

Is Climate Change Our Biggest Moral Issue?

Jim Consedine

Franz Josef glacier could dwindle to a few kilometres in length by the end of this century, driven by a warming climate. Glacial ice could retreat by up to 60 percent by 2100. The Press, Christchurch, 26 November 2013

Is the issue of climate change the biggest moral issue facing humanity at this time? I am well aware of other gigantic moral issues that we face as human beings – world hunger levels, the arms race, violence in our streets and in our social structures, militarism, racial discrimination, environmental destruction through pollution, the list is endless. These all have one thing in common. They are not universal in their disadvantages. They don't affect everyone but rather focus on certain sectors of the human community.

The issue of climate change presents as a universal. While it will not affect everyone the same, its negative effects appear to be everywhere. The question of the heating of the very air we breathe and the overall atmosphere affects everyone. It is not only the atmosphere that is warming up – the ocean is absorbing more heat, and that is what is giving rise to an increasing spate of super storms.

Changing and volatile weather patterns should be obvious to everyone. However, too often these regular events are remembered only in isolation. Who can remember Hurricane Mitch back in 1998 – the worst storm in the Western Hemisphere for 200 years? Then there were the European heat waves of 2003 and 2006? No one who was there will forget them. And those last year in the US and Russia? And the massive floods in recent years in the US, India, China, Pakistan?

Look what Hurricane Sandy did in October 2012 to the Eastern coast of the US: to New York, New Jersey and surrounding cities, and down through the Caribbean Islands. It caused an estimated \$68 billion in damage.

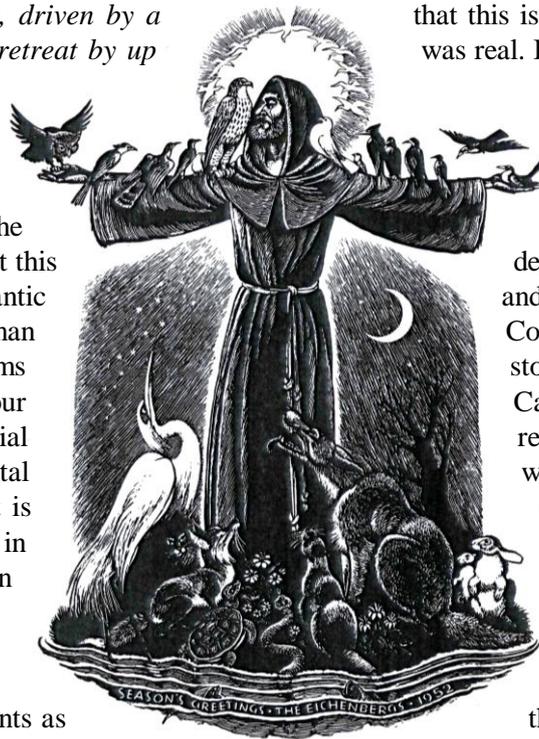
Former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg's warning that this is what the future is like was stark as it was real. It struck a chord in many.

What about the burgeoning forest fires in January 2014 in our near neighbour Australia, with whole states placed on fire alert? Temperatures rose above + 40 degrees C causing havoc with huge fires and widespread water restrictions. Contrast that with the 'polar vortex' storms which hit North America and Canada at the same time. Cold weather records were shattered in every state, with temperatures plummeting to – 40 degrees C in some parts, and consistent temperatures below – 30 degrees C for many days in some parts.

This fluctuating weather is another sign of the massive changes the climate is undergoing. The UN climate chief, Christiana Figueres, this past month has called on corporate investors 'to move their investments out of high-carbon assets like oil and coal into assets promoting renewable energy, greater energy efficiency and more sustainable ways of doing business. The continued dangerous rise in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is in large part the direct result of past investments in energy and mobility systems based on the use of fossil fuels.' (*The Press*, 17 January 2014)

A Prophet from the Philippines

Possibly no one has articulated the issue with the credibility or required urgency better than Yeb Sano, the Philippine's delegate to the 19th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Warsaw in November 2013. With a voice full of passion, he spoke not from academic papers, nor statistics nor some sense of ideology but from a breaking human heart as he articulated the huge damage that Typhoon Haiyan had inflicted on his country that week, compounded for him by



the loss of family members. He told the delegates,

‘Science tells us that simply, climate change will mean more intense tropical storms. As the Earth warms up, that would include the oceans. The energy that is stored in the waters off the Philippines will increase the intensity of typhoons and the trend we now see is that more destructive storms will be the new norm.’

‘Loss and damage from climate change is a reality today across the world. Developed country emissions reductions targets are dangerously low and must be raised immediately, but even if they were in line with the demand of reducing 40-50% below 1990 levels, we would still have locked-in climate change and would still need to address the issue of loss and damage.’

The reality is that despite all the evidence and the heartfelt cry of Yeb Sano, the Warsaw conference failed to deliver the necessary changes needed to stave off the pending global warming. Observers knew the conference was in deep trouble when many NGO delegates walked out in the penultimate session claiming that the conference was going nowhere in its deliberations. In the event, on the last day it cobbled together a statement which met some of the demands of delegates but which essentially failed to stop the catastrophic warming already under way. However, the deal struck will be the first agreement ever

to bind all the world’s countries to curbing atmosphere-polluting greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal, oil and gas. How it will be implemented is another matter.

Moral Obligation

We have a moral obligation to protect and enhance the environment in all its aspects. Clearly, the heating of the atmosphere with its resultant rising sea temperatures and the volatile weather this produces is a moral question of the most extreme importance. Christians believe everything will be brought together under Christ in the fullness of time. (Col 1/20) This is what the Parousia is about, the second coming of Christ as referred to in the New Testament.

