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Blessings at City Rail Link project

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Bishop Michael Gielen has blessed a statue of St Barbara — the patron saint of miners — that has been placed near the entrance of a new phase of the Auckland City Rail Link project.

An August 21 note on the City Rail Link facebook page stated that Bishop Gielen was invited to bless a St Barbara statue that would be 20 metres underground. This was in preparation for the start of mining at the Karangahape Station phase of the project.

Bishop Gielen, who is Auckland auxiliary bishop, also blessed a new roadheader machine, and the face of the shaft that will be excavated first.

The post noted that, around the world, statues of St Barbara are placed at the entrance to mines, for miners to touch on their journeys underground.

The post concluded with thanks extended to "Bishop Michael and



Bishop Michael Gielen blesses the statue (Photo courtesy City Rail Link project)

the Catholic Diocese of Auckland for helping with this blessing during the tight level 3 restrictions".

In his facebook post, Bishop Gielen stated: "May God bless and protect all those involved in this project."

Last year, a statue of St Barbara gifted by Pike River Re-Entry Minister Andrew Little was

placed near the portal of the Pike River mine, with the approval of families of those who lost their lives there.

The icon is acknowledged by many miners, even by non-religious ones, at the start of shifts at mines. She is seen as a symbol of good fortune, without necessarily any religious connotations.

St Barbara was a legendary martyr of the early Church, who died circa 200AD. Her feast day is December 4.

The tradition involving mining can be traced back to the 16th century, when miners and military engineers working with explosives sought the saint's intercession for their protection.

Kiwi version of Christian song popular online

by ROWENA OREJANA

More than a quarter of a million people have viewed "The Blessing Aotearoa New Zealand" within a week of the music video being uploaded on YouTube.

More Than Music Mentor founder Grant Norsworthy, who produced the music video, said the New Zealand version of the song — based on Numbers 6:24-26 — is the offering of Kiwi Christians of different denominations (including some Catholics) to the global Christian Church.

"I felt that what we wanted to do was to be a part of the global movement of the Christian Church, no matter what our flavour, style, denomination," said Mr Norsworthy.

Mr Norsworthy, who does not identify with any particular Christian denomination, said Nelson Anglican Bishop Steve Maina first suggested to him (Mr Norsworthy) in April to do a Kiwi version of a virtual choir singing the song.

Mr Norsworthy said he first had to find out if anyone was doing the same project. When he was sure that no one else was doing it, he reached out to as many people as he could.

Wellington archdiocese seminarian Alfred Tong is one of the Catholics who performed in the video.

One of Mr Tong's pastoral engagements at Our Lady of Bays Parish in the Tasman district is to attend ecumenical meetings of the Richmond Waimea Ministers Association (RWMA). It was in one of these meetings where he met Mr Norsworthy.

"It sounded like his initiatives were a great way to facilitate dialogue between the Christian churches, so I was happy to engage with Grant. We exchanged contacts, anticipating necessary opportunities in music ministry arising at Our Lady of the Bays Parish that required Grant's mentorship," he said.

When Mr Norsworthy asked him (Mr Tong) to submit a voice video for the project, Mr Tong was happy to assist.

"I was already in the mindset of producing reflection videos at the time, and thought it wouldn't hurt to contribute to this wonderful initiative," he said. "To my amazement and joy, it captured the spirit of our union in Christ."

Mr Tong said the video is particularly mean-



How 'The Blessing' looked on a computer screen

ingful during this time of pandemic.

"I think we as a Church have all in some way been challenged by asking the hard question about Christ's continued presence in our lives," he said. "Given all the conspiracy theories which have been surfacing about Covid-19 — and a particularly misguided worldview that 'Covid was an act of God' — this song is a clear reminder of Christ's everlasting presence and God's abundant providence, which is a 'blessing', that has roots in the covenants made to Israel, right from the story of Eden in Genesis."

Mr Norsworthy said the making of the Te Reo Māori verse, led by David Tapane Sr, taught him (Mr Norsworthy) how deeply Māori live in their language and culture.

"[The language, the culture] the sceneries and the faces, these are things that make our version of 'The Blessing' different from the one from Hawaii, or the one from Canada, or anywhere else," Mr Norsworthy said. "This is ours, and we are connected with our land, and we are one people who are diverse, and that's the strength of it."

He said a project like this will help encourage Christian unity.

"I've developed some relationships with Catholic people through doing this project. And I find that we have so much more in common than we have difference," he said.

His son is starting next year at Garin College in Nelson.

"We all want to worship the one true God. And we want to be a blessing, not just to sing about it," he said.

On the front cover: Bishop Michael Gielen blesses a roadheader machine at Auckland's City Rail Link (Photo: City Rail Link)

NZCatholic

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Akld Catholic housing providers facing soaring demand

by ROWENA OREJANA

Catholic emergency housing providers in Auckland are struggling to cope with increased demand for shelter as the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on employment.

Monte Cecilia Housing Trust chief executive officer Bernie Smith told *NZ Catholic* that some people are having to face reduced hours of employment, or are losing their jobs as a result of the first lockdown.

"In the month to two months after the first lockdown, we were having 20-30 inquiries per day for housing. And in the last month to six weeks, it's dropped back to ten to 15 inquiries a day," Mr Smith said. "But if we look back 12 months, we were getting ten to 15 inquiries a week."

De Paul House manager Jan Rutledge said they were getting more inquiries in the second level 3 lockdown last month than they did in March.

"We are up to 26 inquiries and we have a wait-list of 55 families waiting for a place with us. Some of those pre-dated this particular resurgence," said Ms Rutledge.

Both said the increase in demand is not surprising, given that the housing crisis predates the pandemic.

Figures released by the Ministry of Social Development showed the number of applicants on the Housing Register was 18,520 as of June 30, an increase of 50.4 per cent as against the same time last year.

Mr Smith said that, after the first lockdown, the trust has assessed 200 families, with another 100 families waiting to be allocated a social worker so that they can be assessed.

"So that is two to three hundred families waiting on a housing solution, [for] long-term, safe, secure, warm and sustainable housing. That's not counting 150 families we already have in our transitional housing properties. That's just for Monte Cecilia," he said.

■ New cohort

Ms Rutledge said De Paul House is seeing a new set of clients, based on what they are seeing of the people who are seeking their help.

"We're probably yet to see the worst of it. Our clients are still beneficiaries-based. But I think we're going to get a new cohort," she said. "We have provided food parcels to a slightly new client base, but they haven't yet come to emergency housing."

"I think we haven't seen the worst of it. Once the (wage) subsidy does cease, we are going to see a new client base potentially."

Mr Smith said they are waiting with "bated breath" as to what will happen with the wage subsidy.

"For some businesses, the second lockdown would mean they'll have to close up shop, which means more people will lose their jobs," he said.

"We know [the wage subsidy] has been extended, but we haven't fully seen yet what the Covid impact would be upon our families, particularly those that are living on a day-to-day basis," he said.

■ More houses needed

Mr Smith said they project a need for 600 houses in the next 12 months.

"We're not growing because we want to grow. We're growing because of the need. When you get



A gateway at De Paul House as seen from Onewa Road, Auckland.

mothers and fathers with little children coming to you, your heart just cries for them," he said.

He said that, from July 2019 to June 2020, they had 1100 families seeking their support.

"The children connected to those families were 2600. Over 50 per cent of them were 7 years and under," he said.

"There's a huge cohort of children that has been traumatised through homelessness, disconnected from school, from social connections, often from their church, because they are transients and trying to have roofs over their heads."

At the moment, Monte Cecilia Housing Trust has properties from Ranui in West Auckland to Pukekohe in South Auckland, and everywhere in between. The trust is looking at the possibility of building houses for affordable rentals, so that their clients can be housed on a long-term basis.

Mr Smith said Catholics who have invested in rentals can also support them by leasing the property to the trust.

"We would fully manage them, pay the market rent, and that would assist more families to be

housed. We take full responsibility, with rents paid 52 weeks of the year," he said.

■ Parish support

Both service providers said they are grateful for the support they are getting from parishes.

Ms Rutledge said that, at level 3, they were limited to receiving only food and linen donations to cut face-to-face contact.

"We're finding that, in keeping people safe and at home, you have to supply them with food. [Getting food is] particularly challenging if you have young children and you're a solo parent," she said.

However, at level 2, they will be reaching out for furniture, as they are short of beds.

Mr Smith said they really appreciate the support from parishes.

"It's easy to be glass-half-empty. We certainly wouldn't be where we are today without the support of the many parishes of Auckland [in terms of] volunteers, donations of groceries, financial donations, furnishing donations," he said.

Family First wins charitable status battle after Court of Appeal hearing

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Family First NZ has won its appeal in the Wellington Court of Appeal against deregistration from the Charities Register.

"This decision is a win for the freedom of speech and belief in New Zealand. The attempt by the Charities [Registration] Board to deregister Family First would have been a watershed, not just for Family First, but for the whole country," said Bob McCoskrie, national director of Family First NZ.

In the High Court in Wellington in 2018, the court judgement held that Family First's "... core purpose of promoting the traditional family unit cannot be shown to be in the public benefit in the

charitable sense under the Act".

Family First did not accept the High Court's analysis, or its conclusions, and appealed to the Court of Appeal.

"Family First appealed this decision because of the threat it placed on us and other charities and our collective freedom to speak on behalf of our supporters in a civil society," Mr McCoskrie said.

"An overly restrictive or narrow view of what is in the public benefit is likely to be of concern to all charities, many of which have a certain emphasis or point of view. The importance of freedom of expression and open debate in a civil society are ideals every New Zealander should be defending," said Mr McCoskrie.

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Chch diocese buys former Copthorne Hotel site

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Christchurch diocese has bought the site of the former Copthorne Hotel in the central city to use in the planned cathedral parish precinct project.

The purchase of the 2154 square metre site at 776 Colombo Street was announced last month by Millennium and Copthorne Hotels NZ Ltd (MCK).

According to a report on Stuff, the site was cleared after the 2011 earthquakes.

A report on the Business Times website out of Singapore stated that

the terms of the sale are confidential, and that final settlement will happen in late May, 2021.

The article reported that MCK managing director B.K. Chiu thanked Bishop Paul Martin, SM, and his representatives for “the constructive way in which negotiations were handled over the last few weeks”.

Bishop Martin told Stuff that the sale agreement means “that the diocese’s vision for the precinct on which the land is situated will now be able to be fully met”.

The cathedral parish precinct had an estimated cost of \$126 million, as of December last year.

The precinct will be built adjacent to Victoria Square, on the site bordered by Armagh Street, Colombo Street, Cambridge Terrace and Manchester Street.

It will include the new cathedral, which will be able to accommodate 1000 people, a new St Mary’s primary school, as well as offices for the diocese, residential accommodation for priests and the bishop, and a multi-storey car parking building.

The cathedral’s project cost is estimated at \$85 million, the school at \$11 million and the bishop’s and priests’ residence, as well as the car

park building, at \$30 million.

In December last year, the diocese stated that the precinct is expected to be completed by 2025.

The diocesan construction project is part of the \$500 million “North of the Square” project, a joint venture between Christchurch diocese, property developer Carter Group and Crown rebuild company Ōtākaro.

According to media reports, the diocese has already bought most of the land for the precinct project.

The old Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, on Barbadoes Street, is to be demolished.

No Sunday Masses for Wellington archdiocese during level 2

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

While the Wellington archdiocese area is under Covid-19 alert level 2 restrictions, Sunday Masses will not be celebrated in the archdiocese.

Cardinal John Dew announced this in a letter in mid-August.

“If we stay at alert level 2, Sunday Masses will not be celebrated in the archdiocese, as in many parishes it is very difficult to ensure that only 100 people are present, and to keep the necessary safety precautions in

place,” Cardinal Dew said.

In the wake of the announcement of the moves in the Covid-19 alert levels on August 11, Cardinal Dew had subsequently announced the suspension of all Masses and parish activities which involve gathering, until August 18.

But the cardinal later announced that weekday and Saturday morning Masses could continue from August 19, with physical distancing and other public health measures being observed.

The Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, announced on August 21 that Auckland would return to level 2 at 11.59pm on Sunday, August 30, but with tight restrictions on public gatherings. Level 2 would be in place until at least Sunday, September 6, but with religious gatherings in Auckland restricted to 10 people (although funerals can have a maximum of 50 people present). This would continue to restrict the resumption of public Masses there.

In level 2, it is understood that

some parishes in Auckland will allow people to visit churches to pray, as long as mandated public health measures – such as no more than 10 people inside the church at a time – are followed.

