

The Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

A newspaper of the Christchurch Catholic Worker

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HOPE beneath threatening clouds

Jim Consedine

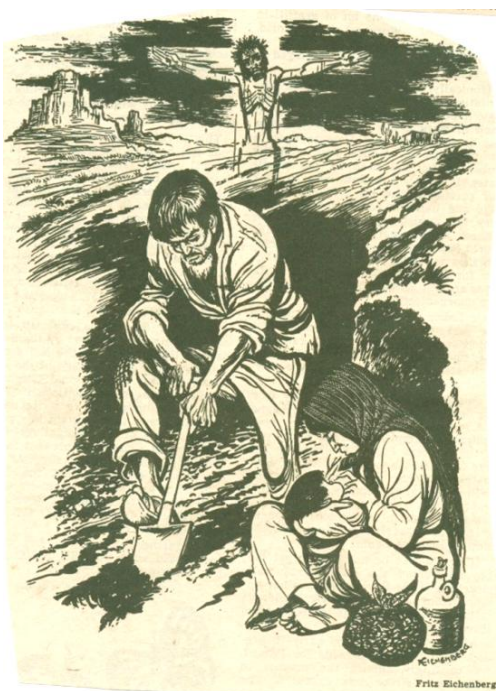
*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in*

—Leonard Cohen

The sudden death of the mystical poet, songwriter and singer Leonard Cohen came a few days after the bombshell election result which delivered the White House to Donald Trump. Leonard Cohen was a poet of the age, writing deeply spiritual lyrics that cut to the soul of human existence which he presented in accessible songs and writings that will be his legacy. His roller-coaster life through good periods and dark ones, accompanied by long periods of reflection and prayer, gave him a wisdom about life that few achieve. Despite his melodious almost sad voice, he was a person of hope.

Sense of Foreboding

And hope is what many need today. To say that there has been a gathering sense of foreboding even fear following Trump's election, the installation of his cabinet and the unleashing of the social and environmental carnage which has followed, would be an understatement. This has followed on the Brexit decision in the UK, the recent elections in both the Philippines and Japan, and the rise of the political Right across Europe. With two unstable leaders, the threat of war over North Korea cannot be underestimated.



The majority of the votes the political Right are receiving are largely coming from people who feel things are bad and can't get much worse. They come from the poor, from people who feel disenfranchised, and from those who have been neglected by the elitist politics of our age, where the rich and powerful keep having all the say. These have become the fertile targets for Right-wing political groups who appeal to their prejudices, their fears and speak to their needs using scapegoats and simplistic slogans.

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Millions of others are feeling despondent, even despairing for the future. They had sensed that the world generally, despite having continued massive disparities, set-backs and inequalities still in place, had been evolving into a more humane place. That we had developed a stronger sense of social justice, human rights and care for the planet which had taken decades of hard work to build. That 'the Arc of the Universe', as Martin Luther King had so cryptically



said, 'was bending towards justice'.

Now they are shaken, deeply concerned that overall gains in racial equality, women's advancement, environmental appreciation, indigenous peoples' rights, climate change action, even economic advancement for many, will be rolled back as extreme nationalism takes hold in various parts of the world.

No simple answers will suffice for everyone. We, who care about the future and want to be part of making it happen, need to perhaps look beyond politics, to find a road that sustains our hope and provides a practical vision to follow.

Lessons from Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, grew up in the US in the early years of the last century faced a similar crisis. A journalist by profession, she espoused a variety of political causes and was herself a militant suffragette, spending time in prison in November 1917 for her protest activities. She was passionate about politics and, in particular, the rights of women, the poor and raged against the insanity of war. She

Who are we?

Members of Te Wairua Maranga Trust, which publishes this paper, have since August 1989 been operating as a community following a Catholic Worker spirituality. We view the Treaty of Waitangi as our nation's founding covenant. We try, however inadequately at times, to live the Sermon on the Mount and its modern implications. We operate three houses of hospitality in Christchurch named after Suzanne Aubert, Joseph Cardijn and Thomas Merton. We offer hospitality to people in need either on a temporary or more permanent basis. We have a continuing outreach to a number of families offering friendship and support. We promote non-violence and a 'small is beautiful' approach to life, practise co-operative work and peacemaking, focus on issues of justice, support prison ministry, help create intentional communities, and try to practise voluntary poverty and personalism.

We engage in regular prayer and we also celebrate a liturgy every Wednesday at 6:00 pm at the Suzanne Aubert House, 8A Cotterill St, Addington, (off Poulson St, near Church Square), followed by a shared meal. Anyone is welcome – phone Francis, 338-7105.

