

*Lay Dominicans of Aotearoa New Zealand,
Mai Te Hiku o te Ika ki Te Waipounamu*



Newsletter July 2020.

Timothy Radcliffe OP in the 25 May "Vatican News" reflects on the pope's assertion that we need stories "so as not to lose our bearings...stories help us rediscover our roots and the strength needed to move forward together".

Stories, both communal and individual are seen to shape our sense of time so that we can navigate towards a future with hope.

This newsletter offers some stories from the past and the present to support us as Dominican family members to move towards our future when the usual calendars that give us a sense of future have been collapsing.

Wisdom of our ancestors



Two of our South Island senior Dominican Family members spent time with **Mary Scally** in 2019 remembering their development as Dominicans and the influences on that.

Jeannie Gallagher, growing up in St. Leonards, a Dunedin Harbourside settlement, went to secondary school at St Dominic's in Dunedin. She recalls a Sister, noticing she had been dux of her primary school querying her choice of commercial subjects."I couldn't say to her that Dad told me I should do that because you could always get a job"

The school itself was "quite a culture shock. "Really it was a wonderment to me, these elegant ladies in their white habits gliding along and the long beads. Looking back nearly 70 years later, the thing that impresses me as Dominican is an interest in learning that

was high on the list. We were always encouraged to question things and go just a little deeper than learning things off by rote" Leaving school, Jeannie kept contact with school friends and with Sisters, especially when she trained as a teacher for the deaf and wherever she lived.. This contact and connection is still important to her.

Mary Dudson, now in Christchurch, grew up in Oamaru. Her story shows again the influence of teaching and learning.



"I was absolutely immersed in Dominicans right through. I went to their primary school in Oamaru and then had some time in the secondary school. During the War, the roll at the boarding school at nearby Teschemakers dropped below the number needed for awarding of the Government exams. "My father was a builder and was asked by the sisters to be the Teschemakers maintenance man. The sisters said to him that he had two daughters' and they could go to Teschemakers for free to bring the roll up to number. So Joan and I both went there. I stayed for four years. I think that was when I began to register that I was Dominican. The Church part was wonderful, we had chapel and Mass every day. We also had some wonderful teachers, we had very conversational teaching, did everything together and solved all problems and tackled new things together. They were very formative years. Our senior Religious education class was to sit around a table in the library and discuss all the aspects of church and life."

Mary kept in touch by herself becoming a teacher and did specialist training in the teaching of the deaf. She married and went to live in Dunedin, reconnecting with Dominicans, noting their movement into the world and increasingly ecumenical lives after Vatican 2.

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Stories from the disrupted Calendar. Three of our members from the lower North Island, Te Awa Rongopai, have given us reflections on their time in lockdown



Michele Ness from the Kapiti Coast has considered what she has learned from the Lockdown period.

What did I learn?

- Sometimes I speak, write and think in that order. Lockdown gave me the opportunity to think more and speak less.
- Not to dismiss clichés as they often contain truth. Impatience teaches patience. The sun will rise again tomorrow.
- The lonely so need a human voice and affection in their lives. Regular contact even if on-line, or by telephone reminds me and them I belong.
- Social justice and practical charity are born in adversity. Economic security aka civilised activity can be achieved not IF but WHEN we value human life.
- The benefits of humour which seems to have broken out and shared widely. I love the photo of a parishioner getting dressed up to take out her bin, ‘because it seemed to be going out more than she is’.
- The diversity of creative gifts of our friends.
- The “joy” of our planet responding to the time of “being still”.
- The best Mother’s Day gift- one of my son’s texting “Mum, I learned today I am now unemployed. Not worried as we are so blessed. There are so many worse off- maybe we can find a way to help them through this” I am so proud that he is thinking of others, that he refuses to talk of being ‘redundant’ (a terrible word), that he is confident and hopeful of his future and that of his young family. So am I.

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Angela Coleman from Palmerston North often gifts us poems, this one is from Lockdown.

Signs of God in our world 2020

People finding ways to reach out to others
 People staying in touch at a distance
 People staying home to care
 People putting signs in their windows to encourage others
 People putting signs in their windows to thank essential workers
 People putting Teddy Bears in their windows and yards to entertain the young and young at heart
 People putting Easter pictures in their windows
 People putting ANZAC poppies in windows and on fences
 People helping those in greatest needs
 People celebrating those around them
 People celebrating those who save lives
 People keeping distance when out
 People politely keeping distance in supermarkets
 People greeting even strangers with smiles and spoken word
 People in leadership who are strong, confident and intelligent
 People finding ways to pray together apart
 People putting others ahead of self
 People reflecting the essential goodness (God-ness) of humanity

Angela Coleman

Written in the middle of the night 27/28 April 2020 (Literally!!!)

