

# TAU AUGUST 2022

The Province of the Pacific, Third Order Society of St Francis



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Website - [tssf.org.nz](https://tssf.org.nz) Please check the website regularly for updated Intercession and Address lists.

Please send any articles that would interest us about your area events or other Franciscan happenings in time for the next issue to

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**The next Tau is due out at the end of November 2022**

**Please send me your stories, etc by Friday 18th November.**

## From the Minister Provincial

Spring Greetings to everyone. I really trust you are seeing signs of spring where you are and this is bringing renewed hope for the days to come. It is wonderful to see how many are planning to attend Chapter/ Convocation in both regions of Solomon Islands and Aotearoa. I am sure this will again be a significant time for tssf in this Province. For those unable to attend please pray for these gatherings. The ministry and power of prayer is underrated, so your contribution to the life of the province through prayer over these times would be so appreciated.

The prayers of many have been with those in the Aotearoa region who have been in the midst of torrential rain storms, floods and slips alongside the challenges of the pandemic. Likewise, prayers for those in the Solomon Islands region who are suffering from the elongated pandemic, unrest and loss of jobs. May you all know deep peace alongside God's great grace as you continue to minister to those around you.

It has been my privilege over the last week to be in Australia with all the other Provincial Ministers including the Minister General, John Hebenton. A wonderful time of sharing stories, listening to each other, listening to God, hearing what is ours to do in this age and time and place. We agreed, on reflection, how amazingly God has continued to lead tssf and that we also must look ahead with imagination and seize the opportunities to do as Francis and Clare would do, both for us individually and as a global Christian religious order.

Over the week together I was often reminded how amazing it is to work together face to face so can I encourage you all to try and attend some area gatherings where possible, especially with warmer weather coming and the airflow can be maintained.

The new web platform is up and running, not without a few glitches but that's technology and as time goes by it will keep improving. Do remember to send me photos or include them in the area notes you write for Tau so that we can form a great picture gallery.

Blessings and peace

Blair.

**Convocation 2022 - 'What is Yours To Do?  
Celebrating 800 years of  
The Third Order Society of St Francis - 1221 – 2021'**

**Convocation is almost upon us.**

There are still spaces available. Please get your registration in asap - even if you registered last year - we need you to re-register for this year.

Payment is due by September 1st. There are still funds available to assist people with the registration fee if needed. Please email Pip -

[pip.colgan@extra.co.nz](mailto:pip.colgan@extra.co.nz)

It will be a wonderful time together so if you are still deciding whether to come . . . it would be great to see you there!

**Where – El Rancho in Waikanae**

**When – Thursday September 22 – Sunday September 25**

**Cost: Full accommodation - \$330.00**

**Live out with lunch & dinner provided - \$175.00**

We have wonderful speakers - Jean Malcom, a former First Order Franciscan Sister, and Em Colgan tssf will be amongst us, and Jeff Golliher tssf will be zooming in from the United States. They have been invited to speak around our theme *What is Yours To Do?*

**Convocation transport**

**Wellington Airport-Wellington Railway Station-Waikanae  
Railway Station-El Rancho**

For those arriving at Wellington Airport on 22 September, the new Airport Express (AX) runs between the terminal and the railway station every 10-20 minutes. The ride takes about 30 minutes. 50% fare reduction applies until 2023.

From there, trains depart for Waikanae every 20 minutes. The ride takes an hour. 50% fare reduction applies until 2023.

Arrival time at El Rancho, Waikanae, on 22 September is between 1pm and 4pm, with the Opening Eucharist starting at 4.30pm. Gubbio members will run a shuttle service between Waikanae Station and El Rancho on both 22 and 25 September or you might prefer a 90-minute walk. Important to let us know when you register! It will be great to see you all again!

## Pacific Province Finances.

Every now and then there are a few queries re what happens to the donations you all make to tssf. I take this opportunity to remind you all that an annual contribution to tssf is part of being professed. This is a donation, not a due or subscription and is over to each individual as to how much you contribute. The guide for those who need that, is \$180 each year as on average that covers the expenses we have which I mention below. Some contribute much more and others less.