We do not seek funding from traditional sources. We hope to receive enough to keep our houses of hospitality open and our various works going. Catholic Worker houses do not issue tax receipts since they are running neither a business nor a church social agency. We invite people to participate personally and unconditionally. Should you wish to make a regular contribution, you may do so through our Te Wairua Maranga Westpac Trust holding account (number 031703-0036346-02). Donations may also be made to **Te Wairua Maranga Trust, Box 33-135, Christchurch.** *The Common Good:* Editor: Jim Consedine - jim.conse@xtra.co.nz; Layout - Barbara Corcoran - burkespass@gmail.com

covered many major protests for her socialist newspaper *The Masses*. Such was the challenge of its content that it was shut down by the US Government.

Upon becoming pregnant to her common-law husband, Dorothy (in some respects not unlike Leonard Cohen) had a major rethink of her life. Political action alone was not fulfilling her needs. There had to be a better way. With the Great Depression fully underway at home and abroad and tens of millions out of work and hungry on the streets, with Hitler and Nazism and the political Right on the rise in Germany, fascism and Mussolini in Italy, Franco in Spain and major parts of Europe destabilising, she sought to find a way forward that would bring hope to people in the gathering social gloom. She intuited that political change on its own would not be enough.

Disillusioned with both the US mainstream political parties and the radical politics to which she had given 20 years of her life, she did the unthinkable and became a Catholic. In the Church, she found the stability and traditions that she needed. And in the Gospels of Jesus and the Church's Social Teachings, she found the 'political dynamite', the spiritual power and the support for a way forward. She studied the Gospels and found in the Beatitudes and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (Matt 5), along with the Social Teachings of the Church, a different platform which gave her hope for herself and her young child, Tamar.

She translated the Gospels into a practical programme with the aid of Peter Maurin, an itinerant French exile with whom she teamed up. Together they developed a social programme. It was based on the nonviolence of Jesus, the pacifist tradition of the early Church and the centrality of Christ's presence in everyday life.

Influenced too by the foremost Catholic philosopher of the century Jacques Maritain, she formed principles of government and social action rooted in equal respect for the individual and the requirements of the common good. Most of her old collectivist comrades scorned her. But she had found her soul and, without betraying many ideals from her earlier life, a social meaning for her life.

She translated the Gospels into a practical programme with the aid of Peter Maurin, an itinerant French exile with whom she teamed up. Together they developed a social programme. It was based on the nonviolence of Jesus, the pacifist tradition of the early Church and the centrality of Christ's presence in everyday life. It also incorporated her long-held

views about the dignity of each person by recognising the presence of the divine within each individual, the need for racial and social equality and economic justice.

In 1933, they launched the Catholic Worker movement. They founded a newspaper *The Catholic Worker*, promoted resistance to the stranglehold of the corporate world holds on peoples' lives. It encouraged daily prayer, houses of hospitality for the homeless, developed communal farms, a personalist 'small is beautiful' hands-on approach to economics, practised voluntary poverty (simple living), championed dignified work and opposed violence and injustice everywhere – among farm workers, in factories, on the streets, at prison gates, outside arms factories and military installations.

Application Today

In reflecting recently prior to the recent US elections that saw Trump win, veteran CW Brian Terrell wrote from Iowa, 'Dorothy was not bound to choose between the greater and lesser evils (Republicans/Democrats) and neither are we. The pollsters are wrong. Our choice is not between being a silent bystander or a collaborator with one degree of evil or another. Dorothy's anarchism (personalism) is the antidote to the paralysis of those who reach the conclusion that electoral politics (in

the US) is a meaningless charade. It offers encouragement to those who are tempted to abandon hope when they discover that their hope in the system was misplaced all along.'

Despite being a suffragette seeking voting rights for women, 'Dorothy considered the ballot was not for her. Fasting and prayer along with sharing resources in community, breaking bread with the hungry and welcoming the stranger, tending gardens and engaging in daring acts of nonviolent protest – these activities constitute a positive programme that she could embrace. It is a programme that, unlike the paltry and soon to be betrayed promises of the corporate political parties, holds infinite potential to bring peace and healing to this tortured planet.' *The Catholic Worker (NY)*, August/September 2016

In the political fear and gloom of the 1930s, Dorothy Day and the movement she spawned rang the bells of hope allowing 'a light to shine through the cracks' by following the radical Gospel of Jesus. She left a light that still guides many today, where in more than 180 CW communities around the world (and hundreds of thousands of other places), the light still shines.

Though clouds threaten, hope lives!

Editorial Call to Action

President Trump was the candidate of disruption. He was the disrupter. Now we must all become disrupters. We must disrupt those who would seek to send troops into our streets to deport the undocumented, to rip mothers and fathers from their families. We must disrupt those who portray refugees as enemies, rather than our brothers and sisters in terrible need. We must disrupt those who train us to see Muslim men and women and children as sources of fear rather than as children of God. We must disrupt those who seek to rob our medical care, especially from the poor. We must disrupt those who would take even food stamps and nutrition assistance from the mouths of children.