For the rest of New Zealand, the existing level 2 restrictions – with religious gatherings limited to 100 people – were to remain, with a review by Sunday, September 6. Individual dioceses and parishes would continue to decide which Masses will be celebrated.

Vinnies see sharp rise in requests for help

by MIKE FITZSIMONS

The Covid-19 lockdowns have resulted in a sharp rise across the country in requests for support from the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The response from volunteers and donors has been tremendous, said Marlena Hoeft-Marwick, national president of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

“Some people have donated money, others have given food items and essential household goods. Our ongoing efforts to support the disadvantaged would not be possible without a multitude of donors and volunteers.”

“Many regions have received donations, which [have] been used to help the disadvantaged in those areas.

“Our national office launched a national appeal in June, which has so far raised \$15,000. We have also developed social media platforms to raise awareness of the needs in the community and to encourage people to contribute.”

Ms Hoeft-Marwick said the society was seeing people and families who do not usually ask for help.

“This is a very tough time for a lot of people – people sleeping in vans, people in over-crowded homes, and people needing food parcels and household essentials just to get through.”

Mike Daly, the society’s area president in Christchurch, said that, during lockdown, the society was faced with the challenge of continuing to provide assistance to welfare clients, when it had no income

from its retail shops, which were closed.

“We designed an electronic method of issuing grocery vouchers to those in need. The system worked very well, with the client receiving the voucher by text and then [being] able to redeem the voucher at their local supermarket,” Mr Daly said.

“The cost was projected to be \$5000 per week. We set up a “Give a Little” page and, after one month in level 4 of Covid-19, we had issued over 300 vouchers and spent over \$20,000. During the same period, our ‘Give a Little’ page had received \$14,000, with an additional \$6000 donated directly to Vinnies. God indeed provides through the generosity of many!”

In Auckland, during the first lockdown period from March to end of June, the Vinnies responded to well over 12,000 referrals/requests for food parcels, said Claire Murphy, Auckland area president.

“This unprecedented demand for food peaked at around 1000 parcels per week and, since the first lockdown period, Vinnies have been processing an average of 500 referrals per week.

“Each family food parcel contains dry goods, fresh produce and bread, and a box of frozen meat, dairy and vegetables. Each food parcel is valued at around \$100.

“The largest demand for food parcels comes from those affected by job losses. Those who are struggling include Pasifika and Maori families, solo parents, those who are mentally and physically unwell, refugees, the homeless, those with expired visas, students on student and working visas, and the elderly.”

Ms Murphy said it was a miracle that Vinnies Auckland was able to process 500 parcels each week.

“This huge effort is being

achieved thanks to donors on the ‘Give a Little’ page and friends of Vinnies, who support us each year. We are also lucky to have wonderful volunteers – individuals, youth groups and organisations that pack and process the thousands of parcels and deliver them.”

The society in Westport reports that “since lockdown, we have had numerous requests for assistance with food parcels. We have been very fortunate to have received generous anonymous donations from people who know the work we do in the community, and want to do their bit to help”.

Kathy Egan, from the society’s Taradale conference, said that, since lockdown, “we have been busy re-stocking the depleted community foodbank, taking the elderly from the local rest homes for walks, and delivering ‘cuisine’ food, donated by a local business, to several families. We also provided funds to local early childhood centres for outings and equipment not covered by Ministry of Education funding.”

“In these cold winter months, firewood has been delivered to many families and we have also provided personal items for women and children staying at the Women’s Refuge.”

Millie Lambess, the society’s Wellington area communications manager, said that, since the first lockdown ended in June, the Vinnies Wellington food bank was continuing to operate at a “100 per cent plus” increase in support provided to clients.

“Alongside the distribution of practical assistance, our community social worker is experiencing an increasing need for psycho-social support, as the long-term effects of the COVID-19 lockdown emerge,” said Ms Lambess.



Tania Martin (social worker) and David (volunteer) cleaning incoming purchases for the food bank in Wellington.

Anglicans grateful for Dunedin cathedral help

by JEFF DILLON

The issue of social distancing actually resulted in two denominations coming closer together briefly — with St Joseph’s Cathedral parish in Dunedin agreeing to a request from the nearby Anglican St Paul’s Cathedral parish recently.

An early morning fire in the roof of St Paul’s Cathedral could not have come at a worse time, being within a week of a planned confirmation service and other formal appointment ceremonies. The cathedral was rendered unusable, with water damage and electrical wiring needing replacement.

Offers for the St Paul’s congregation to join either Anglican Sunday services at All Saints’ Dunedin North or St Matthew’s had to be declined on the basis of numbers. It was expected that the confirmation and other intended services would attract the maximum allowed gathering of 100 people. Adding to the complications was the directive for social distancing under Covid-19 alert level 2, which then meant neither of the two inner-city Anglican churches were able to be used.

The physical distance between St Paul’s Cathedral and St Joseph’s Cathedral is not that great in Dunedin, so the Dean of St Paul’s, the Very Rev. Dr Tony Curtis, approached Bishop Michael Dooley with the request to use St Joseph’s Cathedral. Bishop Dooley was sympathetic in the circumstances. He commented, “I had heard of the unfortunate fire in the roof of St Paul’s and, when I was asked about the approach from the Dean to use St Joseph’s Cathedral on that Sunday afternoon, I was very supportive. It was a practical way we could help our Anglican brothers and sisters. I discussed it with Msgr John Harrison, and he was very happy for the St Joseph’s parish community to host the St Paul’s congregation for their confirmation service”.

So worshippers and a choir from St Paul’s came to St Joseph’s Cathedral on the Sunday afternoon to celebrate a Eucharist service on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and witness the confirmation of a young girl as well as the licensing of a new canon and of a priest



Ziva Curtis is the centre of all the confirmation attention at St Joseph’s Cathedral, while onlookers from left to right include Theodora Clarke-Wallace (a fellow pupil), Dean Rev. Dr Tony Curtis (Ziva’s father), Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr Steven Benford and Rev. Dr Tony Martin (Photos: Julianne Clarke-Morris: Anglican Taonga)

for St Paul’s.

The confirmation ceremony was celebrated by the Anglican Bishop of Dunedin, Rt Rev. Dr Steven Benford, and the young girl was Ziva Curtis, the Dean’s daughter. It so happens that Ziva attends a Catholic school — Sacred Heart School in North East Valley. As Dunedin Anglicans do not have their own primary school system, it is not unusual for Anglican parents to enrol their children at Catholic primary schools to get the benefit of a religious-based programme.

Ziva took part in her classmates’ confirmation preparation at Sacred Heart School, and she and her mother attended and observed the confirmation ceremony celebrated by Bishop Dooley on the Wednesday night before her confirmation. Her confirmation was planned to happen as close

as possible to when her Catholic classmates were confirmed.

There are other examples of mutual respect and collaboration within the religious communities in Dunedin. Bishop Dooley commented on this aspect by saying, “There is a good ecumenical relationship in the city, where we respect our different religious traditions, but try wherever possible to work together and support one another. I meet regularly with the Anglican Bishop Steven Benford, and I appreciate the opportunity for us to share about our ministry and to pray together about it”.

Another example happened earlier this year when Bishop Dooley and Msgr Harrison, as well as clergy from other denominations, were present at the service during which Dr Curtis was installed in his position at St Paul’s. In addition, there is a tradition whereby Churches around Dunedin city take turns in hosting the celebration of Pentecost.

With temporary repairs undertaken in the meantime at St Paul’s, services will resume there. Both Bishop Benford and the Dean have expressed publicly their grateful appreciation for St Joseph’s coming to their aid in their time of need.



The official Anglican party processes up the main aisle of St Joseph’s Cathedral at the beginning of their Eucharist service. Bishop Benford is at the end of the procession.

St Gianna’s home welcomes first baby

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

A very special occasion has happened at the recently-opened St Gianna’s Home for Mothers and Babies in Auckland — the first resident of the home has given birth to her first baby.

The news was shared in a message sent out by Family Life International’s Dame Colleen Bayer last month, in which she thanked God and “a magnificent team of medical professionals”.

“This tiny wee baby, who was fighting for her life, has the extra chromosome of unconditional love — she has been blessed with the gift of

Down syndrome,” Dame Colleen wrote.

“Mum is very brave. She has shown great courage in accepting life in the face of adversity. She, and her baby, are a sign of hope, love and forgiveness in a world so obsessed with abortion.

“This young family of two face many challenges in life, but with our faithful love and commitment, which is a hallmark of all FLI’s Friends for Life, mother, and her baby daughter, will face their challenges head on and will share their love and joy with this broken world.”

Dame Colleen asked for

prayers for “this mum and her precious daughter”.

Saint Gianna’s Home for Mothers and Babies was officially opened and blessed by Auxiliary Bishop Michael Gielen on June 19, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as reported by NZ Catholic.

The home provides a safe and positive home for mothers who need urgent accommodation because of their particular situation. Often, the mothers will be vulnerable to suggestions of abortion.

Each mother’s situation is different, and assistance is given to the mother for as long as she needs after the baby is born.

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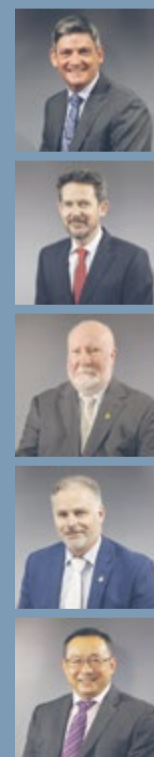
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A metaphor for life

Most of us will have indulged in that slightly obsessive bathroom activity of struggling to squeeze that very last vestige of toothpaste from its tube. I have re-imagined this as a crude, but apt, metaphor for a commonly held view of life. It is one declaring that this life is all there is! From birth to a person's eventual death, it is the sum total of each human's existence, there is nothing more!

The practical implications arising from this existential belief system are pretty obvious — we need to extract every ounce of fun, wealth, status, experience, in short, grab every opportunity for

Neil Broom

personal betterment from the “toothpaste tube of life” because when it's empty, that's it.

And even in that final “squeeze”, let's make sure it is as painless as possible — hence all New Zealanders being called to vote in the ‘End-of-Life’ euthanasia referendum at this year's October election.

But, as a counter to the toothpaste metaphor, I find I am drawn to the brutal honesty of one of the leading apostolic pillars of the early Christian Church — St Paul. In his pastoral letter to the Christians in the Church at Corinth, he asserts, without mincing his words, the historical fact of Christ's bodily Resurrection, viewing it as a kind of “first harvest” pledge for humanity — the pledge

that followers of Christ will also be raised to a new resurrection life.

As a scientist with a long career in experimental research, in which precise observations of phenomena are fundamental, what I so admire about St Paul is that he really does place huge value on the evidence. For Paul, the hard data are utterly crucial, and it is for this reason that he carefully lists the multitude of eye-witness accounts of the Resurrection event. He gives no traction to a popular and theologically permissive view which holds that it is much more important that we are inspired by the Resurrection “tale”, even if it is historically untrue — we just need to be stirred emotionally in a positive way by merely reading the story.

For St Paul, there is simply no room for treating the Resurrection as a kind of Christianised “optional extra”. If the Resurrection is not true, but we cling to it as if it were true, then in Paul's view we are the most pathetic mob of humanity on earth — just stupid, gullible believers in

a downright lie. And equally, he argues, if the Resurrection is not true, then let's not pretend anything positive can come out of it by way of comforting sentiments based on a fairytale; for in the imagery of our toothpaste tube, it's all finished and that's that. And here, St Paul's advice borders on the unsaintly — if there is no Resurrection, we might as well go and have a jolly good booze-up (I was tempted here to use “street language”) and drown our sorrows and fears, for there is nothing more to be squeezed out of the now empty toothpaste tube of life!

St Paul, elsewhere in his correspondence with the early Church in Rome, provided wonderful encouragement for those many Christians who had fallen prey to horrendous physical suffering and persecution. And his message to these early Christians was not that they should seek to be put out of their misery. Rather, Paul exhorted them to take heart in the midst of their suffering, for it cannot compare with the transcendent joy that is to be part of Resurrection life.

As we each face the challenge of how to vote in the “End-of-Life” referendum, may we be emboldened by the hope revealed in the risen Christ. May we pray that people will cling to life, for, while there is life, there is surely the possibility of that life-transforming encounter with the divine.

Neil Broom is an Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Engineering, University of Auckland, and has a particular interest in the relationship between science and faith.



Ronald Rolheiser

Pornography and the sacred

The ancient Greeks had gods and goddesses for everything, including a goddess of shame called Aidos. Shame for them meant much more than it normally means to us. In their mind, shame brought with it modesty, respect, and a certain needed reticence before things that should remain private and hidden. The goddess of shame instructed you as to when you were supposed to turn your eyes away from things too intimate to be seen. Shame, as they understood it, contained a modesty and reverence you were supposed to feel in the presence of anything sacred, or when you were receiving a gift or when making love.