Firstly we contribute to the life of tssf globally by contributing to worldwide costs including legal and financial compliance. This contribution is based on the numbers of professed in each province. This includes the travel costs of the Ministers, the African travel fund and the 6 yearly Inter Provincial meeting for 3 representatives from each province to the UK meeting.

The same applies here where we reimburse the printing, postage, travel and zoom expenses of the minister, secretary, Tau editor, formation and lifelong formation directors and the treasurer. By doing this we support those in the enquire, postulants stages of their journey through the provision of formation documents and studies. Aotearoa region also supports the Solomon Islands region with some of their Chapter expenses, missions activity and getting their representatives to meetings.

The provincial website incurs ongoing costs to supply updated forms, lists and information which would otherwise need to be posted. For those who are not on the internet or require assistance, we post out printed copies of the address and intercession lists.

These lists are updated on the website monthly, hence if you print them off they may differ after some months of changes so there is no reason to have or use lists which are outdated by years. The ministers also check to make sure the daily headings for intercessions are up to date as this changes when provinces gain new tertiaries in new areas or geographic regions change.

As a province we organise and disperse the profession crosses and the “Principles In Plain English” booklet as a form of service for the global order.

This province also makes an annual contribution to the operating expenses of Franciscans International who work as advocates on behalf of the

marginalised and vulnerable.

We set aside amounts each year that build up over time to assist with travel between our regions for Chapter, new printings of books and the purchase of profession crosses.

Each year the treasurer reports to chapter and the Chapter minutes are loaded onto the website. They include the treasurers report if you would like to read through them.

I hope that helps clarify use of the funds donated and distributed.

Blair

## **Quotes from Corrie Ten Boom...**

"You can never learn that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have."

"Do you know what hurts so very much? It's love. Love is the strongest force in the world, and when it is blocked that means pain. There are two things we can do when this happens. We can kill that love so that it stops hurting. But then of course part of us dies, too. Or we can ask God to open up another route for that love to travel."

"Today I know that such memories are the key not to the past, but to the future. I know that the experiences of our lives, when we let God use them, become the mysterious and perfect preparation for the work he will give us to do."

"And our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things too. Don't run out ahead of him."

"Love is larger than the walls which shut it in."

"Even as the angry vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him....Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness....And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on his. When he tells us to love our enemies, he gives along with the command, the love itself."

## GUBBIO/WELLINGTON AREA REPORT

What have the gentle Gubbio's been up to this year? Our programme was disrupted somewhat due to restrictions and sickness thanks to visits from Brother Covid-19 and Brother Omicron. But we all exercised patience and fortitude and enjoyed our meetings all the more. We have 14 professed members including Margaret who has returned from CMS work in PNG and five novices – plus two members of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF) who are valued members of Gubbio. We have some who are very fragile and though unable to come to meetings they make an enormous contribution by their faithful prayers.

Gubbio met in January at St John's Church in Johnsonville and in June and July at St Aidan's, Miramar. We are very fortunate to have had both Maggie and Graeme celebrate for us and are very sorry indeed to farewell Maggie to the South Island. Using study notes compiled by novice Christopher, we studied, sometimes by email, Robyn Parkin's *Reflections on the Journey* and the Rev Canon Dr Jeff Golliher's reflections. In April, our Palmerston North and Silverstream members met at Rosemary's home for the Community Obedience, Study and lunch at a nearby café.

In August we hope to mark the Transitus of St Clare at chaplain Jenny's home, followed by a simple café lunch. We were delighted to welcome Penny Kennett who has moved to Wellington and to mark the recent engagement of Novice Sarah. We are very much looking forward to Convocation, coinciding with 800 years since St Francis founded the Third Order. Virginia will make us a banner, a vast improvement on the broom that was last carried! Also in October we hope to follow our practice of joining with the Secular

Franciscans at Holy Cross, Miramar, to mark the Transitus of St Francis and maybe in November we will have a Quiet Day. For our final service for the year we hope to join the Wellington Cathedral midday Eucharist as usual and then lunch together. Our next study sessions will be from *Franciscan Footprints* by Helen Julian CSF.