We follow a powerful pathway of past Catholic movements of **see, judge, act**: to **see** the situation clearly, to **judge** with principles that foster the integral development of people, and to **act** in a way which implements these principles in the light of everyone's unique situation. The simple but rich architecture constructed by these principles, guided Catholic social actions in the past century in Europe and Latin America.

But the words which carry such a powerful history of social transformation around the world in the service of the dignity of the human person, must be renewed and re-examined in every age, and seen against the background of those social, economic, and political forces in each historical moment.

That moment in the U.S. is now: a pivotal moment as a people and a nation, when bitter divisions cleave our country and pollute our actual dialogue. We must make the issues of jobs, housing, immigration, economic disparities, and the environment foundations for common efforts, rather than of division. We must seek prophetic words and prophetic actions which produce unity and cohesion, and we must do so in a spirit of hope, which is realistic.

This principle of seeing is the starting point for transformative justice and served as the backbone of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si' – on the care for our common home*. It has seldom been more difficult in our society.

—Bishop Robert McElroy, Bishop of San Diego, 19 February 2017

Just War - an obsolete notion

Jim Consedine

The Just War theory is obsolete. This must be the conclusion reached after reflection upon the message issued by Pope Francis for the 2017 World Day of Peace. In it, the Pope stresses that we need to reclaim the non-violent Jesus as our primary relationship and his message of non-violence as our primary way of relating to one another.

As Francis says, 'to be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence. Jesus himself lived in violent times. Yet he taught that the true battlefield, where violence and peace meet, is the human heart: for 'it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come' (Mk 7:21). Christ's message here offers a radically positive approach. He unfailingly preached God's unconditional love, which welcomes and forgives. He taught his disciples to love their enemies (cf. Mt 5:44) and to turn the other cheek (cf. Mt 5:39); he stopped her accusers from stoning the woman caught in adultery (cf. Jn 8:1-11); and the night before he died, he told Peter to put away his sword (cf. Mt 26:52).'

For the first three centuries of the Church, Christians upheld this teaching, even in the face of persecution. Many, like St Maximilian, a Roman citizen (d. AD 293, aged 21), refused conscription into the Roman army with the words. 'I cannot enlist, for I am a Christian. I cannot serve, I cannot do evil.' He was following the non-violent teachings of Jesus and was executed.

Just 22 years later, the Church in AD 313 cut a deal with the Roman Empire. They said, 'we'll stop the persecution and make you citizens. But you will need to be open to conscription into the military.' Many refused. But aided by the development of a Just War theory by St Augustine, expanded later by St Thomas Aquinas, in time the Church moved away from the teachings of Jesus on nonviolence and acquiesced to the demands of the state.

The Just War theory

There were **seven conditions** needed for a war to be just. If any element was missing, Christians couldn't be involved. **The war had to be a last resort after all negotiations had failed; be declared by legitimate authority for a just cause; have a probability of success; have the intention of bringing peace; be conducted with proportional force only; and innocent civilians must never be the target.**

In recent times, successive Popes - Paul VI,

John Paul II, Benedict, Francis - have declared that these conditions cannot be met in today's world of nuclear armaments, sophisticated long-range weaponry, military drones, vulnerable mass populations and indiscriminate bombings. In effect, there cannot be a just war.

Pope Francis teaches that the path of nonviolence Jesus marked out is to be applied to modern warfare and to both domestic and structural violence (eg child poverty, IMF structural adjustment programmes, mass migrant deportations). These structural issues are among many which cause unconscionable violence against people, especially the poor.

If we watch the TV news, we know that most of these seven conditions are violated daily in the 20-30 wars currently raging. This is most obvious in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, where, in addition to everything else, military drones kill 19 civilians for every one militant targeted.

Pope Francis teaches that the path of nonviolence Jesus taught is to be applied to modern warfare and to both domestic and structural violence (eg child poverty, IMF structural adjustment programmes, mass migrant deportations). These structural issues cause unconscionable violence against people, especially the poor.

He says the world is engaged in a world war being fought piecemeal. In our time, there have been thousands of deaths and casualties, ethnic cleansing, devastation of whole cities creating millions of refugees, widespread hunger, in wars fuelled by an arms race that consumes trillions of dollars 'stolen from the poor'. What would it be like if they turned from war? How should the world handle the tens of millions of refugees - collateral damage - who have fled violence and are now displaced? What to do about ISIS and Assad in Syria, among others?

Francis knows that violence is tearing the world apart and there are no easy solutions. He accepts we cannot overestimate the magnitude of the issues confronting us. Knowing all this, he restates that the mission of the Jesus is the mission of Church. Christians are called as disciples to follow this path, regardless of the cost. He has drawn a marker in the sand saying that, as followers of Jesus, **'We need to make nonviolence our way of life'.**

If we don't join Jesus and Francis and draw our own personal line in the sand, who will?

