a priest and an angel, I should salute the priest before I saluted the angel. The latter is the friend of God; but the priest holds His place...When you see a priest, you should say, **"There is he who made me a child of God, and opened Heaven to me by holy Baptism; he who purified me after I had sinned; who gives nourishment to my soul"**

St John Vianney

While we currently experience less priestly vocations, it is **not the same everywhere**. In many countries the faith is flourishing, and an abundance of young men have discerned a call to **leave everything and follow Christ**.

However, the road is not always easy. Their families may be **poor**. Their bishops may **lack resources**. They may live in areas experiencing **persecution towards Christians**.

We are all part of the **one Church**; therefore, **it is up to us**, as members of the body of Christ, to **help the seminarians of today become the priests of tomorrow**.

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PONTIFICAL FOUNDATION





Pope Francis is pictured in an undated screenshot praying with a group of homeless people and members of the Lazare association in his residence at the Vatican (CNS Photo/YouTube)

Pope hosted homeless people at his residence to interview him

by CAROL GLATZ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Dozens of people experiencing poverty and homelessness around the world got to ask Pope Francis any question they wanted.

“We gave him a little buzzer to use if he didn’t want to answer. He never used it,” Loic Luisetto told Agence France-Presse on March 23. Luisetto is the director of Lazare, a France-based association that assists homeless people and coordinated the initiative.

The questions and the Pope’s responses in Spanish were condensed into a new book in French, titled “Des Pauvres au Pape, Du Pape au Monde” (“From the Poor to the Pope. From the Pope to the World”). Published by Le Seuil, it was released on April 1.

The Pope answered questions posed by homeless people from about 80 countries; the questioners included people from the slums in Brazil to

people on the streets in India, Iran and the United States, according to AFP.

A smaller number of homeless people then asked the questions as a dialogue that spanned a total of nine hours over the course of several meetings in 2020 and 2021. The meetings were held first online because of the Covid-19 pandemic and then in-person, with the interviewer-guests invited to stay in the Pope’s Vatican residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Pierre Durieux, Lazare’s general secretary, told AFP that they would bump into the Pope as he went about his daily routine, seeing him “in the elevator or at breakfast with his tray”.

“This closeness to him contributed to the family atmosphere of the interviews,” Durieux said.

The Pope confessed to his guests that he is “a real zombie” in the mornings right after he wakes up around 4am, which means he sometimes falls asleep when he prays.

The poor have been a focal point of his papacy,

as he chose the name Francis after St Francis of Assisi, who lived in poverty, and said after his election that he wants “a poor church, for the poor”.

“It hurts me that men of the Church — priests, bishops, cardinals — drive in luxury cars and, far from giving an example of poverty, give the most negative of testimonies,” he said in the book, according to the AFP.

The Pope explained that he does not get paid, but “my poverty is fictitious, since I lack nothing”. “They feed me, and if I need something, I ask for it,” he said. And they “always tell me ‘yes,’ by the way. ‘We’re not going to fight with the Pope! If I need shoes, I ask.”

“But it is still a bit absurd to have to ask . . . it makes me less self-sufficient,” he added.

Profits from the book sales will be donated to the non-governmental associations that collected the questions together with Lazare, according to AFP.

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VIDEO LINK



Pope: My dream for migrants

During his visit to Malta on April 3, Pope Francis met with migrants and shared with them his hope that they become ambassadors of human fraternity.

Click the link below to watch the subtitled video of the Pope in Malta. (Video: Catholic News Service)

WATCH HERE