Most of the science is saying that because of our abuse of fossil fuels and the resulting changes to the climate, we are gradually destroying Planet Earth. But there needs to be a new economic paradigm, based on a de-carbonisation strategy and set in an ecological framework that is sustainable for future generations and includes full employment and inclusion of all. It requires visionary thinkers – but it is possible.

We can approach it from two levels. At the macro-level, the level of international action, we must demand that our government takes a stronger, more principled position than it took at Warsaw. As a nation we are still basing our future economic development largely on the pipe dream that we will find reserves of oil and gas fields off our coasts. Hence the recent contracts let to overseas conglomerates and mining companies to come and mine. This is crazy thinking. Fracking too should be off the agenda. It’s a destructive process and is anathema to right-thinking people. We need also to support more vigorously international accords promoting renewable green energy and limiting greenhouse gas and CO2 emissions. Staying away from TPPA and further ‘free trade’ pacts would also be a smart move.

At the micro-level, there are a variety of small steps we can attempt. All things are interconnected. Supporting local economic development projects including farmers and community markets, job creation for the unemployed, promoting sustainable agriculture, keeping our carbon footprint to a minimum through use of public transport and less use of private cars, taxing the rich at higher rates and using the funding for better education facilities in low income areas, making doctors more affordable to the poor. These are all areas where social justice needs to be effected and inequality overcome. The better educated the young are, the more likely they are to embrace the social change necessary. And the better the chance we have to save the planet.

Of such is the Kingdom of God in whom we trust. But as Teresa of Avila said succinctly all those years ago, ‘Christ has no body now but mine, no hands, no feet on earth but mine’. Responsibility lies with each of us.

Jim Consedine lives at the Thomas Merton CW in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Who are we?

Members of Te Wairua Maranga Trust, which publishes this paper, have since 1989 been operating as a community following a Catholic Worker spirituality. We view the Treaty of Waitangi as our nation’s founding covenant. We try, however inadequately at times, to live the Sermon on the Mount and its modern implications. We operate two houses of hospitality in Christchurch named after Suzanne Aubert and Thomas Merton. We offer hospitality to people in need either on a temporary or more permanent basis. We have a continuing outreach to a number of families offering friendship and support. We usually receive back more than we ever give. We promote non-violence and a ‘small is beautiful’ approach to life, practise co-operative work and peace making, focus on issues of justice, support prison ministry, help create intentional communities, and try to practise voluntary poverty and personalism. We also engage in regular prayer and generally struggle along like everybody else.

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

We do not seek funding from traditional sources. We hope to receive enough to keep our houses of hospitality open and our various works going. Catholic Worker houses do not issue tax receipts since they are running neither a business nor a church social agency. We invite people to participate personally and unconditionally. Should you wish to make a regular contribution, you may do so through our Te Wairua Maranga Westpac Trust holding account (number 031703-0036346-02). Donations may also be made to **Te Wairua Maranga Trust, Box 33-135, Christchurch.**

Editorial 1 Keeping faith, planting hope

Climate change is one of those topics destined by many to be put in the too hard basket. We all know that it is happening. But in response to the question 'what can I do?', most shrug their shoulders and say it is all too big for them. In one sense it is. It feels way beyond our human capacity to attempt to do anything to help change the situation.

This is where Catholic Worker philosophy can help. CWs have always taught the notion of personalism and championed 'small is better' over against corporatization and 'big is better'. Personalism provides greater local control so we can take better responsibility for outcomes.

In the area of climate change, keeping hope alive is a primary contribution Christians can make. We have the option to be totally paralysed by what is happening around us, or put a stake in the ground and set about making a small but positive contribution towards building a more sustainable future. In so doing we can join millions of others who, unnoticed and unheralded, do just that every day of their lives.

Seeds of hope can be sown anywhere. A recent survey of NZ kindergarten pupils found that they instinctively regard themselves as 'guardians of the earth'. Researcher Jeanne Williams says that her research shows that 'teaching pre-schoolers the importance of the environment will help them become agents of change in the future.' Children of 3-4 years 'have a strong identification with nature; they are intrigued and wonder what is around them. By engaging them at a young age, they have a stronger awareness of who they are and the contribution

they can make. We need to empower them.' (*The Press*, 17 January 2014)

I was recently reading about a small primary school called Holy Ghost Catholic School in Albuquerque, in the USA. There a creative teacher named Michaela Bruzzese co-ordinates *Care for Creation*. In simple terms, her programme promotes education as providing life-giving sustainable habits that will last a lifetime. So as part of the curriculum, she has the children set up a series of gardens where they grow mainly vegetables for the table. Each child is allotted certain work to do. They do the work and reflect in the classroom about what they do – how plants grow, where the rain fits in, how seed germinates, how to care for plants, how to share and enjoy the fruit of their work. They are growing food and developing vital skills but are also literally planting seeds of hope in their own lives.

She writes, 'The Church's social teaching has made the critical difference for our community between knowledge/hope/action and knowledge/despair/paralysis. The task is enormous and it is true that these little steps our school has taken will not, in themselves, be enough to stop possible environmental catastrophe. But we have realized that as a community of faith we have something vital and unique to offer the conversation on climate change.' (*Sojourners*, Jan 2014)

In the face of climate change, is Albuquerque providing a holistic model for school curriculums everywhere?

—Jim Consedine

Editorial 2 Waihopai Ploughshares: Crown drops claim

The Crown has unexpectedly dropped its court action against Waihopai Ploughshares and is no longer suing them for \$1.2 million damages, the alleged cost of their disarmament action. This development comes in response to Waihopai Ploughshares application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court against the October 2013 Court of Appeal decision allowing the Crown to seek damages.