They had an intriguing myth undergirding this: Aphrodite, the goddess of love, is born out of the sea; but, as she rises above the waves in her stunning beauty, her nakedness is shielded by three deities: Aidos, the goddess of shame; Eros, the god of love; and Horai, the goddess of propriety. They protect her naked body with love, propriety, and shame. For the ancient Greeks, this was a religious truth, one which taught that, without these three deities of protection, the naked body should not be seen. When nakedness (of any kind) is not protected by these deities, it is unfairly exposed and dishonoured.

I cite this myth to make a case against pornography, since today it is too naively accepted in the culture and its real harm is mostly unrecognised.

Let me begin this way. First, Internet pornography is today, far and away, the biggest addiction in the whole world. No credible analyst or critic will deny that. Like all addictions, it's also deadly. Yet, more and more we see our society become casual and even indifferent to it.

Pornography is everywhere, is often seen as harmless, and it's not uncommon to see mainstream sitcoms on television speak of someone's porn collection as they might speak of his collection of toy airplanes. Beyond that, we have more people positively challenging those who speak out against pornography.

I've had colleagues, Christian theologians, say: “Why are we so uptight about seeing sex! Sex is the most beautiful thing God left us, why can't

it be seen?”

Why can't it be seen? We might begin with Carl Jung's statement that one of our greatest naiveties is that we believe that energy is friendly and is always something we can control. It isn't. Energy is imperialistic, it wants to take us over and control us. Once it takes hold of us, it can be hard to turn off. That's one of the reasons why pornography is so dangerous. Its energy takes hold like a “demonic” possession.

But pornography is not only dangerous, it's also wrong, badly wrong. Those who protest that sex is beautiful and there should be nothing wrong in seeing it are, in fact, half right; sex is beautiful, . . . but its energy and nakedness are so powerful that it should not be seen, at least not without the deities of love, propriety, and shame in attendance.

As Christians, we don't believe in a pantheon of gods and goddesses, we believe in only one God; but that God contains all other deities, including Aphrodite, Aidos, Eros, and Horai (Beauty,

Shame, Love, and Propriety). Moreover, God is always shielded from our look, shrouded, hidden, not to be approached except in reverence, and for a reason. Our faith tells us, no one can look at God and live.

That's why pornography is wrong. It isn't wrong because sex isn't beautiful, but rather because sex is so powerful as to carry some of the very energy and power of the divine. That's also why pornography is so powerfully addictive — and so harmful. Sex is beautiful but its naked beauty, like the naked body of Aphrodite arising out of the sea, may only be looked at when it is properly attended by love and propriety and protected by shame.

In the end, all sins are sins of irreverence, and that irreverence always contains some impropriety, disrespect and shamelessness. Pornography is a sin of irreverence. Metaphorically, it is standing before the burning bush with our shoes on as we watch Aphrodite arise naked out of the sea without being accompanied by love and propriety, without shame shielding our eyes from her nakedness.

There's why the world of art makes a distinction between being naked and being nude, and why the former is degrading, while the latter is beautiful. The difference? Being naked is being unhealthily exposed, exhibited, shown, peeked at, in a way that violates intimacy and dignity. Conversely, being seen nude is to have your nakedness properly attended to by love and propriety and shielded by shame, so that your very vulnerability helps reveal your beauty.

Pornography degrades both those who indulge in it and those unhealthily exposed in it. It is wrong from both a human view and the view of faith. From the human view, Aphrodite's naked body needs to have divine shields. From the view of faith, we believe that no one can look at the face of God and live.

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



Modesty by Giosuè Argenti, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow) (Photo: Daniel Naczka - Wikimedia commons)

Guest Editorial

Let's not create an ethical dilemma

by ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY FISHER, OP

Most religious believers are not anti-vaxxers. In fact, most of us are praying for a vaccine against Covid-19. So the Australian Government's announcement that it has signed a letter of intent to manufacture the AstraZeneca/Oxford University Covid-19 vaccine (if successful in clinical trials) sounds like great news.

Until you read the fine print on the ampule. Turns out that this vaccine makes use of a cell-line (HEK-293) cultured from an electively-aborted human foetus. Of 167 candidate vaccines for Covid-19 identified by the World Health Organisation, 29 of which are already in clinical evaluation, the Commonwealth has thrown its lot in with one that some ordinary Australians will find morally problematical.

It has also been reported that, if the vaccine is adopted for use in Australia, it will be "as near to mandatory as possible". At the very least, it can be expected that it is likely there will be enormous social and political pressure upon people to use it. "No jab, no play", they'll say. No childcare. No aged care. No job for you.

Of course, many people will have no ethical problem with using tissue from electively-aborted foetuses for medical purposes.

Others may regard the use of a cell-line derived from an abortion performed back in the 1970s as now sufficiently removed from the abortion itself to be excusable.

But others again will draw a straight line from the ending of a human life in abortion, through the cultivation of the cell-line, to the manufacture of this vaccine. They won't want to be associated with, or benefit in any way, from the death of the baby girl whose cells were taken and cultivated, nor to be thought of as trivialising that death, nor to be encouraging the foetal tissue industry.

I, for one, don't think it would be unethical to use this vaccine if there is no alternative available. To do so would not be to co-operate in any abortion occurring in the past or the future. But I am deeply troubled by it.

Those who are troubled by it will either have to acquiesce to the social pressure to use the vaccine on themselves and their dependents, or conscientiously object to it. If they resist, they will suffer various disadvantages and their abstention may undermine the goal of "herd immunity". Some will feel deeply conflicted, whichever way they go. And it will be socially divisive.

Unnecessarily so. If the Government pursues an ethically uncontroversial vaccine, this won't be a problem. If it assures people that no one will be pressured to use such a vaccine, or disadvantaged for failing to do so, it won't be a problem. If it makes available an ethically uncontroversial alternative vaccine, if one is achieved, those who are troubled in conscience will be relieved.

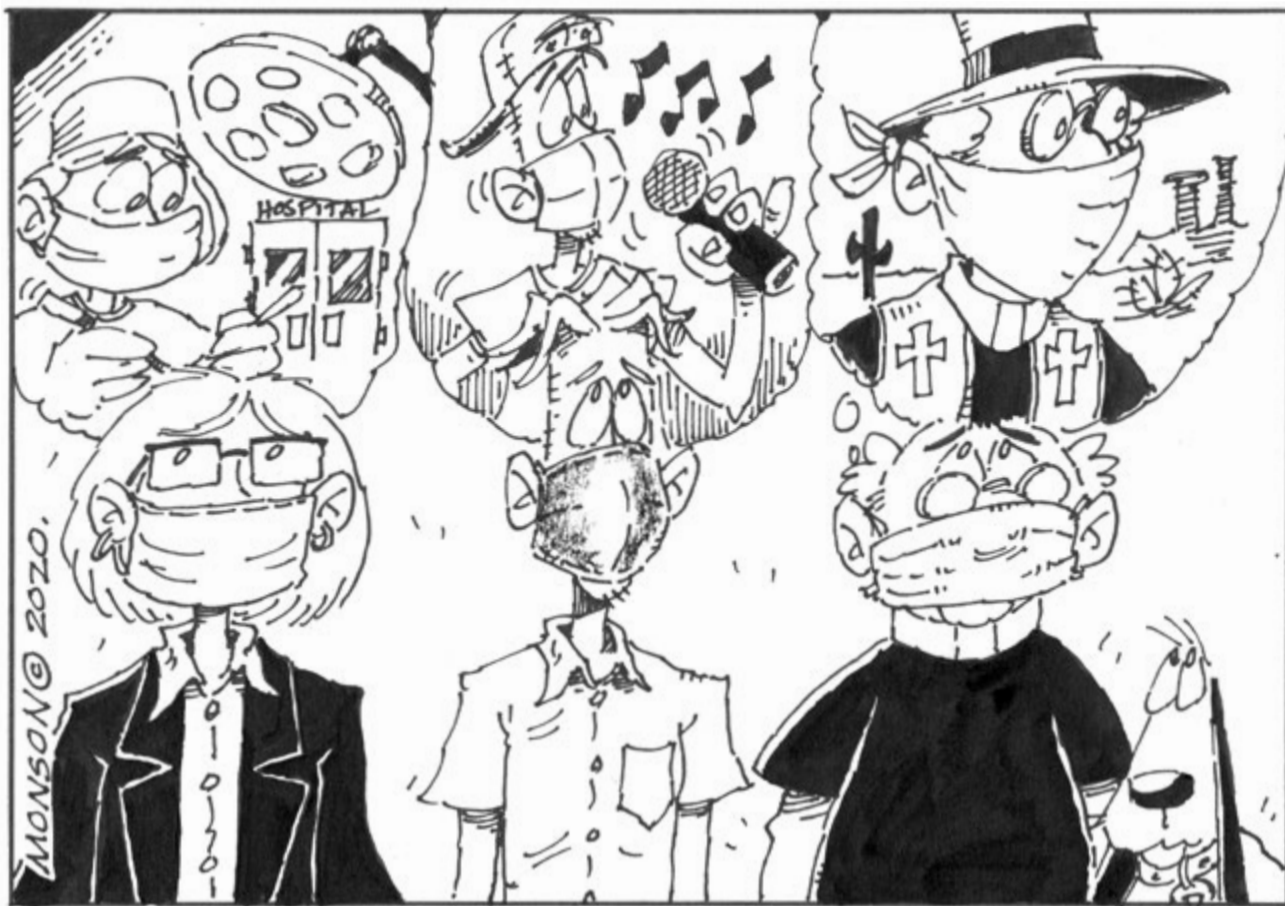
The key, then, is seeking solutions that protect the community's physical health, while also respecting its moral health and offering people choices.

I'm a strong advocate of vaccinations — and not just for Covid-19 — as long as they are safe and ethically obtained. I commend the efforts of our Commonwealth and State governments to keep us safe. I won't be wagging my finger at anyone who uses the vaccine.

What people need right now is some hope that life can return to relative normalcy. But we do not want this at the price of many good people's consciences and the creation of new social tensions. There are ethically untainted alternatives: let's pursue those.

The opinion piece, in response to concerns from the faithful, was first published in *The Catholic Weekly* from Sydney. Archbishop Fisher is the publisher of that newspaper. The article was posted to www.thecatholicweekly.com.au on August 24. It is republished here with permission.

The Habit



Letters

Freedom

Recently, on social media, I've been labelled as a "conservative Catholic". I know it's meant as a slur, and it implies that I am disqualified from commenting intelligently on controversial issues. Obviously, I disagree.

Why does our faith challenge others so much? And why do our religious freedoms feel diminished lately?

Why do the liberal mainstream media belittle people of faith, particularly conservative politicians and social commentators? Why do they literally ignore our news-worthy events? Is it harder for them to manipulate people who put their trust in God?

When many Christians were denied the opportunity to make an oral submission on the Abortion Legislation Bill, a clear message was sent: "You have nothing of value to add to this conversation." Does our Government think that silencing the truth changes the truth?

This Government has fostered bigotry in its debates. MPs who rejected the call for abortion liberalisation were subjected to immense pressure and ridicule. MP Agnes Loheni summed it up when she said "underlying this call is the perverse idea that religious views can be automatically discounted, excluded . . . mocked."

As an aside, I'm not alone in thinking my freedom of religion and ex-

pression is under threat. A whopping 79 per cent replied "Yes" to a recent Newshub poll on "Do you believe our right to freedom of opinion and expression is under threat?"

Catherine Gillies, Auckland.

Pro-life

There appears to be a general agreement in the secular media to ignore all pro-life events, and to shun any attempt to carefully analyse the recent abortion legislation and the upcoming referendums, and the election itself, from a pro-life perspective.

After looking through some of our religious papers and listening to our religious leaders, I wonder if we have caught the same mainstream media disease. All manner of events and happenings are recorded except for the things that should concern us. We are now living in a legally more depraved country than the biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Do you know that every present party leader in Parliament voted to kill babies born alive after a botched abortion, and the favoured method is to let them die of thirst and starvation?

I would urge all your readers to do some research and use their votes wisely to "Send a Message to Wellington" in one of the most critical elections in our history.

J. Costello,

Punakaiki. ■ Abridged. *The vote in Parliament referred to by the correspondent took place on March 10. The current party leaders were among those who voted against an amendment by Simon O'Connor (National) to the Abortion Legislation Bill that would have ensured that, if an abortion results in a baby being born, then a qualified health practitioner has a duty to provide appropriate medical care and treatment for the baby. The amendment was rejected in an 80-37 vote.* — Editor.