7th National CW Hui report

Rebekah Land

Sitting here in the Mangakahia valley in Northland bathed in sunlight after being on the road for a week in steady rain, I'm reporting on the CW National Hui for 2017 held at Berrigan CW House in Wellington. The overall feeling of the hui reminded me of sunshine. I realised it was just a feeling of great warmth of being together again and resting in the company of those who share many of one's own beliefs and ideals.



On Thursday evening, we were warmly welcomed by all the young crew at Berrigan House to which our kaumatua responded with appreciation. After this followed the first of many feasts, a sheep spit roast by Adi and the boys taking centre stage. Thank you to the Hipi of Otaki and Hokianga and their farmers for feeding us so well over the weekend!

Friday morning took us 'around the traps'. It was great to hear how the communities and their members as individuals or families had fared over the last year. After morning tea, in response to the evidence laid out in Nicky Hagar and Jon Stephenson's book *Hit and Run*, we gathered in prayer outside Freyberg House, the NZ Ministry of Defence headquarters. We prayed for those killed and injured by the NZ SAS in August 2010 in an attack on their village. We also prayed for a full public investigation into this and other crimes which have been hidden from the NZ public as much as possible.

Back at Berrigan House, Francis shared with us some of the joys and difficulties that they experience at Suzanne Aubert CW in Christchurch. He shared how having a core group of committed community members, who don't necessarily live in the CW house, has been invaluable in sorting situations out and giving support.

Early Saturday saw us gathered together for morning prayers. The first session was taken by Mike Lloyd from South Auckland. He spoke on 'personalism' and illustrated this perfectly through the stories of his and his family's life of hospitality and care of those in need in Papatoetoe for the last 12 years.

In the afternoon, we were guided by Ana-Marie and Richard as to how to acknowledge and share our collective skills of survival. In small groups we discussed difficult times in our personal lives or within our communities and we shared the things that 'got us through': prayer and being present, unconditional support

and love of others, music, exercise, inspirational people etc.

We were lucky enough to receive a quick visit from two young women from Peace Action Wellington to give a talk about their recent campaigns and actions, including opposing the international arms bazaar in Auckland.

By now Fr Jim had finally decided to grace us with his presence and with Fr Kevin, we had a wonderful Mass with 70 of us packed into the living room. It was a very special occasion. The presence of the Spirit was palatable. A memorable Eucharist. So essential to our lives.

That night, with much gaiety we let our hair down and held a barn dance, acting, singing, and some awesome piano playing by Kevin. The CW All-Stars band was in fine form as usual.

Sunday started with a lovely meditation lead by Jo from Otaki. Kathleen then guided us in a discussion of what problems or issues we are facing as individuals, families or communities and if anything was possible, how would we address them.

Rebekah Dowling-Rampa from the Brisbane CW is training to become a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams and has recently returned from a training program in Colombia and the Afghani region of Kurdistan. She shared some of her photos of her trip with us and told us about some of the issues that the Kurdish people are currently facing.

After a wee stretch and a wriggle, we had our final Mass of thanksgiving. A huge clean-up operation got underway followed by *te poroporoake*!

The children were also wonderfully entertained all weekend with T-shirt screen-printing workshops. They also loved burning off some energy in the local park playing soccer and generally had a great time catching up with each other.

Many thanks also to all the great folks at Berrigan House CW. It is such a wonderful, warm and friendly space that feels full of life. Marissa, Patrick and Jack (and no doubt others) need a big thank you for all the organising and cooking and leadership that they provided.

Rebekah Land is a CW from the Hokianga.

Availability - post hui reflection

Jenny Dawson

I am still old-fashioned enough to use a large paper diary because I think if I put everything on my phone, I might just lose my phone. My 2017 diary is a lovely pale green book entitled *Sacred Ordinary Days – a Liturgical Day Planner*.

A discussion at the National CW Hui in Wellington made me wonder how much my massive diary shapes my availability to other people. Do I fill up every space on those lovely pages with definite dates that are firm responses to requests to do various things with various individuals or groups? Or can I leave lots of time free for whatever or whoever happens along?

Some of my work at present is seeing people for spiritual direction or supervision, which is why I need a diary for appointments. Some people I see on Skype, some in cafes, but most in a room under our house. When they arrive, I am often pottering in the garden nearby, and it is lovely to move from looking closely at growing things - planting out the little lettuce seedlings or thinning carrots or taking the laterals off tomatoes – to give such close attention to another human being and the growing points in their life. My friend and I usually have the door open as we talk and sometimes our attention is drawn to the tui in the kowhai or the occasional gum nut dropping off the eucalypt tree. Only the changing sky reminds us of time, in an undemanding demanding gentle way.