The case began in April 2008, when three Catholic Workers - Adrian Leason, Fr Peter Murnane and Sam Land – calling themselves the Waihopai Ploughshares, sought to enflish the scripture ideal of Isaiah 2/4. After extensive prayerful preparation, under cover of darkness, they entered the grounds of the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) spy base at Waihopai, prayed for peace in the world and an end to warmongering, and deflated the dome covering one of the two antenna to highlight the role of the base in the 'war on terror'. The spy base is part of the United States National Security Agency (NSA) network and, among other things, uses the ECHELON global communications interception system to intercept private and commercial communications.

The motive for the Crown finally dropping the

damages claim is unclear. Perhaps, it being an election year, the government is particularly keen to avoid any further revelations about the GCSB? Or perhaps it is linked to one of the Waihopai Ploughshares' legal arguments - that the civil claim for damages is not justified on public policy grounds due to the **ex turpi causa** defence, which means that a court may deny relief to a plaintiff (here the GCSB) whose cause of action is founded upon illegal activity? As events over the past two years show, the GCSB clearly has been acting illegally.

Or perhaps it was, as Attorney-General Chris Finlayson said on RNZ, the three have no financial assets and it was 'pointless to pursue them for a few farthings.' That certainly is true – they have no redeemable assets.

Whatever the reasons, it is a brilliant result for the three who, collectively more than anyone else in recent times, have placed the spy-base under the public microscope. They have turned a beam onto the nefarious role it plays as part of the US military's 'Five Eyes Network,' and its secret controllers at the NSA in Washington. They have shed a light, however briefly, into the darkness.

—Jim Consedine

US Peace Nun Sent to Prison

Jim Consedine

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks and there shall be no more training for war. Isaiah 2/4



An 84-year old Catholic nun, Sister Megan Rice, and two Catholic Workers, Vietnam veteran Mike Walli (63), and carpenter Greg Boertje-Obed (57), have been imprisoned for several years each for a non-violent peace action at a top-secret US military base.

They had entered the sprawling Y-12 National Security Complex, America's 'Fort Knox' of weapons-grade uranium, nestled behind a forested ridgeline on the outskirts of Knoxville, Tennessee. The complex's security cameras and machine gun nests are designed to repel an attack by the world's most feared terrorist organizations. They were no match for three non-violent peace activists, backed by prayer, filled with a feisty spirit, and carrying only phials of their own blood, a hammer, banners, war pictures and bolt-cutters.

In the dark morning hours of July 28, 2012, the three, calling themselves the *Transform Now Ploughshares*, bushwhacked up to the edge of Y-12, cut through three separate security fences, and sprayed peace slogans and human blood on the wall of a building that is said to hold enough weapons-grade uranium to obliterate human civilization several times over. They remained inside Y-12 for more than an hour before they were detected.

At a February hearing of the Energy and Commerce Committee, multiple members of Congress thanked Rice for exposing the site's gaping vulnerabilities. Eleven launch officers were targeted in a separate investigation of illegal drug use. But that didn't deter federal prosecutors from throwing the book at the three peace-makers, amazingly charging them with sabotage.

Contrary to the US commitment in the Non Proliferation Treaty, Y12 currently manufactures thermonuclear cores for W76 nuclear warheads under the Stockpile Life Extension Program. The purpose of the SLEP is to extend the life of warheads for decades; the ongoing W76 LEP is introducing significant modifications to the warhead's military capability resulting in what some experts have called a new nuclear weapon. In addition, Y12 is planning to build a new bomb production facility, the Uranium Processing Facility, which will have as its sole mission the production of thermonuclear weapons components. The estimated price tag for the UPF, originally \$1.5 billion, is now \$19 billion and rising.

In an attempt to throw a blanket of silence over the

Ploughshares resisters' concerns, the government chose to charge them with sabotage and, despite testimony about the symbolic nature of their action and the hopeful intent demonstrated throughout by their nonviolent behaviour, an East Tennessee jury took less than three hours to convict them of all charges, including the sabotage charge which carried a maximum penalty of 20 years.

Following the conviction, Sister Megan, Mike Walli and Greg Boertje-Obed were taken into custody and labelled violent offenders, even though they are committed to non-violence as their means of protest. As Paul Mango noted, 'In this country, we often point to other nations, like China, Russia or Iran, where dissidents are imprisoned in order to silence their criticisms of the policies and practices of their governments.. We like to think we are enlightened and in a free land like ours such draconian measures are out-of-bounds. But this case shows otherwise. The US is determined to carry out its nuclear agenda, to continue to violate its international treaty obligations, to build new bombs and new bomb plants, and they will even put an 84-year-old nun in jail if that's what it takes to bury the truth. There is no mystery behind this action—the government simply knows its nuclear policy and practices cannot bear scrutiny.'

They claimed that the US acted in violation of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and said Y12 was chosen for the action because of plans for a multi-billion dollar bomb plant to be built there--the Uranium Processing Facility. The sole purpose of the UPF is to produce thermonuclear cores for warheads and bombs. Y12 is an active weapons production facility--workers today are performing Life Extension Upgrades on the W76 warhead at Y12.

The three appeared at sentencing looking pale and thin after 8 months in remand custody. They were dressed in black striped jail uniforms and wearing leg shackles and handcuffs. One hand was allowed to be freed during the five hour sentencing phase. Judge Thapar, who had received 16,000 written submissions and testimonies in support of the trio, (including several from New Zealand), acknowledged their purity of intentions – but failed to appreciate the moral implications of the action nor the imperative of God's Law they acted under. 'They acted to prevent a crime, not commit one. The real crime of nuclear war preparations at the Y-12 facility continue unchecked, while the truth-tellers are locked up,' said Art Laffin, a CW spokesperson after the sentencing.