Rosemary Jamieson



## Following Francis

Saturday January 29 marked a significant milestone in my Franciscan journey – being admitted to the Novitiate of the Third Order Society of St Francis (known as the TSSF and its members as Tertiaries). It started with a colourful brochure, thrust into my hand at the 2019 Anglo-Catholic Hui asking me if I felt God was calling me to become a Third Order Franciscan. ‘Is He? Me? Surely, not! No! Why Not? Well possibly’, I argued with myself. For years I was feeling drawn to wanting to deepen my relationship with God and serve Him in a capacity beyond being a lay person in a parish church, but would I be ‘good enough’? Being in a religious order while remaining in one’s home and own community was a rather new concept to me at the time yet attractive and potentially doable as I wasn’t prepared to renounce my cat Rupert. But the hui ended, I ventured into a new job before being thrust into lockdown and the brochure, since consigned to that pile of papers which somehow never get filed, was all but forgotten about for the next 19 months, although maybe not quite.

Several weeks of being forced to worship alone during the first 2020 lockdown increased my desire to be part of some sort of community, to live to a definite discipline and to be accountable for this. But surely I could do this anyway, I thought, and so I tried to discipline myself to say the Daily Offices or at least read the scripture passages for the day. Doing this alone was difficult and I didn’t get very far. An online lecture on Radical Discipleship where the TSSF was described as ‘the Anglican church’s best kept secret’ brought the Order to mind again so I fossicked through my now random mountain of (still unfiled) papers and found the brochure again.

I learned that St Francis of Assisi founded the Third Order in 1221 for those who felt called to live according to his Rule yet still living and working in the ‘world’. While the First and Second Orders (Franciscans and Poor Clares respectively) take a literal vow of Poverty, Chastity (celibacy) and Obedience, Tertiaries, who include men and women, single and married, lay and ordained, promise to live according to the nine elements of the Rule (Eucharist, Penitence, Personal Prayer, Self-Denial, Retreat, Study, Simplicity, Work and Obedience) and additional principles: Humility, Chastity (really?), Love and Joy.

At first this appeared daunting and even rather scary as surely this proved that Orders were indeed for the holiest of holy types (not me!), but in April 2021 I picked up the phone and spoke to the Formation Director who referred me to

my Area Chaplain whose response was 'So you want to join our crazy bunch?' Crazy? Anglican.org.nz describes Francis as a:

*mission preacher, lover of animals, ascetic, mystic, dramatic fool for Christ, happy singer, troubadour of God.*

A collect from the same source asks God for 'something of his recklessness.' Plus of course Francis was a romantic figure who literally stripped himself 'naked following the naked Christ', a Robin Hood type hero, negotiator with the wolf of Gubbio and he wore the stigmata. To some he might have come across as crazy, but I immediately felt an affinity with Francis and if the Gubbio Group was indeed a crazy bunch then I was even more hopeful about fitting in. So, I become an Enquirer, (another pile of paper!); was assigned a Novice Counsellor and with some trepidation attended my first meeting in May 2021. To my relief and joy, everyone was friendly, appeared fairly normal and wore everyday clothes with the only distinguishing feature being the odd brown hoodie and the Profession cross. I immediately discerned that this was where I wanted to be and from there, I started working towards being accepted as a Postulant.

Tertiaries write their own version of the Rule and commit to keeping it for at least one year. I was also taught to view it as a support, rather like a trellis to help spiritual growth, and not a complex sort of obstacle course. Personal Rules of Life can be tweaked and even renegotiated to accommodate changes in circumstances or direction. My version of the Rule was accepted by the Formation Director and so I was officially a Postulant. Being a Postulant is an opportunity to test one's calling by keeping the Rule. In addition, I had to see a Spiritual Director, keep in touch with my Novice Counsellor and do a series of studies and write two quarterly reports.

It was a long and searching process forcing me to dig deep, adjust to living up to the Rule and saying the Community Obedience daily (not easy at first) especially due to not being able to see my Order for months due to ongoing Covid restrictions. Yet it had its rewards – especially where my prayer life has been concerned, and despite restrictions, I made new friends within the Gubbio group who are now like a family to me. Fast forward to December 2021 when I



submitted my last report and waited anxiously to hear back from my Novice Counsellor and, much to my joy, I got the email with subject line 'Novicing – full steam ahead' with the date – 29 January 2022 which still happened despite Red Traffic Light restrictions being announced less than one week earlier. This is not the end of the journey but another beginning as I have now started working towards Profession with even more studies, reports, and challenges but I know that this is definitely what I desire and with the help of God, Our Lady, St Francis, St Clare and everyone who has helped me to this stage, I will make it.