Baptism

The Vatican's new statement on baptism (*NZ Catholic*, August 23) has fascinating implications.

It is really Christ himself (we are told) who baptises and has the principal role in the event. For that reason, it is not permissible to substitute "we" for "I" in the formula "I baptise you . . .".

Yet the Catechism tells us (CCC 1256) that, in an emergency, any person of either sex can perform a baptism, provided they have the required intention and use the Trinitarian formula ("in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit").

If the baptiser represents Christ himself, it follows that a woman can validly represent Christ in the performance of a sacramental function. This accords perfectly with the fact that God (including Christ, in his divine nature) is neither man nor woman (CCC 239,

370). There is no reason, therefore, why a woman cannot represent Christ in the sacramental function of the Eucharist — no reason, in other words, to reject women priests.

On this issue, even such respected figures as St John Paul II have proved sadly "unteachable" (Matthew 19.8; Mark 10.5). But doctrinal inconsistencies that exclude half the human race from the priesthood benefit no one except the devil.

We must urgently insist on clearer thinking at the Vatican and acknowledgement of past mistakes.

Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy, Christchurch.

Novena

I have been thinking of what we could do regarding this election, and I realise that one of the best ways ahead is, for as many people as possibly can, to pray the 54-day rosary novena for the election.

There is just enough time. For those who do not know, one has to offer 27 days of petitions, praying the rosary, then 27 days of thanksgiving rosaries to Our Blessed Mother.

We can ask for people to be guided to pray for people to be elected to Parliament who desire to do God's holy will and be obedient to his laws. This is what our land needs desperately. I hope many people can join me.

B.W.Wengdal, Herne Bay, Auckland.

■ This letter was received after the previous edition of *NZ Catholic* went to press. — Editor.

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NZ Catholic welcomes readers' letters, although receipt of a letter does not guarantee publication. No correspondence will be entered into concerning publication. Letters should be no longer than 220 words and should be topical, to the point, and include the writer's address and phone number. *Ad hominem* attacks are not welcome. Emailed letters should be sent as part of the text message — not as an attachment — to editor@nzcatholic.org.nz and include the writer's physical address. Pseudonyms are not accepted, except by special arrangement.

Vocational path led Deacon Tang to Aotearoa

by ROWENA OREJANA

As a little boy, Deacon Tang Phan had always wanted to be a teacher.

"[My] teachers were very lovely. They have good hearts. They were kind towards me and they cared for me. I wanted to be one of them . . . to teach others," he said.

He aimed to do that, but things didn't work out quite as he hoped, so he took up Information Technology instead in his homeland of Vietnam.

A homily given by his uncle who was a priest put him onto the path to priesthood, but perhaps, with a different approach.

"He gave a homily saying that Jesus is the best teacher ever. I thought, I want to be a teacher. It might be the way he (Jesus) is calling me," he said.

After two postponements due Covid-19 restrictions, Deacon Tang is finally being ordained to the priesthood on September 19, at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Christchurch.

"We were thinking of July 11 but, because of lockdown level 4 during Easter time, we decided to move it so we can have more people, and everything will be open to everyone. We decided to move it to August 22," he said.

But because New Zealand is again under Covid-19 restrictions, Christchurch Bishop Paul Martin and Deacon Tang decided to move it to September.

Deacon Tang said he took longer than others to find out about the mid-August change in alert levels, because he was at a retreat.

"On Wednesday (August 12) when I came in the church for Mass, I said, 'oh, there's something different today'," he said.

Upon realising Christchurch had been moved up to level 2, he became "a bit worried because of my ordination and many people have planned to come. Everything would be postponed again".

After much prayer, he said he felt at peace.

Deacon Tang said that, when he was a little boy, he often accompanied his grandfather to the parish centre, where his grandfather worked.

The idea of becoming a priest wasn't foreign to him but, during his primary and secondary school years, he became more interested in teaching.

Deacon Tang was teaching IT at a university when his uncle asked him (Deacon Tang) to help in his uncle's parish.

It was at this parish where Auxiliary Bishop Pierre Nguyen Van Vien, who was still a priest back in 2012, asked Deacon Tang if he wanted to become a priest in New Zealand.

"He (Bishop Vien) studied in Sydney and he came back. He said, 'New Zealand is in need of vocations. Would you like to come to New Zealand?' I said, 'where is New Zealand?'," he said with a laugh.

Deacon Tang asked for some time to think about this. With some encouragement, he contacted Msgr Brendan Daly. Deacon Tang came to New Zealand by the end of October in 2012.

He said his father was fine with him going to New Zealand, but his mother wasn't happy at first.

"I'm closer to my Dad. Whenever I go home, I normally have a long chat with him. I said to him, 'Dad, I'm going to New Zealand to study (to be a priest). He said, 'ok, whatever you want and wherever God calls you',"



Deacon Tang Phan (left) after his ordination as a deacon last year. With him is Fr Simon Eccleton.

Deacon Tang recalled.

His mother, however, was not happy about him being so far away.

"Mum was saying 'don't go, because if you go, you cannot come home to see me often'. I said to her, 'I'll go home often to see you.' But since I came here, I have been home twice. Hopefully, later on, I can see her more often, but more than once every two years," he said.

But after seeing that he was happy here, his Mum became happy for him as well. And now, his younger brother, Joseph, is in Christchurch discerning a vocation as well.

"He's still learning English in Christchurch. We hope he can get through it. He's six years younger than me," Deacon Tang said.

Deacon Tang said his priority as a priest is to be "a man of prayer, and to focus on the sacraments that we are called to celebrate and administer to the people".

After these, his next priority would be his pastoral work. "I would love to see the people in the parish, maybe have a chat with them, to share my story or listen to theirs," he said.

Deacon Tang said he will be a teacher of faith as every priest is called to be.

"I never thought I was going to New Zealand. But wherever God leads me, then I'll follow. I'm happy with that. Every priest has to be a teacher, that is the path of my vocation," he said.

Ordinations rescheduled

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

An ordination to the priesthood and to the diaconate according to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite will take place at St Benedict's church in Newton, Auckland, in early October.

NZ Catholic understands that Bishop Denis Browne, Emeritus Bishop of Hamilton, will ordain Deacon Roger Gilbride, FSSP, to the priesthood, and Mr Brendan Boyce, FSSP, to the diaconate on Saturday, October 3, with the Mass starting at 10.30am.

For several months, they have been working in Te Atatu with Fr Antony Sumich, FSSP, as NZ Catholic reported earlier this year.

Deacon Gilbride and Mr Boyce were scheduled to be ordained in

Australia this year. They returned to New Zealand from England and the United States respectively when the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

An initial ordination date of June 20 in Sydney was rescheduled for August 8, but this has had to be called off because of ongoing border restrictions in Australia.

"Recently, we asked Bishop Denis Browne . . . to ordain Brendan Boyce and I to the diaconate and priesthood, respectively. Thanks be to God he readily agreed to ordain us in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite," Deacon Gilbride said in an email announcing his ordination date.

"We are now finalising our preparations for that Mass, and, God willing, there will be no more lockdowns!"

Mr Gilbride said that all are welcome to the October 3 ordination, and to his first Mass celebrated as an ordained priest the following day, October 4, at 12.30pm at St Benedict's.

"We will try to arrange a live-video link, please see our website or Facebook page for details: www.fssp.nz" According to their website, The Priestly Fraternity of St Peter (FSSP) is a clerical Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right, canonically erected by Pope St John Paul II in 1988. Their priests serve in apostolates across the world, with the faithful celebration of the traditional Mass in Latin and sacraments (Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite) at the centre of their charism.



Deacon Roger Gilbride, FSSP

US priest's baptism shock

DETROIT (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Detroit in the US is seeking to contact anyone who may have received invalid sacraments, after a priest of the archdiocese learned his own baptism as an infant 30 years ago was invalid.

On August 6, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a note clarifying that baptisms using an improper formula — namely, those using the phrase "We baptise you . . .", instead of the Church's ancient formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," are not valid.

Father Matthew Hood, associate pastor of St Lawrence parish in Utica, contacted the Archdiocese of Detroit after discovering that his own baptism, captured on video in 1990, used improper wording.

Because the sacraments of confirmation and holy orders can only be conferred upon validly baptised Catholics, Father Hood was "devastated" to learn that, not only was he not baptised or confirmed, but he also was not a validly ordained priest.

As a consequence of the invalid baptism, Father Hood lacked the ability to confer most sacraments since he thought he was ordained in 2017, Archbishop Allen Vigneron said in an August 22 letter to Catholics in the archdiocese.

"The parishes where Father Hood has been assigned . . . will be working with the archdiocese to contact those who sought out the sacraments with Father Hood, so that each individual's circumstance

may be examined and rectified," the archbishop said.

The attempted baptism in the 1990s was done by a deacon and used the words, "We baptise you . . .", instead of the Church's prescribed formula.

On August 9, Fr Hood was validly baptised, confirmed and received the Eucharist, and after a week on retreat, he was ordained a transitional deacon and a priest two days later on August 17.

"The archbishop called me, and I could tell he was even more concerned about it than I was, and I was very concerned about it," Father Hood said. "To know of his pastoral care for me, for my vocation, was a huge grace from the very beginning."

Now, the archdiocese is attempting to contact anyone else who might have been invalidly baptised by the deacon, or who received invalid sacraments from Fr Hood. The deacons is retired and is not currently in active ministry.

Although Father Hood was not able to validly perform some marriages, celebrate Mass, grant absolution, administer confirmation or anoint the sick, any baptisms he performed are presumed valid, since a priest is not required to baptise, as long as the correct formula, matter and intention are present.

"We can be assured that all those who approached Father Hood, in good faith, to receive the sacraments, did not walk away empty-handed," Archbishop Vigneron wrote in his letter. "We know that Our Lord, in his unending love for us, supplied some measure of grace."

Church welcomes release of inquiry details

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand has welcomed the publication by the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care of details of the commission's investigation into abuse committed in the care of the Church.

The commission published documents last month giving the details of its investigation into the Church — including the Church's part in faith-based redress for survivors — which will form part of the commission's inquiry into the historic abuse of children, young persons and vulnerable adults in state- and faith-based care.

According to the royal commission's website, the inquiry is investigating abuse and neglect that occurred from 1950 to 1999. It has the discretion to consider issues and experiences that happened outside this timeframe. In the case of the Catholic Church, the abuse and neglect could have been committed by priests, religious or lay employees.

The terms of reference for the royal commission define abuse as meaning physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, and neglect. It includes inadequate or improper treatment that resulted in serious mental or physical harm to a person in care.

Among the aspects of the inquiry into the Catholic Church will be occasions where the Church provided care on behalf of the state.

According to a royal commission scoping document for the Catholic Church inquiry, examination of the impacts on victims and survivors, and on their families, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities, will include consideration of several factors, including how abuse affected the religious beliefs held by victims and survivors, and particular impacts re-

lated to disability and mental illness, as well as Tikanga Maori and Pacific cultural aspects where applicable.

Also among areas to be considered will be "structural, systemic, practical or other factors that caused or contributed to the abuse of children, young persons and vulnerable adults in the care of the Catholic Church", as well as "the adequacy of any actions by the Catholic Church to prevent and respond to abuse in its care, including any lessons learned and changes made", and "the adequacy of the Catholic Church's redress and rehabilitation processes for victims and survivors of abuse in its care".

The Catholic Church's redress policies will be examined in a public hearing on faith-based redress in November and December 2020.

The scoping document went on to state that inquiry will also assess and make recommendations on "the Catholic Church's current structures and frameworks, and any gaps in legislation, canon law, Church policy, rules, standards and practices that require change to prevent and respond to abuse in its care".

Further assessment and recommendations will be made on "any other steps the Catholic Church should take to address the harm caused by the abuse in its care".

The royal commission document added that, "where relevant, the inquiry may make findings of fault, or that relevant standards have been breached, or both".

"The inquiry does not have the power to determine the canonical, civil, criminal or disciplinary liability of any person, but may make recommendations that further steps be taken to determine liability."

In a statement released on August 20, Catherine Fyfe, chair of Te Rōpū Tautoko — the Church body established to liaise with the royal com-

mission — welcomed the publication of the details concerning the inquiry into the Catholic Church.

"Te Rōpū Tautoko is already working with the commission's staff, and with Catholic dioceses and congregations, to ensure timely and comprehensive responses, with transparency and openness," Ms Fyfe said.

"We will do all we can to positively engage in this important process of listening, acknowledging, learning, and reaffirming commitment to safeguarding the vulnerable."

