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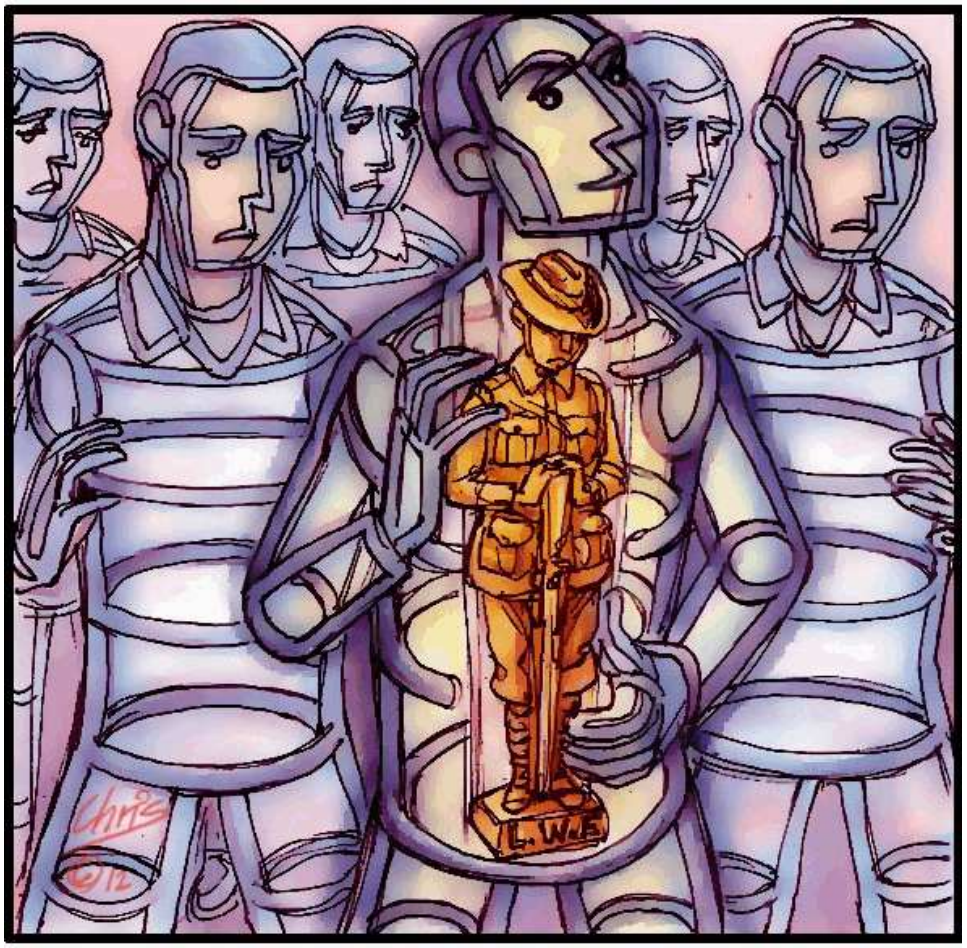

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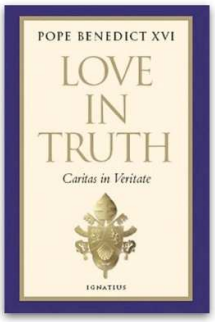
Pope's equivocal view of social justice

APPLICATION

Andrew Hamilton



Christian reflection on almost anything important soon has to deal with the tension between charity and justice. It affects the way we see God's relationship to human weakness and the way we respond to the world in which we live. Both justice and charity need to be given full weight.

Catholic rhetoric about justice and charity, as of much else, is influenced by the thought of the reigning Pope. In his reflections on society and other aspects of human life, Pope Benedict privileges charity. If any planning or struggle for a just society is to be effective it will depend on people's good will and generosity in the implementation. People need to trust and care for one another.

The insight is particularly pertinent to education, health and welfare programs. When people's needs are met by large public programs, it is common for administrators to separate the service provided from the persons to whom it is given. People are then treated simply as objects of service and not as subjects.