Mike and Greg were each sentenced to 62 months of imprisonment, followed by 3 years of probation. Sister Megan was sentence to 35 months imprisonment and 3 years of probation. She will be 90 years old when she is finally freed from prison and probation.

Around the Traps

On a mild warm day, about 50 people turned out for **Christmas dinner** at the Suzanne Aubert CW. Before dinner held under the awning on the back lawn, Jim spoke briefly welcoming guests, reminding everyone of why Christmas was important. He called it a 'game changing event,' calling us to a new way of relating with one another. He then invited Brian McDonald to say grace. Then all tucked into a really good four-course meal. The usual suspects gathered earlier and spent all morning preparing the food – Tui, Sue, Leony, Geoff, Babe, Francis, Adrian (AJ), Jacqui, Raewyn, Judith and Brian Williams. By 3pm all that was left were dirty plates. We had no sooner cleaned up after the meal than the heavens opened in a tremendous downpour. By that stage, many were already resting up!

April 8th was the 20th anniversary of Suzanne Aubert CW. The house had been officially opened on 8th April 1993 by Sister Pauline O'Regan and Muriel Morrison, generous friend and Quaker leader from the city. We celebrated the anniversary with a fish 'n chip night and a party sing-a-long. As the anniversary crept up on us, at short notice, about 20 people including a foundation resident member, Tony Suddaby, gathered and shared stories and reflections of times good and bad. Another foundation resident, Moana Cole, sent her greetings and best wishes. We remembered several former deceased friends who had been laid out in the lounge during their wakes and whose funerals were held there. Francis and Jim provided the guitar music which concluded a lovely evening.

CWs are very grateful for the response to our annual appeal for funding for our hospitality work and the production of *The Common Good*. **We received \$8110 from 71 individual donors**, which is slightly more than last year. While postage costs have continued to soar, many readers have chosen to receive the electronic copy of our paper which has saved us some expense. We remain committed to posting a hard copy to those who prefer it that way.

It was lovely to meet up with Kate Berrigan and her friend Karen Pezzetti on their visit to Christchurch in early January. Moana Cole, Kathleen Gallagher and Mike Coughlan played 'mine host' and we shared a meal and some ideas about the state of US politics (not too good!), and the CW and Ploughshares movements.

CW member Leony Miller has been busy through December collecting materials to send to

the Philippines after the typhoon. Her front rooms have become storage space for the many items received. The goods have been placed in a container to transport to the worst areas in the Philippines. She also has been making contact with and helping support Filipino workers coming to Christchurch for the re-build of the city.

Sombre facts about NZ – 265,000 children live in poverty defined by income. They include 1 in 3 Maori and Pacifica children; and 1 in 7 Pakeha children. Also 1 in 10 suffer from severe poverty, lacking basic necessities and adequate income; 3 out of 5 will be living in poverty for much of their childhood; 51 percent are from sole parent families; 60 percent are from beneficiary families. Poverty is defined as a household living on less than 60 percent of the median income after housing costs. (*The Press*, 9 December 2013)

By November 2013, 9000 people have been killed in Iraq during that calendar year alone. This does not include the wounded which is a far greater number. What have we done to that country? *Letter from Kathy Breen, Catholic Worker.*

The Scandal of Military Spending In an opinion piece published in August 2012 entitled '*The World Is Over Armed, and Peace is Under Funded*,' the UN Secretary General addressed the dilemma which contributes heavily to the disempowerment of millions of people world - wide; namely, global military spending. Last year it is estimated that this spending exceeded \$1.7 trillion or more than \$4.6 billion a day, which alone is almost twice that of the United Nations' budget for an entire year. The UN Millennium Project Report on *Costs of Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) estimates the cost of meeting the UN's MGDs by 2015 is \$149 billion, approximately 8.4% of annual global military expenditures, and 23% of US spending for one year.. *International CURE Newsletter Winter 2013*

Funeral Choice

www.funeralchoice.co.nz

A Catholic Worker project

Cheaper alternatives to consumer funerals

The capture of the children and the nation

Shay Cullen SSC

The story of the rescue of Rosemary is heartening and encouraging. When we read about such stories of young children like that of Rosemary being helped and rescued from the clutches of depraved people who are arrested, we rejoice. But we may not know that hundreds of thousands are not rescued, they suffer abuse like Rosemary who was trafficked and sold at 14 years old into sex slavery and bondage. She was rescued, sheltered and healed while many others are not. A charity like Preda Foundation with limited funds can do only so much.

When children are saved by government social workers, police and charity workers, we applaud and approve and our admiration of good organized government services increases. Government is elected by the people, given public trust and paid through taxes on everything to serve the common good. In developing countries like the Philippines, government agencies, one by one have been captured by the rich to serve them rather than the poor. That's why human trafficking and exploitation is on the increase.

It's been going on for the past many years. President Aquino says he is trying to root it out. Hundreds of thousands are barely surviving dire poverty and hunger; the children are the most at risk. They totter on the edge of abject poverty. This is now seen in all its shame by the fury of typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan). It bared the sprawling slums and stripped away the fragile fabric of the hovels of the teeming poor. Dire poverty was laid embarrassingly naked.

Such poverty and social injustice causes unrest, malnutrition, disease and illness. Economists say the Philippines has a strongly growing economy, creating wealth, but for whom? Little of it is reaching the poor. A cheap hungry labour force benefits the rich.

The Social Weather Station (SWS) survey showed that 21 percent of the population, that's 4.3 million people, went hungry at least once in the second half of 2013. In Metro Manila, there was a 10 point increase in hunger up to 26%, that's 738,000 people who went hungry. The poverty rate has not gone down and it is higher since 2005. Meaning the poor still have nothing much in the world and live from meal to meal.