"At the heart of our responses to the royal commission is a set of principles based on the belief that every person has innate human dignity. With that at the front of our mind, we enter this process wanting to primarily listen to, learn from, and support those harmed in Catholic institutions."

The bishops and congregational leaders sought to have the Church included in the work of the royal commission, which, when first established, was limited to inquiring into abuse in state care. The royal commission acknowledged, in publishing the scoping documents, that the extension by the Government of the royal commission's terms of reference to include faith-based institutions was supported by the leaders of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Cardinal John Dew, vice-president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference and a Tautoko member, welcomed the publication of the inquiry documents.

"We reaffirm our support for the work of the royal commission and our desire to learn from its work, which we are confident will contribute positively to the safeguarding of all people, and strengthening of families, communities and the wider society," Cardinal Dew said.

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference and the Congregational Leaders' Conference Aotearoa New Zealand set up Te Rōpū Tautoko to ensure the Church provides a co-ordinated and co-operative response to the royal commission from all the many dioceses, congregations and institutions of the Church.

8 investigations announced so far

According to the royal commission's website, as of August 18, eight investigations have been launched to date into abuse and neglect that occurred in state and faith-based care settings, and into themes and issues.

They are listed as "Redress — State and faith"; "Māori experiences of abuse in care"; "Pacific People's experience of abuse in care"; "Abuse in children's state residential care"; "Abuse in State Psychiatric Care"; "Abuse in disability care and the experience of people with disabilities"; "Abuse in the care of the Catholic Church"; "Abuse in the care of the Anglican Church".

Two case studies are also listed: "Case study examining abuse at the Lake Alice Child and Adolescent Unit"; "Case study examining abuse of children at Marylands School".

Most investigations are supported by public hearings, the website stated.

"At the end of most, if not all, of the investigations, the Inquiry will publish an investigation report, which will include findings and recommendations," the website noted.

Royal commission to look at Marylands School

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

As part of the investigation into abuse in the care of the Catholic Church, the inquiry is to investigate events that occurred at Marylands School in Christchurch. This case study will include a public hearing, although a date has yet to be named for this.

Marylands was a residential school for boys, including many with learning disabilities, run by the Hospitaller Brothers of St John of God, from the 1950s to 1984.

The nature and extent of abuse that occurred at Marylands will be investigated, as well as why it happened, and the impacts of abuse.

Marylands is one of a number

of individual inquiries the royal commission will hold into state and faith-based institutions, as part of its overall investigation into historical child abuse in care institutions.

A scoping document for the Marylands inquiry, along the same lines as that released for the broader inquiry into the Catholic Church, was released by the royal commission last month.

Among areas of investigation for the Marylands inquiry will be "the nature and extent of any failures of the Order of St John of God, the Catholic Church or the State, to protect children and young people in care from abuse by individuals associated with the order", as well as "the adequacy of the response

of the Order of St John of God, the Catholic Church and the State, to allegations of abuse by individuals associated with the order, including the redress and rehabilitation processes available to victims and survivors of abuse at Marylands".

The Inquiry will also examine "the nature of the relationship between the Order of St John of God and the Catholic Church, and how it impacted on issues of child protection".

The Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand welcomed publication of details of the Marylands case study inquiry.

Catherine Fyfe, chair of Te Rōpū Tautoko, welcomed the announcement, and said the Church and Tau-

toko would work supportively and diligently to do everything possible to co-operate.

"We will work with the royal commission and the leadership of the brothers of St John of God to ensure that our response is as timely and comprehensive as possible, to honour those harmed at Marylands," Ms Fyfe said.

Br Timothy Graham, OH, the Sydney-based provincial of the St John of God order, said the Marylands inquiry was an acknowledgement of those who were harmed in the care of the brothers.

"The inquiry is another chance for the survivors' voices to be heard, and for the brothers — indeed all of us — to listen and learn," he said.

Greater accountability and transparency in church finances wanted

CLEVELAND (CNS) — Broad reforms that would contribute to greater accountability and transparency regarding Church finances are needed, said a report emerging from a winter summit of lay, religious and clergy leaders in the US.

The report, assembled by the Leadership Roundtable from February's 2020 Catholic Partnership Summit, called for the Vatican and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to "create structures and laws for ethical financial leadership".

The report suggested the structure for financial reform would be patterned on the call by Pope Francis in his 2019 "motu proprio" "Vos Estis Lux Mundi" ("You are the light of the world"), and the steps the US Conference of Catholic Bishops took in 2002 to adopt the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People".

The Pope's "motu proprio" emerged from a gathering of the leaders of bishops' conferences around the world, to address the Church's

response to the clergy sexual abuse crisis. It details procedures for reporting complaints of sexual abuse of minors or of vulnerable persons by clerics, and it holds bishops accountable for actions or omissions relating to the handling of such reports.

The charter outlined diocesan procedures in response to clergy abuse, and establishing an audit mechanism to ensure compliance with it.

Michael Brough, deputy director of the Leadership Roundtable, said the summit of 260 church leaders

from 64 dioceses, including prelates, theologians, canon lawyers, philanthropists and young adults, recommended that similar steps were necessary regarding Church financial reporting.

Brough described the recommended reforms as those that can be readily undertaken. "This is not innovation for us in the Church," he explained. "It is about spreading the best practices that are already there. These are actionable reforms. These are not vague recommendations."

Prioritising the poor isn't political, it's the Gospel: Pope

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The preferential option for the poor includes making sure that any vaccine produced for the novel coronavirus helps everyone, Pope Francis has said.

Speaking at his weekly general audience on August 19, the Pope said that the preferential option for the poor, which includes feeding the hungry and drawing close to the excluded, "is the key criterion of Christian authenticity".

Church teaching on giving priority to the well-being of the poor and marginalised is not a political or ideological choice; it lies at the very heart of the Gospel, he stated.

"It would be sad," he said, if priority for a vaccine "were to be given to the richest. It would be sad if this vaccine were to become the property of this nation or another, rather than universal and for all".

During his audience, live-streamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis con-

tinued a series of talks on the principles of the church's social doctrine as a guide for healing and building a better future, particularly as the world is struggling with a pandemic and its negative effects.

In fact, he said, a proper response to the pandemic is twofold:

"On the one hand, it is essential to find a cure for this small but terrible virus, which has brought the whole world to its knees. On the other, we must also cure a larger virus, that of social injustice, inequality of opportunity, marginalisation and the lack of protection for the weakest."

"It would be a scandal if all of the economic assistance we are observing — most of it with public money — were to focus on rescuing those industries that do not contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, the promotion of the least, the common good or the care of creation," the Pope said.

These are the four criteria that should be used "for choosing which

industries should be helped: those which contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, to the promotion of the least, to the common good and the care of creation."

Pope Francis said the COVID-19 pandemic "has exposed the plight of the poor and the great inequality that reigns in the world", and it has made those inequalities and discrimination even worse.

One of the responses that must not be missing is the preferential option for the poor, he said.

But Jesus "stood among the sick, the poor, the excluded, showing them God's merciful love", he said.

The preferential option for the poor is a duty for all Christians and communities, he said, and it means doing more than providing needed assistance; it requires remedying the root causes and problems that lead to the need for aid.

"Many people want to return to normality" and get back to business, the Pope said, but this "normality" must not entail ongoing social in-

justice and the degradation of the environment.

"The pandemic is a crisis, and we do not emerge from a crisis the same as before: either we come out of it better or we come out of it worse," he said. "We must come out of it better" and build something different.

The world needs an economy and remedies that do not "poison society, such as profits not linked to the creation of dignified jobs", but rather profits that benefit the general public.

"We must act now to heal the epidemics caused by small, invisible viruses, and to heal those caused by the great and visible social injustices," he said.

By "starting from the love of God, placing the peripheries at the centre and the last in first place", he said, "a healthier world will be possible".

Recovering from the pandemic will require action rooted in tangible love, "anchored in hope and founded in faith", he said, "otherwise, we will come out of the crisis worse".

Italian government eases some restrictions on Masses

ROME (CNS) — Although the number of new Covid-19 infections in Italy was creeping up in late July and early August, the country's internal affairs ministry eased two restrictions placed on the celebration of Masses: allowing choirs, and dropping the safe-distancing requirement for members of the same household.

The Italian bishops' conference in late July already communicated to dioceses that the Internal Affairs Ministry's coronavirus committee had decided that each region of Italy, depending on the local infection rate, should decide whether to maintain the limit of 200 people at any given Mass.

The bishops' conference had asked for the limit to be lifted for church buildings that can ensure people are seated at least five feet apart and, "without difficulty", still have room for more than 200 people.

At the same time, the bishops had asked for the return of choirs, and

for an end to the social-distancing rule for people living in the same house.

After a meeting on August 10, the government informed the bishops' conference that choirs could return, as long as precautions were taken to keep choir members at least three feet from each other and at least six feet from members of the congregation.

"That distance," the note said, "can be reduced only by using physical barriers" such as plexiglass "to prevent contagion through droplets".

The bishops also had asked for an exemption from the distancing rules for "family members who already live daily within the same domestic walls".

The government agreed, not only for family members living in the same house, but for family members who visit each other often, and for anyone who "habitually shares the same space" or socialises together.

SISTER'S MARATHON EFFORT



Sister Stephanie Baliga, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist of Chicago, runs on a treadmill in the basement of her community's convent on August 15. On August 23, she set out to run a marathon on the treadmill to raise money for the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels. She completed the marathon and raised US\$92,000. (CNS photo)

WHO supports Pope's call for fair, global access to vaccine

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The head of the World Health Organisation, which has been strongly advocating rapid, fair and equitable access to potential Covid-19 vaccines worldwide, voiced support for Pope Francis' similar call for global protections.

Pope Francis made appeals on August 19, both on Twitter and at

his weekly general audience.

"I couldn't agree more with Your Holiness," the WHO's director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, replied, as he retweeted the papal tweet on his account, @DrTedros.

"The #Covid19 pandemic shows that we must make health a human right for all, and not allow it to be a privilege for the few. It also gives us

an opportunity to rebuild a better, safer, fairer world — together!" he replied in his tweet Aug. 20.

The World Health Organisation has been promoting and gaining increasing support from more than 70 countries to join the so-called COVAX facility and advanced market commitment, which would guarantee rapid, fair

and equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines worldwide.

Countries are being asked to finance the vaccines from their own budgets and partner with lower-income countries, with possible added support from donations, in order to help countries have a guaranteed share and allocation of vaccines.

Bishop says normalisation of relations between Israel, UAE, can bring peace

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The normalisation of diplomatic relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates can be a step for peace in the Middle East, said the chairman of the US bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace.

Bishop David Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, on August 20 welcomed the announcement in a statement, saying it was "gratifying" that, as part of the agreement, Israel said it would temporarily suspend plans to

annex disputed Palestinian territory in the West Bank.

The planned annexation of Palestinian lands by Israel has been a major point of contention between the Jewish state and much of the Arab world.

"The Catholic bishops of the United States have long held that, both morally and as a basis for lasting peace, the two parties must negotiate directly, and arrive at a fair compromise that respects the

aspirations and need of both peoples," Bishop Malloy said.

"As Catholic bishops we join in this aspiration, and know much work remains in the pursuit of peace in the region," he said.

The UAE, a federation of seven emirates, and Israel plan to exchange embassies and ambassadors, according to an August 13 statement from the White House announcing the agreement.

The UAE joins Egypt and Jordan

as the Arab countries establishing relations with Israel.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas rejected the agreement, describing it as "a betrayal of Jerusalem".

Palestinian leaders have long called for a peace deal with Israel that recognises Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine and Israel, and for ensuring access for Jews and Muslims to each religion's holy sites in the city.

Eucharist being turned into 'just a commodity'?

by CATHNEWS NEW ZEALAND

The Catholic Church is selling “the Eucharist” and people short, and is making a mistake by turning Mass into a YouTube experience.

The comments are from Fr Thomas O’Loughlin, emeritus professor of Historical Theology at the University of Nottingham and Director of Studia Traditionis Theologiae.

“There are some things Zoom and YouTube just won’t do, because real experiences are whole human experiences,” Fr O’Loughlin said.

“Can you send an apple by email?” he asked.

He made the comments a few weeks ago in an international conversation hosted by CathNews NZ on Zoom, and as part of its “Flashes of Insight” series produced in association with La-Croix International.

Fr O’Loughlin said he will accept doing Mass online when people give up going out to dine with others, and when people dine alone at home with pre-packaged food and say it is as rich an experience as it is eating and drinking with friends.

People wanting to have Mass on their TV or computer at home and priests supplying it sounds a warning about the real nature of the community, he said.