I would like to thank those at my own parish who prayed with me on Sunday January 30 and especially for the beautiful icon presented to me which I will always treasure and gaze at as I endeavour to follow the example of St Francis in my Christian walk.

Ingrid Vlieg

### ***The Source of All Power - or Waka Awash***

*Covid gusts swirl round us.*

*We're exposed - as in a howling storm.*

*Boundary-cloaks we draw tighter,  
in semblance of comfort (or control),  
but the drenching, blasts still bowl us along.*

*Like fearful disciples, tumbled in Simon's boat,  
we look to Christ - but how is it - that He sleeps on?*

*Fear not, He soon will wake,  
to admonish us, taking  
calm command of the storm.*

*Peter will know His reassuring touch,  
and sure-footed, in stilled waters, steer on:  
The great Gospel journey will resume its glorious course,  
as we, the awestruck crew - learn anew - WHO's strong.*

See Mark 4:36-41

From Christopher a Novice in Gubbio (that windy place!)

## **TAUPO MEETING at Sarah & Rick Hart's home, 9-10 July 2022**

Present were 3 of our members; Brian, Sarah and Lesley, together with members from King's Companions: Helene Young, Andrew McKean, Phil Dyer, Titia Dyer (Broekhuizen), Laurie Hopping. (Not to mention the two black Labradors who were very much in attendance!)

The meeting began at 10.00 am with prayers and then a "go-round" sharing where each of us is at. We were conscious of those not able to be with us, including those in need of special prayer.

Andrew then took us on a contemplative camera walk where we tried to change from "taking" photographs to "receiving" them, as well as insights the Lord might reveal. Later people shared their discoveries and insights.

As is common with TO meetings the shared lunch was abundant and delicious, with all gathered near a wood burner on a cold winter's day, with hot soup simmering on the hotplate. Sarah & Rick offered amazing hospitality, putting up nearly everyone overnight in warmth and comfort.

A gentle walk in the afternoon near the Wairakei Hotel took us alongside a hot stream at 40°C plus (too hot for swimming). Another place to wonder at God's handiwork! Then another meal with hotpot pork from the farm... delicious!

Since the All Blacks were playing the Irish it seemed churlish not to watch with our hosts (who are Irish) and there was much cheering and hooting.

Sunday morning after a filling breakfast of porridge (with brown sugar) people set off to church and/or home.

All together the weekend was a great way to bring two areas together with hospitality and companionship, prayer and contemplation.

Hei te wa

Brian Hamilton

### **Here are the dates for Juniper Forest meetings this year...**

**October 15<sup>th</sup>** meeting to be held at Selwyn Library, Parnell.

**December 10<sup>th</sup>** meeting to be held at Vaughan Park.

The meeting may be changed to a zoom meeting depending on Covid restrictions.

Many Blessings, Diane.



"Remember these? There are still some available for \$10.00 plus postage \$2.00. A number of people find them useful when they are not wearing a profession cross. They are not an "official" badge of belonging, so are able to be worn by others, not just members of tssf, so that includes postulants and novices. They attract comment so are often an opening to share one's faith in a gentle way.

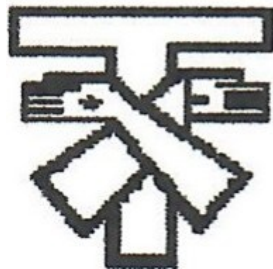
Contact Marion Fairbrass, to purchase."

## ***Companions Corner***

*Welcome to the Companions who have got back in touch with me. This is your page or extra pages if you want in the future!*

*Please send me your comments or stories of your journeys, etc.*

*If you know of other Companions who would like to have more contact with others, please share this newsletter with them and ask them to be put in touch with me so I can put them on the mailing list.*



*May we be mindful and aware of God's presence in our lives, and may that light be shared with all we meet. Amen*

*Companions promise to be a faithful Companion to all of Creation and its Creator, and in particular to the Sisters and Brothers of the Society of Saint Francis?*

*Companions promise to pray for them, holding their communities, their daily lives, and all those with whom they come into contact, in the all-encompassing Love of God?*

*Companions continue to find ways to share the unity, love, joy and life which God holds out to us in Christ, just as Francis did?*

# **You can trust God with the details!**

The words attributed to St Francis : ***“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”*** took on new meaning for us recently.