As little as one percent of the population are super rich and own as much as 70% to 90% of the national wealth. They use their wealth as bribes and infiltrate the bureaucracy, police, military and congress and 'capture' government agencies and bend them all to support their own interests. Government appears to serve the interests of the rich more than those of the people. Corruption is epidemic. President Aquino, considered clean of corruption himself, has made its elimination the goal of his

presidency.

Rosemary was a child of poverty. When her mother died of TB, Rosemary was taken by a pimp and trafficker who later became a manager of a sex bar frequented by international and local sex tourists. Rosemary was brought up as a sex worker, one of many thousands in the brothels and sex bars of the Philippines into which they are trafficked as human slaves trapped by debt.

In this beautiful country, the resilient, kind, patient and friendly people are exploited and most don't know it. They are manipulated and conditioned into believing the rich deserve everything they have got and sexual exploitation of even minors is acceptable. 60 years old folk singers can co-habit with 16 year-old girls and it is judged okay. Mass media re-enforces this. Social media exults in it. Some justify it since they make money. They don't see the forced abortions and the daily abuse and human rights violations. The victims seldom earn money, as most trafficked victims are 'captured', by personal debt to the bar owners and cannot escape.

Much like the nation itself, the Philippines is imprisoned by foreign debt on loans that benefit the rich and the poor are paying the interest on that national debt.

The huge increase in electricity charges in Metro Manila last December illustrates the capture of government by the rich elite. The electric power producers took over the national industry through privatization and sweetheart deals with friends in government. Most public utilities are now privatized and owned by the profit-driven wealthy elite. The electricity producers, Aboitiz, Malampaya and a few others with Meralco, mostly using filthy coal plants also approved by their friends in government, allegedly form a monopoly, a price fixing cartel and allegedly colluded to create a false electrical shortage to justify the price increase and thus maximize their obscene profits. They deny all wrong doing.

Besides that, corruption knows no end. Every day, new revelations emerge of one huge scam by government officials in cahoots with the barons of business. Rights advocates are taking a stand and opposing it. Media has the courage and freedom to reveal the truth but many journalists are assassinated as a result. The dark forces strike back.

Silence is approval in the face of evil. We must oppose all human trafficking, child abuse and price fixing especially that which hurts the poor. We must speak out, protest and declare what is true and right, come what may. [shaycullen@preda.org, www.preda.org]

Fr Shay Cullen is an Irish Columban priest working in the Philippines with abandoned children.

In honour of the SOA victims: ‘No más! No more!’

John Dear

Thousands gathered over late November in Columbus, Ga., to pray, study, reflect, network, remember and march to the gates of the notorious School of the Americas (SOA), the US training camp for Latin American militaries and death squads, officially called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. It was both heart-breaking and heartening, a time of grief and a time of joy.

Speakers came from around Latin America to tell us about ongoing US militarism, human rights violations, poverty and injustice. More than 70 workshops were held on topics that included the various struggles in Latin America and the ongoing US drone warfare.

This year, we also heard a litany of grief, a kind of prayers of the faithful. After each intercession, we sang, ‘No más! No more!’ I was moved by this SOA Watch litany, and offer it here below with their permission to share the spirit of the weekend, the news from Latin America, and the need for ongoing prayers to end systemic injustice and war.

In Mexico, a repression campaign in the name of the ‘War on Drugs’ is being unleashed against the people who are struggling for direct democracy and justice. 60,000 people have been killed in the past six years. At least 18 high-ranking SOA graduates have played key roles in civilian-targeted warfare against indigenous communities in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca. Perpetrators of violence on all sides of the ‘drug war’ have received weapons and military training from the US. We cry, ‘No más! No more!’

In Colombia, they have sent more troops to the SOA/WHINSEC than any other country. Since 2002 alone, over 35,000 have been killed and the number of internally displaced has risen to around 6 million. Over 10,000 Colombian soldiers have been trained at the school and linked to many assassinations and disappearances. Reports show that 30 of the 33 Colombia Army Brigade commanders were trained at the SOA, with increased extrajudicial executions in areas under SOA-trained commanders’ control. We cry, ‘No más! No more!’

In Honduras, over 400 members of the resistance movement have been killed since a June 28, 2009, SOA graduate-led military coup, and hundreds more forced into exile, beaten or detained by police. Death squads terrorize villages resisting land displacement in the lower Aguan Valley. Pre-election violence continues to intensify, with 18 murders and 15 armed attacks against candidates of the LIBRE party, which is led by deposed President Zelaya’s

wife Xiomara Castro. As Hondurans go to the polls on Sunday, we stand behind their striving for the restoration of democracy. We cry, ‘No más! No more!’



In Guatemala, the SOA played a key role in the three brutal military dictatorships that ruled Guatemala from 1978 to 1986. SOA graduates comprised four of eight military officials in the cabinet of Lucas Garcia, six out of nine under Rios Montt, and five out of 10 under Mejia Victores. The brutal SOA counterinsurgency strategies that were implemented in Guatemala left over 200,000 people dead. In a triumph of justice, the people of Guatemala placed Rios Montt on

trial for genocide. But the struggle for justice is not yet finished. We cry, ‘No más! No more!’

In Paraguay, during the 32 long years of repression and iron-fisted dictatorship by General Alfredo Stroessner, over 18,000 people were tortured, nearly 20,000 illegally detained in hidden cells, and hundreds forever disappeared. Today, nearly 2 million Paraguayans live in external exile, having fled the fearful violence of dictatorship and Plan Condor, while yet more are internally exiled due to the decades of economic violence. In June 2012, the democratically elected president of Paraguay, Liberation Theology Bishop Fernando Lugo, was removed in an ‘express coup’ set in motion in a conflict over land with one of the richest landowners in the country. Meanwhile, the right to protest these events is being criminalized. We cry, ‘No más! No more!’