“Eucharist makes little sense without a community.”

Challenging the meeting, Fr O’Loughlin posed the question as to whether the Church had stopped being a real community and is being reduced to religious ideology.

He sounded a warning that we may be reducing the Eucharist to just getting communion, which almost makes it a commodity.

Fr O’Loughlin said the Church has a wealth of spirituality it can call on during Covid-19 lockdown, and questioned why we opted for the “summit” experience.

He said he agrees that Mass is the summit of Christian prayer, but suggested perhaps the Church has forgotten the hinterland.

Fr O’Loughlin said that the Liturgy of the Hours, shared prayer, Lectio Divina, prayer together and Scripture study are just some of the examples from the Church’s spiritual tradition that respect the characteristics of the liturgy and that are easily adapted to a virtual environment.

“Why did we pick on something so physical such as eating and drinking?” Fr O’Loughlin asked.

■ Spiritual Communion

Questioned on whether it was appropriate to use the readings of the day and make a “spiritual communion,” Fr O’Loughlin sounded a stern warning.

He observed that spiritual communion came from the time when only priests received Communion, and was developed by the heretical Jansenists, to a point where nuns were not seen as worthy of physically receiving Communion.

Spiritual communion “is tied up with notions of unworthiness and impurity”, and it is a part of a moral theology we left long ago, he said.

Host of the international conversation, Fr Joseph Grayland, director of liturgy in the Palmerston North diocese, said the idea for “Let’s Talk Liturgy” came about due to the disruption to worship brought about through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fr Grayland said the pandemic has impacted laity and clergy alike.

“For many people, the online Mass, viewed from the living room, was sufficient, they didn’t have to go out, and it fulfilled the need for Sunday Mass.”

“The priests also liked doing this because it was readily identifiable as part of their mission”.

Labelling online video Mass as a form of clericalism, Fr Grayland said there are real concerns around the passive, observer approach, and the personal nature of the “priest’s Mass”.

Flashes of Insight — Let’s Talk Liturgy is, therefore, an opportunity for people to discuss and consider the nature of liturgy in an international context.

More than 80 people from the UK, Australia, the Pacific have been involved in the conversation.

The second round of conversations continued on August 12, and at least one more round was being planned.

This article was first published on www.cathnews.co.nz. It is republished here with permission. Fr O’Loughlin’s talk can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UWuMRgFLKc&feature=youtu.be>

Being spiritually close while socially distant

NEWARK, N.J. (CNS) — Social distancing during this ongoing pandemic “is necessary for the common good”, said Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, “but we need to counter this with a dramatic increase in what Pope Francis calls ‘spiritual closeness’”.

“How can we stay close to Jesus, and all our sisters and brothers, at a time when concern for them demands that we keep our distance?” he asked. “How can we remain spiritually close at the same time that we practice social distancing?”

Cardinal Tobin made the comments in the August 14 issue of his archdiocesan newsletter.

Ministry in a time of pandemic “is like walking a tightrope”, he said.

“We must keep our distance— out of respect for the health and well-being of others, especially those who are most vulnerable,” he wrote.

“At the same time, we must find ways of being close to our brothers and sisters, and we must search for opportunities to invite all members of the Body of Christ to walk with us — synodality — and to become intimately involved in the Church’s life and ministry.”

He urged Catholics in the archdiocese to be “especially concerned” about the many people during this time “who are experiencing intense anxiety, (who) feel lonely and abandoned, and who really count on public worship for their own support”.

Cardinal Tobin said, “. . . as Pope Francis reminds us: ‘Embracing your cross . . . means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognise that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity’.”



Family Matters

Helen Luxford

Lockdown take 2

I am writing this during “take two” of a Covid-19 alert level 3 lockdown in Auckland.

This was after weeks of living relatively normally, after the previous lockdown. Kids’ activities were back on, I was back to commuting to work by train when able to, and we could see friends and family.

Then, out of nowhere, I got a message from my Mum one Tuesday night, saying that the Prime Minister was making an announcement at 9:15pm.

When Mum’s message came through, our kids were tucked up in bed. School lunches had been made for the following day.

The PM announced that there were new Covid cases in our community, and that we were moving to alert level 3 on the following day.

So, there was to be no school for many the next day. When our kids woke up, we gave the news to them gently. None of their schools had any work prepared, so it was a free day for them.

Meanwhile, we adults processed the news. Personally, I think that I have been sheltered from the impact of levels 3 and 4 lockdowns, because, being an essential worker, the routine of going to work and getting out of the house remains.

I work on some weekends and don’t work on others. The latest non-work weekend under lockdown for us is not full of the usual sport and birthday parties and so on.

This has meant that we got a lot done

around the house. We have also spent time doing puzzles and watching a movie with the kids. In some ways, we are sheltered from the cabin fever of having to stay at home.

But our kids aren’t. They will take any excuse to go for a ride in the car, but you can’t take them anywhere — even the supermarket still wants only one person per household to go in at any time.

However, I sense that everyone is more relaxed in this lockdown than they were in similar circumstances beforehand. Thankfully, there is not so much panic buying at the supermarket. We survived levels 3 and 4, which went for much longer, so people have commented that two weeks at level 3 seems more manageable.

I certainly feel more relaxed about it all. It is strange to think that the rest of the country is in level 2, and are essentially carrying on as normal. We aren’t yet looking too far forward as to how this all ends. No one really knows.

Will the world go back to the way it was before — busy airports, people jumping over to Australia and the Pacific Islands for holidays, Kiwis going further abroad for the famous OE overseas experience?

There seem to be many different perspectives on this global pandemic — some people are taking it very seriously and are not leaving their houses; some people think it’s all a conspiracy theory with the Government trying to control us; some people are feeling “over it” and

just want to get back to life as normal.

In a quiet moment, I have reflected on the surreal element — we are, one way or another, living through a major event in history right now. My husband can, one day, look back and say he had a big birthday (that went by very quietly) during the global pandemic — we’ve had four birthdays in lockdown in our house. As school-age children, we would ask our grandparents what it was like to live in the time of a world war. Will our grandchildren ask us about living through a global pandemic? Maybe they will get all they need from the Internet!

Our son’s Church sacramental programme has been disrupted completely by the re-implementation of restrictions. I remind myself that he will get the sacraments in due course, and that faith is a lifetime journey, and he is only at the start of it.

The control this Covid-19 has over the world will eventually diminish, one way or another. Life will go back to some sort of normal. We all have to hang in there until it does.

Colossians 3:15: “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times, and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.”

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.

THE CHURCH YEAR

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Easter time

Ordinary Time

We are here: ▼ 23rd Sunday

Concern for the welfare of all in a community of faith

Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

The advice given in today's readings is full of concern for the welfare of all who belong to the community of faith. Should someone go astray, every effort needs to be made to offer kindly, but purposeful, counsel.

The words Ezekiel uses might, at first, strike us as particularly severe or blunt. But if we realise that it is his vocation to get disobedient Israel back on track, then we see the relevance of those words.

It is a life and death matter that requires Ezekiel to turn the house of Israel away from their wayward actions. The text thus indicates how desirous God is that everyone be rightly

disposed towards a faithful lifestyle.

Paul's advice to the Romans finely focuses upon the word "love". In doing this, he aims to help us understand love as central to the life of faith. Having its roots in revered Old Testament teaching linked with Moses, "love" is given meaning through the biblical record of instruction delivered during many a trying time in Israel's history. This love, then, shows itself particularly in faithful observance of the commands concerning our treatment of one another.

The teaching that comes from Jesus' lips in Matthew today stems from this long-standing faith tradition. And so, his advice to his follow-

September 6: 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Ezekiel 33:7-9; Psalm 94; 2. Romans 13:8-10; **Gospel:** Matthew 18:15-20.

ers anchors itself in a right understanding of belonging to the community of faith, commonly called the Church in Christian tradition.

Of concern to Jesus here is being on the right path, the one laid down for all Church members. So, every effort is encouraged in order to preach how to observe Jesus' sound advice to his disciples.

These readings give focus to our lives by laying down the essential attitude we must adopt if we are to be seen as true members of God's people.

We are duty-bound to nurture a generous, gracious heart

These biblical texts treat of a certain regard for our lives as people who sin and have need of the Lord's mercy, forgiveness and compassion.

Sirach introduces the topic by looking realistically at the way we act towards one another, and the leniency with which we should forgive those who have failed to be faithful to the Lord. The recurring word "remember" is his way of asking us to adjust our response to others' failings. To recall the tenets of our faith is to be mindful of God Most High, who has dealt mercifully with his people. And in the context of traditional teaching remembered, we find good reason for dealing compassionately with those whose faults trigger

negative feelings. How we relate to our neighbour is, therefore, an indication of our genuine commitment to everything the Lord has commanded.

At the centre of today's second reading is Christ the Lord. Its verses drive home the point that our lives in community must be grounded in Christ's life and death. This simple, yet profound, message calls us to reflect prayerfully on the great graces Christ willingly pours forth upon us.

Peter's question in Matthew is reason enough for Jesus to tell a lengthy parable that contrasts a master and his servant. It is the former who shows generosity of spirit and compassion, while the latter, in his turn, is mean-spirited and exacting.

September 13: 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Sirach 27:30-28:7; Psalm 102; 2. Romans 14:7-9; **Gospel:** Matthew 18:21-35.

The extreme contrast between these two teaches a sublime lesson about forgiveness, especially with respect to the Lord's heavenly Father. Knowing that we must imitate divine mercy and compassion means that we are duty-bound to nurture a generous, gracious heart for every occasion.

The life we are called to lead is made vitally relevant for us because of the boundless compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father.

SAINTED GLASS



The Feast of The Exultation of the Holy Cross is celebrated on Monday, September 14. Although not strictly stained glass, this unusual window in Pokolbin Gardens Chapel, Hunter Valley, Australia, features the cross. To me it captures the meaning of the feast, which venerates the cross on which Jesus was crucified. The crucifixion was a real event, a real execution on a real cross, part of the history on which Christianity is based. Without the cross, there is no redemption. Take away the history, take away the cross and what do you have? — Glen McCullough

When the scripture came alive

Bible News

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (CNS) — Scripture really came alive on August 9 for Catholics in Charlotte in North Carolina in the USA.

A 5.1-magnitude earthquake originating near Sparta was felt in Charlotte a little after 8am on Sunday — just as parishioners at St Gabriel Church were listening to the first reading of Sunday's Mass from the first book of Kings.

St Gabriel's pastor, Fr Richard Sutter, texted the *Catholic News Herald*, Charlotte's diocesan newspaper, to say that they felt the earthquake during the 8am outdoor Mass, just as the lector was reading the words concerning the encounter between the Prophet Elijah and God on Mt Horeb, "After the wind there was an earthquake — but the LORD was not in the earthquake."

According to the US Geological Survey, the August 9 earthquake occurred about 4km southeast of Sparta, and had been "preceded by at least four small foreshocks" that had started about 25 hours earlier.

The pastor of the Catholic mission in Sparta, Fr Cory Catron, said everything was well and no damage is apparent.

"Made for good homily material, though," he said.

In his homily, he joked about being worried that the next thing to happen would be fire — a pastor's nightmare — but he also used the opportunity to remind

people that God is constantly present in our lives, and we must not be distracted by the noise and problems of the world around us, but listen for his voice in the stillness.

The Sparta quake was felt as far south as Atlanta and as far north as Virginia, according to the USGS.

The USGS notes that "large earthquakes are relatively uncommon in the region", although "moderately damaging earthquakes strike the inland Carolinas every few decades, and smaller earthquakes are felt about once each year or two."



St Frances of Rome Catholic Mission in Sparta, North Carolina, is seen in this 2015 file photo. Father Cory Catron, pastor of the mission, said his church suffered no damage from the 5.1-magnitude earthquake on August 9 (CNS photo).

Local Diocese News

Many faiths at final event held in centre

by BEATE MATTHIES

“Go out into the world today and love the people you meet. Let your presence light new light in the hearts of people.” St Teresa of Kolkata shared this wisdom when she was working in India, a country of many faiths and cultures.

The last event at Te Ngakau Waiora Mercy Spirituality Centre before its closure at the end of July concerned “Feeling a Divine Presence in the Light of different Faiths”. About 50 people attended.

The July 29 event was organised by the Mercy Spirituality Centre in cooperation with the Auckland Interfaith Council (AIFC).

Ten speakers of different faiths reflected on the theme of “presence”. Ruth Cleaver, the AIFC president and Beate Matthies, the manager of the Mercy Spirituality Centre, welcomed the participants and speakers together.