Towards the end of 2018 in my impending retirement from full time ministry we visited the rural parish of Mangakuri Beach(Central Hawkes Bay) to take a service in the paddock Chapel belonging to Mangakuri Station... The old Mangakuri homestead, called Castlehill stood as guardian alongside it.

“ It would be a great retreat home?” We commented to each other.

During 2019 after our time in Assisi the call for us to establish a hospitality space for pilgrims came clear. Castlehill was on the open market for sale when we returned so we investigated the possibility of purchasing it but discovered it was way out of our price range. The vendor eventually removed the property from the market.

In 2020, during a stay at St Isaac’s, acting as relief kaitiaki, Rosemary had a vivid dream that we were in Castlehill. We decided to check out if it was available to buy praying for wide open doors if it was. This was during the second Covid lockdown. We wrote to the owner and posted it, hoping it would be a welcome change for him to receive a handwritten letter in his rural letterbox.

Arriving back in Hastings the owner invited us to visit him at Castlehill and share our vision over a coffee.. We explained to him our desire as TSSF Franciscans to establish a retreat . He shared that he liked living at Mangakuri and could be thinking of selling the homestead and a small amount of adjacent land but retaining the rest to build himself a new home on. The visit and discussion was encouraging and again we prayed. If this was God’s will for us then let it be so. .

Out of the blue 2 months later a call from the owner saying **if he was to sell** we would have first option and this was the price.... Not negotiable! More prayer!

The housing market towards the end of 2021 was buoyant and we discovered the asking price was achievable if we sold our home and rental. We sought discernment from family and prayer partners. The result was a unanimous YES. So we took the plunge and when he said he would sell and offered us first choice, we said we would like to purchase the property.

During Labour Weekend we went for a trip out to Mangakuri Beach, and called by Castlehill. It was during that visit that the Scripture Matthew 13:45-46 was given to us. ***“The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.”***

This is what we did!

With the Castlehill owner heading overseas for 6 months on work commitments, we had plenty of time. Our home sold straight away, so for the next 6 months we took the opportunity to visit family and friends, house sit and “live simply.”

The unconditional date arrived but we still needed half the asking price, as our rental had not sold.

In faith we paid the deposit praying God would honour us.

Friends in Timaru without seeing Castlehill, but aware of our journey, shared Isaiah 58: with us ***“The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in”.***



We were encouraged by these words. Settlement date (30 June) approached. Our rental still remained unsold. Three days before the due date, through a friend's generosity of a bridging loan, we were able to settle the purchase. There was great rejoicing and grateful thanks for our friends' provision. Rosemary and I picked up the keys

and “camped” in Castlehill's kitchen with the fire going for 2 nights before our furniture and belongings arrived. Our eclectic array of furniture fitted as if designed for the home. Our guests marvel at the peace and serenity of the place. We have tidied up the Chapel adjoining the homestead which the Station Trust Board have granted permission for us to use as we see appropriate and be its kaitiaki.

The daffodils are now blooming and lambs are gamboling in the nearby paddocks. Castlehill has been gifted to us to care for and we will walk with God as we determine its future pathway to enable God's will to be done.



**Castlehill is now open for God's business!** Offering hospitality for those God brings its way.

We can accommodate 2 doubles plus a single, with separate bathrooms, or more, using marae style for overnight stays. There is also a small 2 berth caravan on site plus plenty of camping or motorhome parking. We can fully cater for up to 12 people for day retreats or conference type events. Koha (love offering) gratefully accepted. Situated 1 hour drive from Hastings/ Havelock North, or 40 minutes from Waipawa/ Waipukurau.

Contact Bryan or Rosemary Carey [rbcarey.carey@gmail.com](mailto:rbcarey.carey@gmail.com) to check availability.



## **Portiucula's Meeting Dates 2022**

At the beginning of June we met up and started to look at The Franciscan Forms of Service reflections. We also organised dates for the rest of the year, the dates being:

**Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>** St Luke's Havelock North at 5 pm for Transitus of St Francis.

**Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>** possibly Rosemary and Bryan's, but the decision to be made nearer the date.