In Argentina, SOA graduate Leopoldo Galtieri headed the military junta that ruled the country. Throughout the entirety of the Dirty War, 30,000 people were killed or disappeared. As the trials against Plan Condor move through the justice system, the role of high-ranking officials in the Southern Cone and the US are being charged with complicity. We cry, ‘No más! No more!’

In Chile, 10 of the officers indicted with Pinochet for crimes against humanity were trained at the SOA. Thousands were victims of the Doctrine of National Security, promoted by the SOA, and also taught to the police. Today, this doctrine continues to produce victims, such as the Mapuche leader Jaime Mendoza Collio and student Manuel Gutierrez. In honour of those lost 40 years ago in the coup against President Salvador Allende, we cry, ‘No más! No more!’

In El Salvador, SOA graduates killed Celia Ramos, her mother, Elba, and six Jesuit priests at the University of Central America in San Salvador on Nov. 16, 1989. Next month marks the 31st anniversary of the SOA

graduate-led massacre of over 900 civilians in the village of El Mozote, and the killing of four US churchwomen on Dec. 2, 1980. Today, the US is pushing again for increased militarization in El Salvador and Central America, and attempting to subvert the democratic process using Cold War-era tactics. We cry, 'No más! No more!'

In Nicaragua, over 4,000 soldiers were trained at the SOA for Somoza's National Guard death squads. For all the victims that died during the Somoza dictatorship, to the student protesters, the journalists and campesinos that were killed during the 45 years of rule, and to all the families that sought for a better Nicaragua, we cry, 'No más! No more!'

In Venezuela, in April 2002, graduates of the SOA were key players in an attempted coup against the democratically elected government. Democracy prevailed as the people took to the streets. One hundred people died in the violence during the coup attempt. In the wake of the death of Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez in March of this year, social violence broke out in response to the elections which brought President Nicolas Maduro into office. We cry, 'No más! No more!'

In Haiti in January 2010, a deadly earthquake struck, killing hundreds of thousands and displacing many more, in both a natural and unnatural disaster leaving Haiti under a US- and UN-orchestrated occupation and an unjust distribution of aid. As the UN forces ready themselves for yet another occupation of Haiti, we cry, 'No más! No more!'

In the United States, Congress approved over a trillion dollars for military operations while 36 million people inside our borders do not have enough to eat, 3 million are homeless and over 2 million people are locked in cages. Students unable to pay for college have to turn to the military in order to support their families. Laws attempt to criminalize immigrants who come to this country looking for a better life, many of whom have left their countries as a result of oppressive military policies and economic policies that destroy their communities. Across the nation, the racist system of exploitation and oppression that has defined US immigration policy for centuries is growing in the form of detention centres, inundation of local police forces by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the war on the border grows to fever pitch. We cry, 'No más! No more!'

May love and mercy go with you as you speak in solidarity with those who have been silenced by death and repression. Through your witness, may their voices be heard here at the SOA, in the White House, in the halls of Congress and in the hearts of people across the Americas so that the School of the Americas will be closed forever and we can begin to abolish war and injustice and welcome a new world of justice, nonviolence and peace.

Fr John Dear visited NZ at the invitation of the Catholic Worker in 2010. This column is reprinted from NCR, 26 November 2013

Charges Dismissed Against War Resisters

Four people charged with blocking the gates of Rockhampton army base in Queensland, Australia, during the largest US military exercises in the Southern hemisphere had their charges dismissed after the prosecution failed to proceed today.

Robin Tuabenfeld, Andy Paine, Dave Sprigg and Catholic Worker Jim Dowling travelled to Rockhampton in July 2013 to resist Australian and US training for present and future wars. Around 18,000 US, and 9000 Australian troops took part in the 2013 'Operation Talisman Sabre' war games, a total of 27,000 troops. The protestors held pictures of victims of the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and lay on the road in front of the main entrance to the base, where they were arrested.

Before court some of the group with friends and family held signs and handed out leaflets noting that the day of the court appearances, 6th January, was the Feast of the Epiphany on the Christian calendar. This is the traditional day for gift giving for much of Europe. It marks the day the wise folks gave gifts to Jesus before eluding Herod, the head of State, who was intent on killing

the Prince of Peace. Jesus eluded Herod, but the story tells us the countless Bethlehem infants killed in Herod's search and destroy mission were not so lucky. Nor have been the tens of thousands of children of Iraq and Afghanistan who have suffered and continue to suffer so much from war-making in more recent times.

Their leaflet declared:

'Today we humbly offer our gift of peacemaking to the Prince of Peace, Jesus. After more than a decade of revenge, murder, and mayhem since September 11, it is time for people everywhere (especially Christians) to try the nonviolence of Jesus. As Martin Luther King Jr put it, 'The future choice is between nonviolence and nonexistence!' Let's continue the nonviolent struggle!

CW website

- Leading articles from the first 16 years of *The Common Good*
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www.catholicworker.org.nz

Causes of War – Possibilities of Peace

Art Laffin

'Where is the world to save us from torture? Where is the world to save us from the fire and sadness? Where is the world to save the hunger strikers?' - Adnan Latif, Guantanamo prisoner,

On the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy, eight of us stood outside the White House to appeal yet again for justice for the Guantanamo hunger strikers, for an end to the tortuous confinement for all held at Guantanamo and for an end to war.

The Dorothy Day CW began a weekly Friday peace vigil in 1998 at the White House to call for an end to US criminal war-making in Iraq and that we embrace God's command to renounce all war and killing. Since then our vigil has called for an end to all US war-making and military intervention in our world, for the abolition of all weapons of war--from nuclear weapons to killer drones, for an end to all US-sponsored oppression and torture and justice for the poor and all victims.