Ms Matthies, who is also the Catholic representative on the AIFC, commented that “presence” was often considered as rather mystical. Referring to the Bible, she mentioned the prophet Elijah’s search for the Almighty God in a great wind, in an earthquake or in a fire. God was in none of them. God was present in the silence. (1 Kings 19:11-13)

The next speaker, Ram Lingam, recalled a little anecdote on a mistaken identity during his last visit to India. Mr Lingham, then turning to the topic, said that, in his Hindu tradition, human beings are always in the presence of the divine – and the divine is present in us. Therefore, the Indian greeting is “Namaste”, which translates to “I bow to the divine in you”.

Diane Winder, an Interfaith/Interspiritual minister, said that the divine presence was everywhere, and that she felt it, for example, when walking in silence through the kauri trees.

Paul Wilton, a Jewish speaker, explained the concept of believing that the world stands on three things: the Torah (God’s word), Avodah (worship, service of God) and Gemilut chasadim (acts of loving kindness). He concluded his speech



Members of the Auckland Interfaith Council and speakers.

with a song of praise. Everybody turned silent when he chanted in Hebrew.

Imam Muhammed Shaakir had asked another member of his Muslim congregation to give a speech on the divine presence, according to Islamic traditions. Anzar Chida, a young man of Indian heritage, stated that we human beings could never understand what God is – God is always bigger than anything we would be able to understand. Mr Chida then recited a poem that he had written on his feeling about God.

Harpreet Singh Kohli represented the Sikh community, and explained how he was meditating on one of the mantras: “Sing . . . Tuhi Tuhi Tuhi – This is you, this is you, this is you.” For the Sikh, the divine was inside of oneself.

Muriel Samuela from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints mentioned the importance of gathering to worship and the efforts to keep the Divine Covenants, especially to show love for one’s neighbour.

Steve Drake, who represents the Baha’i Faith on the AIFC, shared his spiritual experience of a

pilgrimage to a sacred place. It was a very special experience, and a strong feeling of love that will always stay with him.

The last speaker of the evening was Rev. Ivica Gregurec from the Anglican Church in Auckland. Following on the notion of sacred spaces, he mentioned special places of presence in churches, shrines and sacraments – and people standing on holy ground.

The Buddhist member of the Auckland Interfaith Council, Caitlin Bush, had provided a quote from the founder of Buddhism, which was printed on the leaflet that was given out to the participants: “If you wish to know the divine, feel the wind on your face and the warm sun on your hand.”

The atmosphere during the event was relaxed and positive. People commented on the obvious love, camaraderie and fellowship amongst the council members.

Other comments were that the evening was heart-filled, professional, interesting, enlightening and beautiful . . . the best yet, they said.

Priest remembered 40 years after his death

by REX BEGLEY

It is no wonder that Terry Healion and his sister Cecilia were delighted at Bishop Peter Cullinane’s suggestion of a memorial Mass of Thanksgiving for the life and ministry of their brother.

Wednesday, July 29, was the 40th anniversary of the sudden death of Fr John Healion. This year, friends and family from as far away as Auckland and Wellington gathered at Our Lady Help of Christians church, Fitzroy, New Plymouth, where Bishop Denis Browne and Fathers Vui Hoang and Freddie Barte concelebrated with Bishop Cullinane.

In his welcome, Terry recalled his brother as “strong in physique, resolute in faith, youth counsellor, comforter of the dying, austere in lifestyle, impatient with insincerity, humble enough to ask for help when needed”. Other qualities were listed: “Angry when confronted with

prejudice, advocate of the poor and oppressed (accepting chairmanship of Corso at a difficult time), understanding with the sick and distressed, a priest of God and truly seen as a man of God, loved by so many.”

Terry recalled the words of Manuka Henare, director of the office of Evangelisation, Justice and Development, describing Fr John as “one of those rare priests who understood fully the role of the laity in the mission of the Church, and let them take off in the community”.

He also recalled a story told by Monsignor Charles Cooper about Fr John’s funeral. At the time, an American liturgist, Fr Eugene Walsh, was conducting a training week for priests at the Pastoral Centre in Palmerston North. Fr Walsh went with the priests to Tokorangi Marae to attend the Māori requiem for Pa John Healion. Four years later, when Fr Eugene died, he had left in-

structions in his will that he wanted the same type of funeral as he had experienced at Tokorangi marae in Halcome.

In his homily, Bishop Cullinane encouraged people present to “live life to the full – not self-indulgently, but in ways that are for others”. These words echoed those of Melville Carll, a parishioner of Taita, where Fr John had been assistant priest from 1965 - 1972. At the time of Fr John’s death, he had written, “For us John, dear friend, you have made us realise once again that the

length of life is less important than the intensity and sincerity with which it is lived.”

Beautifully crafted prayers of the faithful were led by Fr John’s nephew, Michael Healion, and Michael’s children Harriet and Alfie.

The whole liturgy was enhanced by beautiful singing led by Harriet and Alfie, and finally the sharing of memories, and the delicious food served by Fathers Hoang and Barte and the people of the parish. Catholics certainly know how good it is to remember with thanksgiving.



People receive communion at the Mass.

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Bollywood steps up

by NEVIL GIBSON

Hollywood's studio system was declared dead in the past month. It was the end of an era in which big budget movies were released solely to paying audiences in cinemas.

Famous studios names such as MGM, Fox, Warner, Paramount, Columbia and Universal may live on in various forms, but their business models will not.

The last to go were Paramount and Warner, which, until last month, also included HBO and CNN. These are now just cogs in AT&T, a vertically-integrated broadcaster and telecommunications company.

Similar changes have reduced the others to mere production units, as the entertainment giants morph into streaming services that are directly linked to their subscribers.

Netflix set the pace, as it realised the only way to survive, once it could no longer access studio-made movies, was to make its own.

The result is that cinemas are no longer the industry's central focus — a fact underlined when Disney decided that *Mulan*, a big budget (\$US200 million) movie, which was made in New Zealand, would go straight to its streaming service at a premium price.

Part of the reason was the closure of cinemas worldwide, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

But it also reflects the emergence of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Apple as movie producers.

Netflix is by far the biggest, because it operates in virtually every country, and offers much more than just English-language movies.

For example, it is now the largest exhibitor of movies made in India, Latin America



Taapsee Pannu in *Thappad*

Movie Review

and elsewhere in Asia. Filmmakers in these places can now aim at global audiences, rather than be restricted to brief festival opportunities.

Thappad (Amazon Prime Video) is Bollywood's latest attempt to put Indian movies on an equal footing with their international peers. The story seems derivative — comparisons with Netflix's *Marriage Story* are inevitable — while the title (Hindi for "slap") recalls Australian author Christos Tsiolkas' 2011 eight-part TV series, which was remade in Hollywood in 2015.

The eponymous event occurs at a party, where a Delhi advertising executive (Pavai Gulati) is celebrating his promotion to a job in London, that his wife (Taapsee Pannu) has long desired. They have no children, but she is devoted to supporting her husband. This contrasts with the rival careers at the centre of *Marriage Story*.

She pulls him away from an aggressive argument after he learns from a colleague that the position will still make him answerable to a British boss. He reacts violently, and her response is to go into lockdown, rather than accept his forgiveness.

The downward spiral in their relationship worsens when divorce lawyers are called in, reminiscent of *Marriage Story* and its antecedents, *Intolerable Cruelty* and *The War of the Roses*. Indian social mores add to the complexity as the wife withstands peer pressure, and copes with a legal system where saving face triumphs over spousal rights.

Writer-director Anubhav Sinha has won Indian awards for two previous movies, *Article 15* (2019) and *Mulk* (2018), with more likely to come as his reputation spreads abroad.

Amazon rating: All ages. 142 minutes.

CLIPS

Hope Gap

(Transmission)

Last year's British Film Festival continues to deliver quality goods this year. Bill Nighy and Annette Bening play an intellectual couple living in the picturesque East Sussex coastal town of Seaford. The film is based on *The Retreat From Moscow*, a play by William Nicholson, who also directs (his screenplay credits include *Les Misérables* (2012), *Gladiator* and *Unbroken*). The source is his own parents' breakup, after 33 years of marriage, and its realism is, therefore, telling. Nighy is a teacher, whose main interest is Napoleonic military history, while Bening is immersed in anthologies of poetry. The third player is Nicholson himself (Josh O'Connor), who is trying to make a life of his own, while caught between loyalties. The dramatics recall the intensity of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, as the audience is tempted to take sides over an act of adultery and its devastating outcome. Rating: Mature audiences. 100 minutes.

The Hater (Sala Samobojcow: Hejter)

(Netflix)

The Polish title indicates this is a sequel to *Suicide Room*, a 2011 Internet thriller from director Jan Komasa. The young protagonist is led into some dark areas. A similar, but slightly older, character (Maciej Musialoski) in the follow-up has a chip on both shoulders. He has been thrown out of law school for plagiarism, but he gets his own back by joining a progressive politician's campaign, while also being paid to subvert it. Other targets include a snobbish intellectual couple who have financially supported his studies, but who consider him unsuitable for their daughter, on whom he has a crush. Like other recent Polish movies on Netflix, some of the characters verge on the nihilistic, while few in the societal elite have redeeming features. Before this, Komasa made *Corpus Christi*, which has an equally bleak view of humanity, and was one of the standouts at this year's NZ International Film Festival. Netflix rating: 16+. 135 minutes.

The Crimes That Bind (Crímenes de familia)

(Netflix)

Two based-on-fact court cases involving a single family are the basis for this absorbing drama from Argentina. At the centre is a middle-class Buenos Aires matriarch, Cecilia Roth, whose 80-odd screen roles include Pedro Almodovar's *All About My Mother* (1999) and last year's *Pain and Glory*. In the family court, she is backing her son's case for custody against claims of abuse and abandonment from his spouse. This is despite his obvious flaws and drug addiction. The other case, in criminal court, is a charge of infanticide against the live-in domestic help, whose child is treated like a grandson by Roth. In evidence, the matriarch turns against the maid (Yanina Avila), who has only partly recovered from her abusive upbringing in a remote country district. The legal outcomes lead to unexpected twists that will keep you engaged until the end. A hint of this is in an end credit quote from German dramatist Bertolt Brecht's poem on another real-life infanticide. Netflix rating: 16+. 99 minutes.

Authoritative journey through history of science and philosophy

ON TRIAL FOR REASON: Science, Religion and Culture in the Galileo Affair by Maurice A. Finocchiaro. Oxford University Press (New York, 2019). 304 pp., \$32.95. Reviewed by NANCY ROBERTS (CNS)

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) is the Italian astronomer, physicist, mathematician and engineer almost universally known as the father of modern science. He also is famous for being convicted by the Inquisition for "vehement suspicion of heresy" in 1633, owing to his assertion the earth circles around the sun.

Thus Galileo fell on the wrong side of Catholic teaching, which then held that the planets all revolved around earth. But evidence such as his observation that Jupiter's moons didn't rotate around earth led Galileo to a very different conclusion: The earth and other celestial bodies all orbit the sun.

This view, which supported the earlier work of Copernicus, put Galileo in direct conflict with Church authorities. After his heresy trial, he was placed on house arrest for life.

The Galileo affair, as this conflict has come to be known, is usually viewed as a monumental clash between science and religion. Yet, like all dramatic historical events, over time it has been overlaid by a patina of myth that doesn't quite tell the whole story.

How, one wonders, did Galileo become a cultural icon, a symbol for that "perennial and universal problem of the relationship between science and religion"?

Maurice Finocchiaro, professor of philosophy emeritus at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas,

Book Review

is singularly well-equipped to take us down a less-travelled, but much more nuanced pathway of understanding.

With lucid explanations and clear illustrations, he paints a picture of the early 16th-century worldview.

Among several different types of objections to the concept that the earth circles the sun were those based on theology. One drew from Scripture to claim "the idea of the earth moving is heretical or at least erroneous because it conflicts with many biblical passages which state or imply that the Earth stands still," Finocchiaro writes.

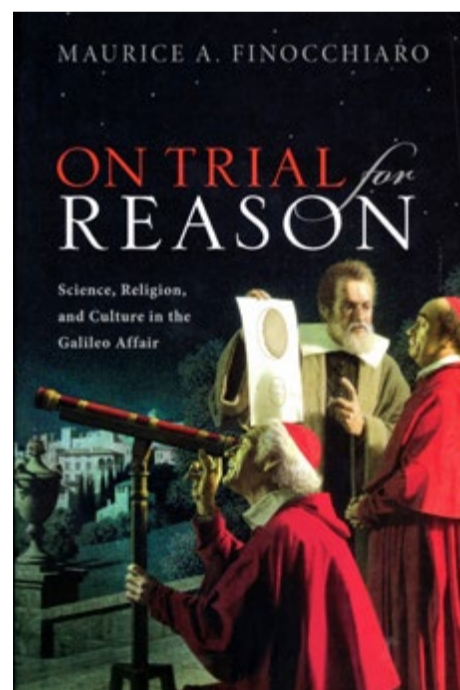
Other objections included those based on the empirical, such as the intriguingly-named objection from the deception of the senses. It went like this — because one cannot actually perceive the earth's motion around the sun, then this must not exist, because the senses are generally known to be reliable.