Mary Woods-from Kapiti and the Mission and Justice Group reflects on the presence of God in lockdown.

Covid19 Lockdown Musings

As 'vulnerable' over 70s, Les and I were locked away in our bubble. Our daughter Margaret did our shopping and ensured starvation was unlikely to set in. I had a number of projects spinning round in my head and this seemed to be the opportunity to achieve them. Except that my energy had gone. I spent the first ten days lying on the sofa reading. Apart from cooking and cleaning my only other activity was walking on the beach and thanking God that I could.

Zoom created a bridge across the world that kept us connected with our families. We had Zoom birthday parties with cakes and candles. We even played cards on line. Playing 500 was part of our children's growing up. We had played at home, on tramping trips and trains, once even on the floor of Moscow railway station, but playing on the internet with my cards dealt to me on the screen was a new experience that worked well.

On our long wide beach God has many faces. The first thing I noticed was that the air had become clearer than I had seen for years. The reduction in vehicle fumes was allowing our planet to breathe again. One day I met Kahuriruhi aka a pied shag. She was standing by the water so I stopped and stood still, keeping a social distance between us. With her black hooded cloak and white dress, she looked like a diminutive Dominican in her habit. She eyed me with one eye and then turned round and eyed me with the other. I stood quite still. She spread her wings to dry them in the breeze as shags do. I waited as her laundry dried then she tucked her wings in again and using her beak slowly and systematically smoothed each feather down. This bird was elegant. But then a woman with a dog came along. Kahuriruhi decided that it was time to go and flew off skimming the waves, as shags do.

Two weeks into lockdown we came to Easter. It felt odd not being able to go to Church. It became a time to remember and reflect on earlier Easter ceremonies. When I was a boarder at St Dominic's in Dunedin I remember the scariness of Tenebrae in St Joseph's Cathedral as people banged their books in the darkness while the last candle was snuffed.

Holy Thursday was the Eucharistic feast that included the washing of feet. Jesus showed his apostles two models at the last supper, the act of service as He washed their feet and the act of Love in the Eucharist. John's gospel includes only the washing of the feet. This year with our focus on hand washing, I was left wondering once again why the Church celebrates the Eucharist every day and the foot washing only once a year.

Good Friday memories are of processions. I often joined the straggly group who climbed the hill at Diamond Harbour. We were a small group of people who came together only on this day to carry our cross and share our readings. Our gathering was simple and raw as suited the day. In another time and place there was the procession with the L'Arche community. This went down the hill and through the bush to suit the declining abilities of the participants, who were all given roles and dressed to suit their part. One year Jesus decided that he didn't want to go. It made me wonder if the original Jesus also had second thoughts about going out that day.

I missed the Easter Vigil with its wonderful liturgy of fire and light. Even though it arises from the northern hemisphere seasons which don't fit with ours, it still carries us into a time of rejoicing as our light is beginning to fade.

The internet emerged as tool for celebrating Easter. But it takes time to work out how best to use a tool. The Mass is our ongoing commemoration of the Last Supper which was an interactive celebration Jesus held for His friends. When I tried to watch a priest say Mass to a camera in an empty room or church I felt alienated. There was no interaction. Camera and screen created a barrier between the viewer and celebrant in both space and time. It seemed to put the priest in the role of performer for an audience which cannot effectively replace the shared experience of being together.

I did appreciate some of the small lay led liturgies where women and men contributed from their bubbles. They read the day's readings, commented on them and prayed. They connected with each other and with us.

The future may contain many different models of Church but to be true the celebration of the Eucharist belongs within a worshipping community. If one party is only the audience and the other a performer the event is entertainment rather than celebration. Covid 19 Lockdown has challenged us all. It has also given us a unique opportunity to experiment and to rethink how we carry out our various roles in our Church.

Where our stories for the future coming from?` How will the Hope of the Dominican charism continue to infuse the world with its energies and insight?

Maybe here in these young women taking Proverbs 31":25.

She is clothed in strength and dignity and rejoices without fear of the future.

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St Dominic's College Theme Song 2020- Dominican Girl- (You Tube.)

Where and How might you support the development of Young Dominicans?

Blessings of Dominic and Catherine from
Michele Ness and Willie Campbell.

16 July 2020.