Being busy is not an admirable quality but it is often promoted today as an indicator of achievement or connectedness or popularity. Maybe one of the great deceptions of the twenty-first century is the falsehood that, no matter how big our diaries, whether hardcopy or electronic, being so fully occupied makes us better people. Thinking we have control of anything is epitomised for me in how many of us regard the time God gives us – which we can pretend is entirely ours until sometime unplanned happens. So often that is gift, or if it's shocking or painful has hidden within the folding some treasures of relationship and love, for which we could never plan.

The Catholic Worker values of hospitality, personalism, and building community seem to be calling me to much more freedom and openness with my time. Maybe I could draw pictures or write poems or love-letters in the spaces within my big diary and so become more open to not being sucked into the pressure of our society. Perhaps that would mean I could become a little more Christ-like, perhaps more deeply part of the neighbourhood around me, and even more open to the wind of the Spirit. Maybe....

Jenny Dawson, an Anglican priest based in Porirua, wrote this after the CW national hui held in April.

Fourteen Knees

Fourteen knees
pressed cool to concrete,
victims, workers,
guards, glass doors.
Bloodied feet.

In the name of the God of Peace,
In the Spirit of the non-violent Jesus,
In memory of the victims of tyranny and sin,
'Take our blood instead!'

Looking back at us,
victims,
people and places,
pleading, watching.
Waiting.

Take our blood,
hear our prayer,
have our secrets, our shame.
Take our silence,
receive our seven scarlet hearts.

In memory of the victims of tyranny and sin,
'Take our blood instead!'

Blood freeing,
blood living,
blood redeeming,
blood poured, spilled, given,
blood in seven simple jars.

In memory of the victims of tyranny and sin,
'Take our blood instead!'

Sin of distance,
sin of fire,
sin of omission,
sin of honour,
sins of seven deadly kinds.

Compassionate One,
in your heart
everything belongs,
sinner,
soldier,
system,
saint,
stricken ones.

In the name of the God of Peace,
In the Spirit of the non-violent Jesus,
In memory of the victims of tyranny and sin,
'Take our blood instead!'

Peter Healy sm vigiled outside the Wellington GCSB.

Around the traps

Key NZ Economic Facts - Statistics show a significant ownership of New Zealand companies by investors using tax havens. Foreign investors owned 28% (or \$386 billion) of wealth in New Zealand whose commercial net value totalled \$1.4 trillion at March 2016. This comprised housing, land, other property, plant, equipment and financial assets owned directly or indirectly by households, government and foreign investors. New Zealand residents owned a further \$227 billion of investments abroad. (These totals exclude wealth held by non-profit organisations, shared natural wealth such as rivers, and human and social capital.)

Foreign direct investment (ownership of companies) in New Zealand increased from \$15.7 billion in March 1989 to \$110.8 billion in March 2016 – over seven times. As a proportion of the total output of the economy, Gross Domestic Product, it has risen from 22% to 44%. Ownership of overseas companies by New Zealand residents has not grown as fast over that period (five and a half times) so net foreign direct investment has grown over eight times from a net liability of \$8.8 billion to \$72.8 billion, and as a percentage of GDP multiplied over two times from 13% of GDP to 29%.

Foreign owners controlled 36% of the share market in 2016. In 1989, the figure was 19% and it was estimated to be below 5% in 1986. At March 2015, they owned an estimated 35% of all equity (shareholdings) and 47% of privately owned equity, including shares not listed on the stock exchange.

—Bill Rosenberg, CAFCA research, March 2017

Re fake news. One day, third century Desert Father Abba Anthony told a young monk this parable: ‘The time is coming when people will be insane, and when they see someone who is not insane, they will attack that person saying: ‘You are insane because you are not like us.’

Third century manuscript

Shameful facts. The US spends six times more money on prisons than education, and incarcerates five times more inmates than the world average. President Trump’s request for \$638 billion in military spending is \$71 billion larger than the combined military budgets of the next seven highest spenders: China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Britain, India, France and Japan. He is largely paying for this military increase by slashing welfare and healthcare federal budgets and reducing programmes for the poor.

Catholic Agitator, April/May 2017

last tomato standing

in solitary stance
tied against the wind
its back to the stake
one red tomato

stands defiantly
amid the dying foliage
a testimony to life
fruitfulness, grace

on this frosty June morning
I pick it gently, tenderly
hold it with reverence
admiring the rich texture

then receive it like communion
a cosmic moment
the last fruit of summer
a first taste of winter

—Jim Consedine



Poverty in New Zealand is not really like poverty in Africa or India. And so often it ends up being argued about. In New Zealand, poverty is really another word for inequality. And the problem with inequality is that it is a risk factor for disengagement. If you don’t think you have a shot at those things everyone else has a shot at, then why bother? In the young people I see who don’t go to school any longer and who roam the streets at night and who huff butane or smoke cannabis or drink themselves rotten every weekend, it is this disengagement I fear most. Because it will damage them and it will damage you and me who still believe that the country is the country where one day the brick in the wall they beat their head against is ours.