We remember and pray for all victims of our war-making empire, including the thousands killed by lethal drones and the nine men who have died at Guantanamo over the past seven years. Adnan Latif, was a Guantanamo prisoner from Yemen, held for ten years without ever having been charged with a crime and cleared for release on four separate occasions. He was found dead in his cell on September 8, 2012.

As we gather here at the White House we are mindful that today is the 50th anniversary of the assassination of JFK. In a new groundbreaking work regarding Kennedy's murder, our good friend and renowned theologian and peacemaker, Jim Douglass, published an exceptional book: *JFK and the Unspeakable*, which meticulously examines the untold story of the political context and real forces surrounding Kennedy's death. Today is Day 4334 since first detainees were brought to Guantanamo; 164 detainees remain at Guantanamo, 84 have been cleared for release. This is day 284 of their hunger-strike and 11 detainees remain on hunger-strike

In his book, Douglass convincingly asserts that at the height of the Cold War, JFK risked committing the greatest crime in human history: starting a nuclear war. Horrified by the spectre of nuclear annihilation, Kennedy gradually and courageously turned away from his long-held Cold War beliefs and toward a policy of lasting peace. But to the military and intelligence agencies in the US, who were committed to winning the Cold War at any cost, Kennedy's change of heart was a direct threat to their power and influence. Once these dark 'Unspeakable' forces recognized that Kennedy's interests were in direct opposition to their own, they tagged him as a dangerous traitor, plotted his assassination, and orchestrated the subsequent cover-up. This book is a must read for anyone interested in the truth about why JFK was murdered.

Another must-read about JFK's commitment to peace was published in *Rolling Stone* magazine (21 November 2013). In this compelling article, John F. Kennedy's Vision of Peace, RFK Jr highlights how his uncle was committed to ending the all US involvement in Vietnam. On 11 October 1963 (six weeks before his death), he authorized National Security Action Memorandum 263, making official policy the withdrawal from Vietnam of the bulk of US military personnel by the end of 1965.

A majority of Americans believe that JFK was not killed by a lone gunman. Even a special Congressional committee found in 1979 that Kennedy 'was probably assassinated as the result of conspiracy.' What emerges in the aftermath of Kennedy's murder? The Vietnam War escalated, the cold war continued for another quarter century and the national security state became more expansive and dominant. Clearly the official narrative of JFK assassination is not to be believed. Clearly there is now compelling evidence as to who was really behind the JFK assassination.

We, and all future generations owe an enormous debt of gratitude to JFK for saving the world from nuclear annihilation and for trying to bring about a world of lasting peace free of weapons of mass murder and war, a task that we are all charged with today.

Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk who was considered one of the greatest spiritual writers of the 20th century, offers this description of the 'Unspeakable': 'It is the void that contradicts everything that is spoken even before the words are said; the void that gets into the language of public and official declarations at the very moment when they are pronounced, and makes them ring dead with the hollowness of the abyss. It is the void out of which Eichmann drew the punctilious exactitude of his obedience...'

Thus the 'Unspeakable' is all around us and is powerfully manifested in a war-making empire committed to remaining the #1 military superpower and crushing those forces that seek any real change and transformation. Thus, the US empire continues to operate with impunity as it has waged lethal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, uses deadly killer drones as part of its kill-list and assassination program in Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia, and continues its criminal policy of indefinite detention and torture at Guantanamo.

As we gather here to once again say 'Yes' to the God of life and love, and 'No' to the lies and death-dealing policies of the US national security state and war-making empire. Let us all labour together to create God's Beloved Community and help bring about a world free of violence, oppression, torture, weapons and war.

Art Laffin has been a member of the Dorothy Day CW in Washington, DC for several decades.

Room for Christ

Dorothy Day



It is no use to say that we are born two thousand years too late to give room to Christ. Nor will those who live at the end of the world have been born too late. Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts.

If everyone were holy and handsome, with 'alter Christus' shining in neon

lighting from them, it would be easy to see Christ in everyone. If Mary had appeared in Bethlehem clothed, as St. John says, with the sun, a crown of twelve stars on her head and the moon under her feet, then people would have fought to make room for her. But that was not God's way for her nor is it Christ's way for Himself now when He is disguised under every type of humanity that treads the earth.

To see how far one realizes this, it is a good thing to ask honestly what you would do, or have done, when a beggar asked at your house for food. Would you--or did you--give it on an old cracked plate, thinking that was good enough? Do you think that Martha and Mary thought that the old and chipped dish was good for their guest?

In Christ's human life there were always a few who made up for the neglect of the crowd. The shepherds did it, their hurrying to the crib atoned for the people who would flee from Christ. The wise men did it; their journey

across the world made up for those who refused to stir one hand's breadth from the routine of their lives to go to Christ. The women at the foot of the cross did it too, making up for the crowd who stood by and sneered.

We can do it too, exactly as they did. We are not born too late. We do it by seeing Christ and serving Christ in friends and strangers, in everyone we come in contact with. While almost no one is unable to give some hospitality or help to others, those for whom it is really impossible are not debarred from giving room to Christ, because, to take the simplest of examples, in those they live with or work with is Christ disguised. All our life is bound up with other people; for almost all of us happiness and unhappiness are conditioned by our relationship with other people. What a simplification of life it would be if we forced ourselves to see that everywhere we go is Christ, wearing out socks we have to darn, eating the food we have to cook, laughing with us, silent with us, sleeping with us.