Ultimately, as Finocchiaro shows, "the Church came to recognise that Galileo was right, not only about the earth's motion, but also about the limited authority of Scripture". These points were made in Pope Leo XIII's 1893 encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, which asserted the authority of Scripture on matters of faith and morals, but not on science. Later,

during the period 1979-1992, St John Paul II's "rehabilitation" of Galileo praised the scientist for demonstrating that religion and science are actually "in harmony and not incompatible".

The author concludes that Galileo's model of critical thinking is an exemplary legacy. He takes us there by way of an interesting, authoritative journey through the history of science and philosophy. Enriched with a detailed bibliography and index, *On Trial for Reason* is destined to become the classic treatment of this subject.

Nancy Roberts directs the journalism program at the University at Albany, SUNY, and has written/co-edited two books about Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker.





Papal Prayer

The Pope's universal prayer intention for September: Respect for the Planet's Resources.
We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner.

40 YEARS AGO

THREE SCHOOLS SIGN ON

Auckland's first three Catholic primary schools were integrated last weekend, when Bishop Mackey and the minister of education signed the formal agreement documents at a ceremony at Bishop's House, Ponsonby on August 30.

The three schools — St Mary's Avondale, Saint Francis, Pt Chevalier and St John the Evangelist, Otara — bring to 22 the number of Catholic schools which have been integrated so far.

They are the first schools in Auckland diocese to join the national education system; St Mary's Cathedral School in Hamilton was integrated shortly after the new diocese was set up.

Last Saturday's signing ceremony was attended by members of the Auckland Education Board and the Catholic Schools Administration Office, as well as priests, teachers and school committee members from the three parishes. Also present were assistant Bishop John Rodgers of Auckland and Msgr F.R. Wright, chancellor of the Auckland diocese.

Hailing the occasion as an historic

one, Bishop Mackey traced the history of the integration process, which she described as "a movement towards harmony and cooperation".

He pointed out that the Integration Act had been signed five years before the first Auckland schools had crossed the line. "Five years seems a long time ago, but enterprises of this kind cannot be put together overnight."

He paid tribute to the work done for the independent schools in the 1960s by people such as Mr Ron Hubbard and Anglican Bishop Eric Gowing, and by the Catholic negotiators at the integration discussions like Fr Philip Catcheside and Peter Kelly.

He also thanked politicians in successive governments and the offices of the Education Department who have been involved in the integration process, especially Mr Alf Hinton and Mr John Joliffe.

"There are many people who have had a hand in the integration movement," said Bishop Mackey, "and I want to put on public record the thanks which the Church owes them."
— *Zealandia*, September 7, 1980.

CAPTION CONTEST



Write the best caption for this photo and win \$30. Send in your ideas by Tuesday, Sept. 15 to Caption Contest 597, NZ Catholic, PO Box 147000, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144. Or email: design@nzcatholic.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 595, (right) was **Judy Lamb, Whangarei.**

Some other suggestions were:

"I want to complain about the crappy service!" — **J. Jarka, Dunedin.**

"Patron Saint of Guano." — **Chris Stoddard, Auckland.**

"Tricking a bird out of the hat, you have to be grateful, for the return you get. . ." — **G. J. Rietveld, Christchurch.**

"A wiser man would have kept his hat on." — **John Lewis, Hamilton.**

"As a statesman you take the good with the bad." — **Russell Watt, Auckland.**

"You can leave your hat on." — **Paul McKee, Christchurch.**

"If I have seen further — it is by standing on the head of a giant!" — **Joan Leonard, Auckland.**



I've made deposits on my higher perches

"The hat me father wore." — **Richard Ryan, Tauranga.**

"Is that a statue? I can see movements." — **B. Parker, Auckland.**

"The bird has the last word." — **Michael Lamb, Whangarei.**



NZ Catholic has five double passes to see the movie *Fatima*, which screens at selected cinemas from September 10.

For a chance to win tickets, email your name and address to design@nzcatholic.org.nz with 'Fatima' in the subject line.

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(except for first Friday of the month to be held at St Joseph's, Otahuhu)

Confessions: Monday - Thursday: 30 minutes before Mass; Friday, Saturday, Sunday: 1 hour before Mass

Mt St Mary's, 4 Rangiwai Road, Titirangi
Fr Antony Sumich
Mass Times

Sunday: Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament 10.15am; High Mass: 10.30am
Exposition: Begins after Mass
Confessions: Begin at 9am
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 24/7
24/7 Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration
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Filmmaker led to Church by the story of Fatima

by AGNIESZKA RUCK

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (CNS) — For British Columbia film producer Natasha Howes, *Fatima* is more than just her latest screen project.

The filmmaker credits the miraculous events in rural Portugal a century ago for her conversion to Catholicism and her devotion to Mary.

Mary's appearances before three children are the driving force behind two films Howes has produced: her 2009 film *The 13th Day* and the just-completed *Fatima*.

Fatima was set to be released in April, but the pandemic and the closing of theatres delayed that plan. The film was instead set for a simultaneous release in select theatres across North America and on streaming sites, including Apple iTunes and Amazon Prime, beginning on August 28.

The film is based on the real-life events of 1917 when Mary appeared to three children with messages of peace, having a significant impact on their country and the Catholic Church.

Howes hopes *Fatima* and the story



Natasha Howes, a producer of the movie *Fatima* (CNS Photo)

of Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia dos Santos will inspire everyone, Catholic or not.

"This is a film for everybody," Howes told *The B.C. Catholic*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

"I have developed a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother through my interaction with this story," she said. "The story of Fatima is multilayered and very, very deep."

In the new film, "We've taken key facets of that story and woven it" into a "deeply human, emotional, personal journey".

Fatima dives into the events from the point of view of Lucia, a girl growing up during the time of World War I, as she, along with her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta, tends her family's sheep.

Lucia was 10 when she and her cousins began seeing visions of Mary, who delivered messages about the power of prayer and fasting to bring about peace. Their testimony rocked their families, neighbours, religious leaders, and the secular government, as all tried to make sense of what was happening.

The number of people interested in seeing Mary for themselves grew, and on October 13, 1917, thousands gathered to witness strange events in the sky, described as the Miracle of the Sun, and which were recorded by several sources, including non-religious newspapers.

Francisco and Jacinta died young and are now saints. Lucia became a Carmelite nun and recorded the events in her memoirs. She died in 2005 at the age of 97.

Howes said that *Fatima* tells "the human story behind the story of the apparitions and the miracle", with particular research and emphasis on the "human psychology" of each key player in the story.

Developing the script was an "intricate and sensitive" process that involved working with an advisory



Jorge Lamelas, Alejandra Howard and Stephanie Gil star in a scene from the movie *Fatima*. (CNS photo)

committee from Portugal's Shrine of Fatima; consulting Sister Angela Coelho, postulator for the canonisation cause of Francisco and Jacinta; and reading eyewitness accounts and Lucia's memoirs.

Fatima is not meant to be a documentary, said Howes. Although inspired by true events, it does not follow them exactly. For example, only four of the six apparitions reported by the children are depicted.

Fictional elements were inserted to add historical context. In the film, Lucia's brother is sent off to fight in the war, when in reality he was never conscripted. As a narrative device, it "heightens the emotional dynamic" within Lucia's family and helps place them firmly in that era, said Howes.

The team behind the film is working with Picturehouse, a film distribution company whose personnel were behind *The Passion of the Christ*.

Howes hopes the film will inspire audiences to learn more about the history and impact of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. It certainly had that effect on those behind the scenes

of *Fatima*, which was filmed entirely in Portugal.

"It is part of the lifeblood of the Portuguese identity," she said, "and that's so incredible to me."

"Everybody on set had a story to tell about Fatima," she said. "Everybody I knew, their uncle, aunt, or grandparent was there to experience the Miracle of the Sun."

Now, in a world rocked, not by a world war, but by a pandemic, fear, discrimination, and division, the visionaries' message of prayer and peace is as relevant as ever, said Howes.

"We actually have a movie here with key themes of faith, hope and love, and this is a primary time to release an inspirational movie."

■ *Fatima* will be released in NZ cinemas on September 10, with previews in select cinemas from September 3. For group bookings at your local cinema, email Carmela Lopez at: fatimamovienz@gmail.com Note that New Zealand cinemas are open and able to host bookings safely at level 2 and level 1.

Pontifical Academy to fight 'deviant spirituality' of Mary

by CAROL GLATZ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Given the many criminal organisations and gangs worldwide that have distorted the true role and image of Mary, a pontifical academy has unveiled a new department dedicated to fighting "this deviant spirituality".

The Pontifical Marian International Academy will be working with the Italian government and law enforcement on a number of initiatives, through the department dedicated to the "analysis, study and monitoring of criminal and Mafia-related phenomena", and to promoting "a theology of liberation from the Mafia", according to its website.

Pope Francis praised the "important initiative" in a letter sent to Franciscan Father Stefano Cecchin, the academy's president, dated August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary.

"Marian devotion is a religious-cultural heritage whose original purity needs safeguarding," the Pope wrote, according to an excerpt of the letter, published by Vatican News on August 20.

Protecting the heritage includes "liberating it from superfluous elements, powers or social conditioning that do not comply with the Gospel criteria of justice, liberty, honesty and solidarity", the Pope wrote.

In particular, the Pope "noted with

pleasure" the creation of the new department, and a conference the academy will hold on September 18 with other Church leaders and public entities, for finding effective ways to raise awareness and begin a cultural shift toward a correct understanding of Mary, human dignity, civic duty and legality.

Fr Cecchin told Vatican News that the figure of Mary is often distorted and exploited by criminal organisations as a way to make people more submissive and "turn them into slaves".

They twist Mary's image and acceptance of God's will into a false role model of a woman who is God's "slave", compliant, submissive and passively resigned to the fate of her son, who dies at the hands of the powerful, he said.

They use religion to "enslave and not help people live an authentic religiosity", he said.

Another problem, he said, is manipulating the Catholic faith to promote superstitions, magic and special powers to frighten and manipulate people, especially for making money from them by promising they can be healed or have their problems solved, he added.

The main task of the pontifical academy is to offer "a healthy formation" in the study, understanding and theology of Mary, he said.

The academy seeks to keep up



Demonstrators are pictured in a file photo holding banners during a demonstration in Naples, Italy, to commemorate the victims of the mafia, and demand an end to the stranglehold of organised crime on southern Italy. (CNS photo)

with, and respond to, new phenomena and difficulties, which is why it created the new department, which will include judges, criminologists, law enforcement, and state and Church leaders "to work together for the good of the human person and society, the common home, as Pope Francis says", Fr Cecchin said.

Eradicating exploitative and un-

healthy practices that cloak themselves in symbols of Catholicism will entail offering individuals and families a formation that is "truly Christian", he said.

When asked about the practice in southern Italy of participants in Marian processions tilting the statue of Mary in a bow before the homes of presumed Mafia bosses, Fr Cecchin said the practice "is not religion; it is superstition".

He said the practice suggests that Mary and even God submit to the bosses, "to teach the people that God is on their side" and it uses people's religious inclinations "to lead them to be slaves, not free".

Members of the new department hope to present their projects, initiatives and plans at the September 18 conference, he said, with the hopes of holding a national conference every May 13 to discuss the outcomes of their efforts.

Fr Cecchin said the academy is also working with Muslims, and it has created a Muslim-Christian Marian commission, which will offer courses together with the mosque in Rome.

The effort is needed, he said, because experts in Islam, which recognises Mary's divine grace, have noticed "bad interpretations of religion" and how religion is used to divide people and create problems.

"Instead, God is love, not fear or punishment," he told Vatican News.

Around the world church



Women form a human chain in front of Saints Simon and Helena Church in Minsk, Belarus, on August 27, during a protest against presidential election results. (CNS photos)



People at a Mass celebrated in American Sign Language on August 16 at the St Francis Borgia DEAF Center in Chicago.



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, distributes Communion during a Mass for the French National Pilgrimage on the feast of the Assumption at the Marian sanctuary in Lourdes, France, on August 15.