—Dr Glen Colquhoun, *Late Love*

Brisbane Ploughshares action

And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isaiah 2:4)

On Ash Wednesday, two members of the Brisbane Catholic Worker movement, Jim Dowling, 61, and Tim Webb, 22, disarmed the Cross of Sacrifice, which has stood in Brisbane's Toowong Cemetery as part of a war memorial since 1924. They removed a copper sword from the stone cross, placed it on an anvil, hammered it and reshaped it into a garden hoe. They then hung a banner across the memorial cross which read 'Beat Swords into Ploughshares'. Each face one count of wilful damage. They have been remanded for a future trial.

Members of the Catholic Workers movement resist war and social injustice and promote peacemaking and non-violence in their everyday lives. Like the Christians of the first three centuries of the Early Church, they believe Christians should not go war.

In a statement, the two accused men defended the action. 'We believe Christianity has blessed wars for far too long and this sword on the cross was a terrible symbol of it. That's why we felt cause to remove it. The ploughshare is a symbol of life. The sword is a symbol of death. We choose life. We willingly accept any consequences of this call to repentance, as we remove and convert the blasphemous sword from the Cross. We pray that other Christians will join us in recognising our past and present sin in bearing the sword while worshipping the non-violent Jesus.'



Tim Webb beats sword into hoe.

'There have been many insults and false accusations levelled at us. One is that we are insulting soldiers. This is untrue. We are all from families who have lost relatives in wars since WW1. We recognise veterans have paid a far greater price than those who sent them off to war. We wholeheartedly support helping veterans who have PTSD and other problems. To recognise some wars as wrong is not to insult soldiers. To send them to these wars and lie to them is to insult them.'



CW Jim Dowling separates sword from cross

'We have also been called religious fanatics like ISIS for removing the sword from the Cross. The opposite is true. Those who would unite the sword (violence) and religion are the religious fanatics. We wish to remove the religious justification for killing.'

'We have offered to raise the money to pay for further repairs to the stone cross. We are happy to do this as long as there is no further desecration of the Cross with the sword. 'Put away your sword,' Jesus told Peter on the night of his arrest. 'Those who use the sword will die by the sword.' (Matthew 26:52)

In support, veteran peace-maker and prophet Fr Emmanuel Charles McCarthy wrote from the US, 'The cross is the instrument of homicide on which Jesus was murdered after refusing the protection of violence. It is also the device of death on which Jesus was killed by His enemies as He loved them unto His last suffocating breath—'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' The sword is the cross turned upside-down. The cross is the historical reality and symbol of Jesus' love for all humanity. The sword is the historical reality, symbol of the blood-drenched minds and hands of the economic and political power 'elites who, over millennia throughout the world have tricked or forced ordinary working people into the mad bedlam and slaughter of war. The Way of the Cross of Christ is from heaven; the way of Caesar's sword is from hell. How dare Christians, especially Christian leaders—bishops, priests, ministers, pastors—permit the state or any Church to equate the nonviolent self-sacrifice of love for all, including lethal enemies, of Jesus on the cross with the savage, hateful, murderous sacrifice of others that the sword represents.'

'The removal of the sword from cross at the war memorial at Toowong, Australia, should mark the beginning of the removal of all equivocal and deceitful cross and sword symbols from state and Church property worldwide. The murderous evil that presently is and has been for centuries the result of this double-dealing blasphemy, requires nothing short of this.'

Letter from prison to Catholic Bishops

Prison Farm
California
August 1973

Dear Bishops of California,

I trust you will not think this letter an affront. Call it brain damage from bumping my head every time I sit upon this lower berth of one of 24 double-decker beds where I lie...one of 99 women in two barracks, 30 of them (religious) Sisters. Here in our women's barracks, I have never been with a more beautiful crowd of women and girls. Warm and loving, pure of life and speech. They are women of great dignity and recognise in the struggle of the United Farm Workers against agribusiness the importance of *La Causa*...They realise the long fight there is ahead. They may seem to be losing or to have lost, but the strike goes on against growers, corporation farms, child labour, poisonous insecticide.

This morning here in the grassy yard, the bishops of El Paso offered the Mass and several hundred received communion. But where are the other bishops of California? But the bishops will lose the support of growers, it is said. How wonderful it would be for you to embrace holy poverty by having wealth taken from you! It is hard to know how to go about divesting oneself when there are a dozen consultants, priests and laymen in a diocese who might not agree to selling your superfluous holdings and giving to the poor. You certainly would quicken the process of acquiring voluntary poverty by visiting the striker or non-striker prisoner and taking the

consequences.