To work effectively with people welfare agencies need to develop a culture that puts priority on the person with the need and not simply on the need itself. Their agents need to interact with their clients as person to person, not simply as seller to customer, official to member of public, or professional to client.

This requires a personal commitment by those who work in welfare. But it also requires a culture. The Pope spells this out in Christian terms, basing it on God's love for each human being shown in the life, death and rising of Jesus Christ.

Charity, of course, is neither restricted to nor necessarily to be found in Christian agencies. The common currency of the phrase 'as cold as charity' is testimony to past failure. In many public organisations, too, the place of charity is spelled out and embodied splendidly in secular terms. People experience their dealings with other public agencies as being as cold as the lack of charity.

The Pope also says 'yes' to social justice. But his 'yes' is normally a 'yes, but ...'. The commitment to justice must be accompanied by love, by prayer, by loyalty to the church and so on. When speaking of prayer and participation in liturgy his 'yes' is unqualified.

That is not to doubt his commitment to social justice. All of us respond to some things with a 'yes but'. We may, for example, endorse an interest in spirituality, but remark that it always needs to include a concern for the poor. Conflicting 'yes buts' make for balance.

Today it is right to endorse even charity with a 'yes but'. Charity is central, but

it demands a strong commitment to social justice. If we were to see Christian faith as expressed only in charity, we would reduce the relationships between people to those of personal gift. We would fail to see that we owe and are owed much by others.

If I owe someone something, the generosity and affection with which I pay my debt are commendable but they do not make my payment simply a gift. My dispositions and those of the recipient may make it felt as gift, but it remains something owed.

Ultimately we make a claim on one another by the fact of our shared human dignity. This places a responsibility on us to feed the starving and to care for the sick and to welcome those who seek asylum. In complex societies we expect the state to organise the ways in which we discharge our debt. We might make of the services we provide a gift graciously given, but they are not a gift that we can in good conscience refuse to make.

If we view our responsibilities to the poor only in terms of charity, we ignore the connections and responsibilities to poor and disadvantaged people that we bear by virtue of the humanity we share with them. Within a Christian view of the world, too, we ignore the implications of God's care for each human being, and so especially for the most needy, and our membership in Christ's body by virtue of his death and resurrection.

To focus exclusively on love is a particularly insidious temptation for churches. Christian history is full of religious authorities and groups whose profession to act out of love has blinded them to the appalling lack of respect they displayed in their dealings with members who fell out of favour.

If the claims of justice are not recognised and met, assurances of love are self-deception. In intellectual reflection our affirmation of the centrality of justice may legitimately be a 'yes but'. In our actions such a qualified affirmation is equivalent to a denial.

Religious fundamentalism is a two way street

VIDEO

Peter Kirkwood

Norwegian mass-murderer, Anders Breivik was brought to trial a few weeks ago. The court proceedings have revealed his well thought out motivations for the killings. They hinge on an ultra-nationalism with nostalgia for a white Christian Europe, and a deeply held xenophobia, directed particularly against Muslim migrants.

The interviewee featured here on Eureka Street TV sees the Breivik case as highlighting the urgent need for interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue, and he's well placed to make this assessment. Mehmet Ozalp is a leading Australian Muslim academic, author and community activist, and a veteran of interfaith dialogue.

And he's no romantic, he's hard-headed in this activity. He doesn't shy away from the awkward, difficult, seemingly intractable areas of division and conflict between Muslims and the broader community. In the interview he addresses four key 'fault lines' in relations between Muslims and the rest.

Ozalp migrated with his family to Australia from Turkey in 1984 in his high school years. While studying engineering at university, he went through a settlement crisis and turned to his religion. As he studied Islam further he says he gradually shifted from a blind faith to a deeper and more conscious belief and practice.

A particular inspiration was Turkish Muslim cleric, spiritual writer and advocate of interfaith dialogue, 71-year-old Fethullah Gulen . He sparked the global Gulen Movement which advocates what he calls *hizmet*, or faith-based community service and activism.