For a total Christian the goad of duty is not needed--always prodding him to perform this or that good deed. It is not a duty to help Christ, it is a privilege. Is it likely that Martha and Mary sat back and considered that they had done all that was expected of them--is it likely that Peter's mother-in-law grudgingly served the chicken she had meant to keep till Sunday because she thought it was 'her duty'? She did it gladly: she would have served ten chickens if she had them.

If that is the way they gave hospitality to Christ, it is certain that is the way it should still be given.

The Catholic Worker, December 1945

Book Review

***Pope Francis - Untying the Knots*, Paul Vallely, Bloomsbury, London, Paperback, published 2013, 227 pages NZ\$24.35. Reviewer: Robert Consedine.**

The London *Tablet* said 'read this book, forget the rest.' They were right. It's a page turner. I couldn't put it down.

The author Paul Vallely, went back to Argentina to talk to a wide range of supporters and critics of Jorge Bergoglio, now better known as Pope Francis.

The author pulls no punches in describing the 'tortured complexity' of life under the military dictatorship – one of the most brutal in the 20th century.

In this frightening environment, among many other atrocities 150 Catholic priests were killed and 500 pregnant women were held prisoners until their babies were born. The babies were then adopted out to 'good Catholic families' and the mothers were killed. In total 30,000 people disappeared in five years.

Bergoglio is initially portrayed as a silent enigma,

sitting on the sidelines, refusing to speak out; he would have been killed. Then as the story develops, we learn of his quiet, courageous, heroic acts.

In that journey the author uncovers a man of extraordinary complexity and paradox. 'A doctrinal traditionalist and an ecclesiastical reformer; an authoritarian who seeks to empower others.... a radical but not a liberal.... a right wing sympathizer and a humble reformer. He combines religious simplicity with political guile.'

The author traces Bergoglio's early career as a Jesuit superior where he developed the reputation of being an unpopular, divisive, authoritarian leader who was loved and hated in equal measure.

Then he was sent to live amongst the poor - and a dramatic transformation occurred. He was converted by the poor to a new understanding of the Gospel and of Christ. When the story of Bergoglio's conversion experience became known, it went viral.

When he was unexpectedly elected, the new Pope

described himself as ‘a sinner trusting in the mercy of God.’ He has been admitting his mistakes ever since.

He also described Vatican II as ‘a great work of the Holy Spirit.’ This bodes well for the future of the church. As Pope he appears determined to reform and decentralize a corrupt Vatican bureaucracy and banking system. He frequently challenges all the baptised to be part of the mission of the Church, emphasising God’s closeness to the poor and marginalised.

The author, despite the limitations of time and contacts, has done an impressive job in trying to balance the contrasting narratives of the life of Bergoglio – life

under the military junta and his transformation into an advocate for the poorest and the most marginalized.

His papacy is a breath of fresh air for the Church and the world. There is a level of excitement and high expectation of change in the air. The world’s media has given him an extraordinary reception. Pope Francis will be smart enough to know that the ‘honeymoon’ with the world and the global media won’t last.

Although there are many gaps and some repetition, this book is a well balanced entry into the life of a remarkable man.

Letters

The Open Door Community,
910 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE,
Atlanta, GA 30306 - 42412

Dear Friends,

We write on behalf of our friends on the streets and in prison to share with you the Good News – God is on their side! She condemns the poor against those who condemn them. And it seems like there are so many who condemn our friends to death by lethal injection, by withholding healthcare and housing, by cutting food stamps.

And yet. And yet. God is here. God was born, raised and lived with us. Showed us how to live. Shows us how to live. God is here. Hallelujah!. And so are we, bearing witness that here on the margins of our society there is life, valuable life, abundant life.

Thank you for sharing with us that we may stay here and provide some sanctuary and relief from the hell that is homelessness and prisons. And so that we may provide some resistance to our culture which condemns the poor to death in so many cruel ways. Thank you for sharing your money, your blankets and produce and everything else with us.

Much love,

Emma Stitt

(for the community)

Malu 'Aina
Centre for Non-violent Education and Action
P O Box 489
Kurtistown, Hawaii 96760

Dear Friends,

Christmas, with its message of ‘peace on earth, goodwill to all’ is a special time of the year to pause and reflect. It’s time to take stock of what is really important in life, the values we hold dear, including our family and friends. It is during this season that I send out an annual appeal to help sustain Malu 'Aina’s work for justice, peace and aloha 'aina (love of the land) and to say thank

you for solidarity over the long haul.

Malu 'Aina has been planting seeds and sharing food with people in need, the least among us, for 33 years. However, the gap between rich and poor is widening. It appears that personal gain for the 0.1% has displaced concern for the common good. For many, hope of a better life, is in short supply.

In addition, Malu 'Aina is now in its 637th consecutive week of sponsoring a Friday peace vigil at the downtown Hilo Post Office/Federal Building. Each week a new leaflet is prepared for worldwide distribution on the internet and on the downtown street corner. That is more than 12 years of ongoing wars and trillions of dollars spent on death and destruction. There seems to be always enough money for new weapon systems and wars, but never enough for meeting basic human needs and caring for the earth.

Together we want to see a change in priorities. We want a world where we fight less and talk more, where love and kindness is affirmed as the law of our being, where everyone has the basic necessities of life, where ‘justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream’, and we treat the Earth, our mother, with the respect she deserves.

In this Holy Season, we are truly blessed by the gifts of your solidarity – your peace, aloha, good will and financial help. Thank you for sharing your lives.

With gratitude and aloha,

Jim Albertini

(for Malu 'Aina).

Bishop’s House
Diocese of Palmerston North
18 February 2014

Dear Catholic Workers,

Grateful for your publication, and enclose donation. Better late than never. God’s blessings on your work.

† *Charles Drennan*

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The Common Good

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



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

Richard McBrien, *Catholicism: Study Edition*. p 977.