Cesar Chavez is leading the way in building a new social order in the United States. Renewal is coming from the bottom up, not from the top down. ..by co-operatives and credit unions, by decentralisation and regionalism, by land trusts. The Church could provide the means for these beginnings. Forgive me for being presumptuous, but Christ's words are so clear, 'Sell what you have and give to the poor.'

This has been a strange jail experience. Mass every evening.... There has been no humiliating rectal and vaginal searches for drugs, no dispossessing us of books, suitcases, clothes. My only complaint is the complete lack of privacy – 50 women in one long room and 5 uncloseted toilets ranged along the washroom.

But I forget I am writing to bishops about most serious affairs. They are our dear fathers, who in turn ordain other fathers who provide us with sacraments – the water of salvation, the bread of life. And shall we not through them as through Him receive all good things?

(Yet) I see empty convents, institutions, academies, novitiates, and (recall that) Jesus said, 'sell what you have and give alms. Feed the hungry, house the homeless, visit the sick and the prisoner. You will reap a hundredfold.'

Yours in Christ,

Dorothy Day

The Beatitudes – as we see the world today

Blessed are those who live from the depths of their being.

They will see, radiate and attract goodness and know through freedom.

Blessed are those who recognise our Earth is in mourning because of human abuse and destruction.

They will comfort it.

Blessed are those who recognise their smallness in the whole of the Cosmos

They shall share in the co-creation of an unfinished universe.

Blessed are those who live in right relationship with all life.

They will bring about change in the world.

Blessed are the merciful.

For they shall know the heart of God.

Blessed are those who are so in God's love.

They shall know it is God who lives and acts in them.

Blessed are those who live in harmony with all earth's creatures.

They will come to experience a deep peace within themselves.

Blessed are those who seek justice for people who are throwaways in our society.

They will know the true worth of all Creation.

—Brisbane Mercy Sisters, Ireland

Wasting water: a wake-up call

Sr Kari Pohl

I recently returned to live in the United States after six years in Nicaragua, where I had become accustomed to irregular water service — or rather, the regular stoppages in water service. During the dry season and much of the rainy season, our water would go out in the morning and stay out until sometime in the afternoon. We'd considered ourselves fortunate, though — other barrios in the nation's capital only had water service for a couple of hours in the middle of the night. Meanwhile, in many rural communities, wells had gone completely dry.

I watch what's happening with Earth's water, and I alternate between wanting to cry in sorrow and scream in rage. Bolivia lost its second largest lake last year when Lago Poopo completely dried up, taking with it the fish, birds and other wildlife the Uru-Murato people used to depend on for their own survival. What does a traditional fishing culture do when there are no fish, when there's not even water?

I hear about Flint, Michigan, and Valle de Siria, Honduras, where the water itself — the very thing that it supposed to give life — has become a poison, sickening thousands and causing damage that will reach into the next generation.

I follow reports on the disappearance of the Aral Sea in Uzbekistan — which only a few decades ago was the world's fourth largest inland body of water and is now practically gone due to the avarice of just a handful of people insistent on cultivating cotton in a part of the world whose climate was never suitable for such a thirsty crop. How can such a miniscule group cause so much destruction?

I read about Lake Turkana in Kenya — the world's largest desert lake, which is at risk of drying up due to the construction of a massive hydroelectric dam 100 miles upstream. I can't even wrap my mind around bodies of water of that size simply disappearing.

I pray with *Laudato Si'*, and find myself drawn over and over again to paragraph 14, which, in the Spanish version says: efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis haven't 'proved ineffective' — they've been frustrated. And they haven't been frustrated by some vague 'powerful opposition' — they've been frustrated by the powerful themselves.

Efforts have been frustrated by bottling companies who buy entire aquifers right out from under municipalities; they've been frustrated by the mining/extraction and petrochemical industries, which show no motivation whatsoever in developing new techniques for accessing and processing raw materials that don't involve contaminating millions of gallons of ground water and/or dumping toxic residue into the nearest stream or river; they've been frustrated by the owners and managers of mega-farms who continue to use what limited water remains to grow cotton, sugarcane,

tobacco, alfalfa, and other water-intensive crops in parts of the world whose climate is no longer (or never has been) able to support them; they've been frustrated by energy corporations who have no qualms about building massive ecosystem-destroying dams.

Unlike in either version of *Laudato Si'*, however, I don't see a 'lack of interest' — in me or in anyone else. What I see and experience is a sense of powerlessness, a feeling of being overwhelmed, a fear of being swallowed alive by forces far beyond what the average person can control.

We live in a world where money is power and where the accumulated wealth of 67 individuals is greater than the assets of 3.5 billion other people combined; where the laws are made by the powerful, for the powerful; where politicians are brought and sold; where lethal force is all-too-often an acceptable tool to use against protesters, environmentalists, human rights workers or anyone who has the audacity to question the status quo.