Gulen in turn was inspired by Turkish holy man, Said Nursi (1878—1960). Both broadly fit into the progressive Sufi strand of Islam exemplified by figures such as Rumi.

Ozalp became more active in the Muslim community, teaching classes about the Quran, and helping to establish a Muslim high school in the western suburbs of Sydney. In 2000, with a group of friends, he formed the Affinity Intercultural Foundation whose aims were to build bridges between Muslims and the broader community, and to nurture an Australian Muslim identity.

Particularly since September 11, Affinity has become one of the leading organisations fostering interfaith dialogue and understanding in this country. Ozalp served as its founding president from 2001 to 2007, and as executive officer from 2007 to 2009.

In 2009 he founded the Islamic Sciences and Research Academy of Australia (ISRA), a joint venture between Affinity and Charles Sturt University, and he is its

director. He lectures at Charles Sturt University, and is studying for this PhD in Islamic theology at the University of Sydney with a thesis on the writings of Said Nursi.

As well as his academic teaching, Ozalp is much in demand as a speaker, giving talks in a wide range of forums around the country. He is the author of two books, *101 Questions You Asked About Islam* and *Islam in the Modern World*.

Traversing grief on the Camino

FILMS

Tim Kroenert

***The Way* (PG). Director: Emilio Estevez. Starring: Martin Sheen, Deborah Kara Unger, Yorick van Wageningen, James Nesbitt, Emilio Estevez. 121 minutes**

It's one of the world's most famous long walks. The Way of St James, the pilgrimage route that extends hundreds of kilometres to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, in northwestern Spain, has been trekked for millennia by religious pilgrims or tourists in search of a scenic adventure.

The Way is actor turned filmmaker Emilio Estevez's empathetic consideration of the Camino and those who walk it in the modern era.

At its heart is a poignant account of bereaved father Tom (portrayed by Estevez's real-life father, Sheen) who makes the trek in honour of his adult son Daniel (Estevez), who died in the early stages of his own pilgrimage during a freak storm. Tom carries Daniel's ashes with him and scatters them along the way.

He shares the journey, reluctantly at first, with an eclectic group, including Joost (Wageningen), a Dutchman of generous girth and generous nature; snide American Sarah (Unger), whose abrasive personality masks numerous hurts; and Jack (Nesbitt), an Irish writer attempting to write a book about the Camino.

All have ostensibly mundane motives for attempting the trek (Joost to lose weight; Sarah to quit smoking) but as the film progresses it becomes clear that each is hopeful, to varying degrees, that the Camino will provide them with something beyond their immediate, material desire.

The Way is a sincere film, if somewhat sentimental. Luscious cinematography is employed to soak up the rustic greens and browns and stone-greys of the stunning locations. Combine these with a string of montages set to contemporary music that look like cheesy outtakes from a credit card commercial, and at times *The Way* feels decidedly like a tourism video.

Meanwhile the pairing of Sheen and Estevez as on-screen father and son, in a film Estevez wrote and directed, lends a sense of navel gazing and family love-in that taints the film's better achievements. (Indeed the film was inspired by Sheen's own experience walking the Camino with his grandson, Estevez's son, Taylor, in 2003.)

But it is a thoughtful film. In road movies the geography (which here is sometimes harsh, sometimes beautiful, always inspiring) can usually be read as a metaphor for the internal journey the characters are on. This may reflect the nature of religious pilgrimages too, where pilgrims may seek to wring meaning from each moment. If meaning proves elusive though, the pilgrim might be

disillusioned, or embrace empty platitudes in its place.

This proves to be an obstacle for Jack in particular, who, when we first meet him, is ranting about the plethora of metaphor and symbolism that have occurred to him on the trail. He's in search of a fresh angle, but has instead been frustrated by clichÃ©s.

His desire could be seen to reflect Estevez's. Certainly both the fictional writer and the real life filmmaker are on the right track. They recognise that what's extraordinary about the Camino lies within the ordinary, notably in the basic humanity of those who journey upon it. Transcendence comes through relationship. Experiences become meaningful because they are shared.