# The Transfiguration and Hiroshima

## Two Blinding Lights

The first atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, two cities in Japan, on August 5 and 6, 1945. As a result, over 200,000 died, nearly all civilians. The bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on the eve of the Transfiguration.

What Tower of Babel reaching to the sky,  
What power assumed over death and life!  
To destroy with terror and with fear,  
That which is for us to care,  
Judgment without justice dealt,  
No heart where mercy felt.

The planes fly home,  
The pilots have no ears,  
The victims they do not know,  
The screams they do not hear;  
It is a job to be done,  
A war to be won.

There is a blinding light here,  
It brings darkness and death.

It is the eve of the day  
When Jesus on the mountain side,  
Knows He is to die  
For all of us who go astray;  
No judgment here,  
His sacrifice has paid the price.

What love is here defined  
Of God for humankind!  
That He for us should give His Son  
That we might with Him be one;  
May from His wounds deep healing pour  
As may our warring world restore.

There is a blinding light here,  
It brings healing and hope.

Chris Barfoot TSSF  
August, 2022

# A Trinitarian approach to the climate crisis

**Ruth Valerio**

***Dr Ruth Valerio is Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at Tearfund. She enjoys living sustainably, practising what she preaches and inspiring others as she does so. She has written several books for adults and children.***

*News of people dying in disasters, the destruction of ecosystems, world leaders refusing to take meaningful action on global heating, make me cry and rage and lament and grieve.*

**My response to the climate crisis has always come from what I believe; it has a direct link to my Christian faith. Caring for the whole creation is rooted in the community of God in the three Persons of the Trinity.**

Who is the God we worship? Psalm 113 declares that God is the Almighty One, whose glory is above the heavens, and yet its focus is that God raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. We worship a God of Justice who takes action to help the poor.

We see this throughout the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, God's words through the kings, prophets and laws all emphasise righteousness, love and compassion. It is also evident in Jesus' response to the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' in the parable of the Good Samaritan. He turns it on its head, implying 'You are the neighbour! So act accordingly with those close to you and those beyond your natural boundaries'. It is demonstrated, too, in the early church's practice of collecting money during a famine not only for their own poor, but those from other communities as well.

The environmental crisis is impacting the poorest most, in the UK and around the world. In 2013, tragically, a 9-year-old girl called Ella died. The coroner made a landmark ruling that a key cause of death was the choking pollution she lived with in inner-city London. Pollution, food deserts, lack of access to green spaces, and fuel poverty are just some of the issues facing the UK's poorest communities today.

If Covid-19 had not happened the biggest story of the last few years would undoubtedly have been the unfolding climate crisis: high temperatures, wildfires, floods, storms and droughts, all on an unprecedented scale. While the first lockdown did see global emissions drop by 7%, they have surged again. At

Tearfund we hear daily the consequences of the environmental crisis on those we serve.

We now turn to God the Son, Jesus Christ. Starting again with the Scriptures in Colossians 1:15-20, we discover Jesus as the Lord of All Creation. God the Son *in* whom and *through* whom and *for* whom everything was created: a powerful affirmation of the value of *all things*. The God of Justice calls us to care for the poor, but this passage asks more. The Lord of All Creation loves the *whole world*, not only people. Verse 20 declares that the cross has reconciled *all things* in heaven and on earth to God.

We see this elsewhere in the Scriptures. The Bible begins with God creating the heavens and the earth, all of which is 'very good'. The laws of the Old Testament like the jubilee and the sabbath were not only about people, but also the land and livestock. The prophets too held together righteousness, justice and the state of the land. The Psalms and the vision in Revelation celebrate this as well, where, as theologian Richard Bauckham describes, we are pictured as part of the worshipping 'community of creation'. We have been placed in this world, not separate from it, to be God's image here.

Covid itself is an environmental crisis, demonstrating the utterly broken relationship we have with the wider natural world. It is likely that it is a zoonotic virus (one that can jump between species) that has occurred because of our mistreatment of the earth. It is also probable that Ebola developed because of the destruction of the rainforest in DRC. This opens our eyes to deforestation, illegal trafficking and poaching of animals, the wet market trade, and many other terrible ways we are treating God's precious creation.