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Where do we go with this? Where do I go with this? I think the main challenge isn't getting people to care — it's to convince us that what we do really does make a difference. It's hard to persuade a poor farmer to fix her leaky faucet when the mega-producer down the road is also wasting water — not by the drop, but by the millions (billions? trillions?) of gallons because it costs less money to drain an entire water table and dig a new well than it does to revamp the system and introduce more efficient irrigation techniques.

I pray that I may someday be 'there' — that I may be willing to put myself on the front line to protect the very thing that keeps us all alive, to protect the right of all of us to at least survive, and to protect the holy gift that God has given us.

Kari Pohl is a Sister of St. Joseph of Baden, Pennsylvania. This first appeared in the NCR Global Sisters Report, 14 February 2016.

Francis to visit pacifists' graves

Pope Francis will make a brief visit to two Italian cities in June in order to pray at the tombs of a pair of 20th century priests who were ostracized by Church leaders partly due to their support for pacifism and conscientious objection.

The pontiff will head first to Bozzolo, a small town near Verona, where Fr. Primo Mazzolari is buried. The pope will then travel to Barbiana, near Florence, where Fr. Lorenzo Milani is interred. These two priests were ostracized and sanctioned by ecclesiastical authorities during their lives and have been victims of a process of removal of their legacies from the institutional memory of the Catholic Church in Italy.

Fr. Mazzolari was born in 1890. Like Francis would many years later, he advocated for a Church that was poor and spoke to and for the disadvantaged people of his time. He was also a pacifist who criticized the church's just war teaching. In a 1959 meeting shortly before Fr. Mazzolari's death that year, Pope John XXIII called him a 'trumpet of the

Holy Spirit.'

Fr. Milani was born in 1923. He set up what he called a 'school of the people' that was open to both Christian and non-Christian families, and sharply criticized educational systems that privileged the rich over the poor. He was put on trial in 1965 for advocating conscientious objection in a letter to Italian military chaplains. He died of leukaemia, aged 44.

The pope's visit to the priests' tombs comes as he has put a special emphasis on Jesus' teachings of nonviolence in recent months. In his message for this year's World Day of Peace, Pope Francis called on Christians to emulate Jesus's way of acting nonviolently. The message teaches, 'Jesus marked out the path of nonviolence. To be believers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.'

—Joshua J. McElwee, NCR, 26 April 2017

Review

***A Parish Apart*, Nadur Productions, 2014, directed by Sinead Donnelly. Reviewers; Sue and Michael Malloch. DVD price: \$30.00. Order from sinead.donnelly@hotmail.com.**

This DVD documentary is summed up by St Mary's parishioner in Carterton, Pip Nichols, saying 'This is either the birth of an emerging Church or preparation for the death of it.'

The film represents the awakening of the parishioners in Carterton of their own spirituality and communion with one another. A paradigm shift in thinking was led by a priest searching for answers to the questions of 'power over people in the Church' rather than 'power with people,' and the urgent need to recognise the role of the priesthood of the laity

Post-Vatican II views were of a Church 'together led by the Spirit', and accepting where people are at, rather than the imposition of dogmatic rules and guilt

based on fear. Our salvation partly comes from communion and love and forgiveness with our fellow parishioners. It highlights the serious problem a lack of ordained priests is causing the Church, including the amalgamation of parishes.

The film shows how this one parish practiced liturgies of the people, which could model one way for our future Church. Eventually, because this 'more power to the parishioners' model was unacceptable and due to concerns expressed by some parishioners, the archbishop felt obliged to ask for the resignation of the parish of its parish priest, Fr Eddie Condra. No priest was available to replace Fr Condra, so the Parish was forced to amalgamate into the wider region of Wairarapa.

This excellent documentary gives us an insight as to how God's people will have to face these realities in the future and some of the issues involved. A must-see!

This video can be viewed online at: <https://vimeo.com/173566656>

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A Catholic Worker project
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www.funeralchoice.co.nz

CW website
Leading articles from the first 20 years of
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In this issue	Page
Hope beneath threatening clouds - Jim Consedine.....	1-3
Editorial - Call to action - Bishop Robert McElroy	3
Just War theory obsolete	4
Seventh National CW hui report	5
Brisbane Ploughshares action.....	8
From the Archives - Dorothy Day writes from prison	9
Wasting water - a wake-up call	10

The Common Good

Te Wairua Maranga Trust
Box 33-135
Christchurch 8244
New Zealand



Christians do not even fight against those who are attacking since it is not granted to the innocent to kill even the aggressor.

—St Cyprian of Carthage (c200 – 258 AD)

To the Roman emperor, 'Hitherto I have served you as a soldier. Now I am a soldier of Christ. It is not lawful for me to fight.'

—St Martin of Tours (336 – 397 AD)