Our climate crisis is not only impacting people, but also causing ecosystem collapse and extinction at an unprecedented rate. My eldest daughter's Hawaiian boyfriend grew up diving amongst the island's coral reefs, seeing the growing devastation unfolding in these beautiful habitats of his homeland. A recent UN report found that 66% of marine environments and 75% of land environments have been changed because of us. I was struck watching David Attenborough's *Perfect Planet* programme that the world he saw as a young man has now changed beyond recognition. How terrible!

We turn now to God the Holy Spirit, beginning again in the Scriptures with Romans 8:19-25. This passage highlights the Spirit's eschatological role in God's creation, moving it towards its perfection in Christ (as outlined by the brilliant late theologian, Colin Gunton). This starts at the beginning as the Spirit hovers

over the waters, bringing order out of chaos, and continues through the Scriptural narrative - in the life and ministry of Jesus particularly - culminating with the vision of the future in Revelation, where the Spirit and the bride say 'Come'.

It is that new physical reality of the transformed heavens and earth, in which the wider natural world is fully present, that we are drawn towards and guaranteed through the Spirit. This keeps looking forward in anticipation to when the children of God will be revealed and the whole creation set free. As Catholic theologian, Peter Hocken, explains, 'The Spirit has been given both as the first fruits and as the hope of liberation, and we are stretched between the two'.

Don't we feel that stretching so much?! There are many wonderful, enjoyable things in this life, and yet I am not comfortable here. News of people dying in disasters, the destruction of ecosystems, world leaders refusing to take meaningful action on global heating, make me cry and rage and lament and grieve. I long for a different reality and know that I must faithfully and patiently work towards that despite these things.

The Spirit's work in our lives enables this, helping us to pray in our weakness, giving us hope, causing us to bear fruit and exercise supernatural gifts. Looking towards the future, we know that our work is not in vain, because we have the promise that, with the Spirit, our efforts will, somehow, be seen in the age to come.

So let us keep working, rooted in the Trinitarian God: our God of Justice, the Lord of All Creation, and the eschatological Spirit who keeps us moving forwards in hope.

**Dr Ruth Valerio is Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at Tearfund. She enjoys living sustainably, practising what she preaches and inspiring others as she does so. She has written several books for adults and children.**



Taken from 'The Franciscan' September 2022

## How is NZ being affected by climate change?

Sea-level rise is caused by melting of the polar ice caps, as well as expansion of ocean water as it warms. In New Zealand, the sea may rise by up to a metre by the end of the century. This will mean **more coastal erosion and flooding, which will damage homes and infrastructure like pipes and roads.**

**Rising sea levels are a big risk for New Zealand** – the country has just published a national plan to tackle this and other climate threats. Globally, sea levels could rise another foot by 2050, warn scientists. Countries are introducing measures including early warning systems, sea walls and surge barriers.

## How are the Solomon Islands being affected by climate change?

Pacific islands are extremely vulnerable to climate change. The most substantial impacts of climate change include losses of coastal infrastructure and land, more intense cyclones and droughts, failure of subsistence crops and coastal fisheries, losses of coral reefs and mangroves, and the spread of certain diseases.

Sea-level rise, the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, increasing air and sea surface temperatures, floods and protracted droughts, coastal erosion, salt water intrusion, and salinization are threatening island economies and habitats.

*Information from several Internet sources*

*“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” [John 15:7-8](#) (NIV)*

When we allow the Bible to animate our thoughts — when God’s Word influences not just our *prayers*, but also our *perspective* — the more our requests align with what God wants to do. It’s like we slip our hand into His, partnering with our Heavenly Father to accomplish the good things He has planned. I don’t fully understand it, but I think this is what Jesus was getting at in [John 15:7](#) when He said, *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.”*

## **BE CONTENT**

*"If we could push ajar the gates of life,  
And stand within, and all God's working see,  
We might interpret all this doubt and strife,  
And for each mystery could find a key.*

*"But not today. Then be content, poor heart;  
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold.  
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart--  
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.*

*"And if, through patient toil, we reach the land  
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,  
When we shall clearly know and understand,  
I think that we shall say, 'God knew best.'"*

*Author Unknown*