The film is mostly successful in communicating this. Tom is at first staunchly protective of his grief. But as the journey progresses he comes to see that the purpose of opening up is not just to let people in, but also to give of yourself. Sarah's curiosity about his character and motivation, for example, are not motivated merely by nosiness, but by a desire to reveal herself to him in turn; to find common ground in shared pain.

There is no shortage of humanity in *The Way.* Jack's cynicism about the religious dimensions of pilgrimages has its roots in his hurt and betrayal over the clergy sex abuse scandal within his country. Meanwhile, tellingly, it is Joost, whose stated reason for doing the Camino is the most superficial, who is most deeply affected upon its completion. The capacity for sudden, unbidden wonder may be one of the great gifts of ordinary humanity.

Erasure of an Aboriginal temple

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Pattie Miller

For thousands of years there was a sylvan temple on the banks of the river near where I was born. I have never seen the temple because most of it was destroyed before I was born, but I know what it looked like because it was described and sketched by an early ethnologist travelling in the area.

It had a mile long avenue of trees carved with serpents, forked lightning, meteors and various hieroglyphs, leading to an earth-walled circular space where a giant human figure, also made of earth, reclined.

You might imagine from the temple that I was born in Greece, or Egypt, or perhaps India, but the fact is I was born and grew up near the Macquarie River in central west NSW.

The sylvan temple, as described by the ethnologist, John Henderson, was the largest and most important sacred site for the Wiradjuri people along the river. Like all temples, it was used for protecting and conveying secret spiritual knowledge to the initiated and people came from hundreds of miles to be part of rituals and ceremonies.

It was as important as the Acropolis or the temple of Horus, but it no longer exists. Worse, perhaps, the temple was forgotten, or deliberately not spoken of.

So complete was the erasure that I didn't even know the temple had ever existed until a few years ago when I was researching my hometown. I had spent my entire childhood in the area, roaming the hills and looking for treasures and adventures, but no one had mentioned this extraordinary place.

In the midst of my research at the Mitchell Library, I opened a dusty old book I had ordered from the stacks, not expecting much. I was overwhelmed to discover Henderson's detailed description of a temple and his meticulous drawings of carvings on each tree.

By now I recognised the temple as a Bora ground, an initiation site for young men but in design and function it was a temple. This beautiful and powerful place had existed so near my home, yet no one had even spoken of it.

Years later while I was living in Paris, I saw an Aboriginal painting in the MusÃ©e du Quai Branly. It was called *Le Temps du RÃªve*, *The Time of the Dreaming*. The painting had a yellow ochre background and was covered in swirls of tiny red ochre dots. When I saw this painting in the post-modern museum on the banks of the Seine, I felt proud. This was a thing of beauty from my place being honoured here in Paris!

Through the long narrow windows I could see the museum garden and the pearl

sky, one window revealing the severe beauty of the Eiffel Tower. I realise now that it was the pride of a colonial child, pleased that her parents approved enough of her new home in the Antipodes to display her art in their elegant house.

But then I thought of the bora trees at Wellington. All that is left of them are the drawings of the carved patterns sketched by Henderson in 1829.

The sketches are of a ground plan of the temple and of the avenue of 28 tree trunks, each one carved with different symbols. Most of these are recognisable from other works of ancient and contemporary Aboriginal art — wavy lines, dots, semi-circles, and concentric rings. But there were other less-used symbols such as rectangles and V-shapes and what look like human parts — a heart and a vulva.

The patterns were beautiful. I couldn't stop staring at his drawings, even though I knew Wiradjuri women were not allowed to see the original carvings.

I wished helplessly that the bora trees had not been destroyed. I wished I could see them. They were gradually chopped down, then burned, the last one, I believe, within my lifetime.

I suddenly knew that if offered a choice between the carved trees standing on plinths, uprooted and alone, open to every gaze in the MusÃ©e du Quai Branly thousands of miles from home, and what actually happened to them — burned to ash — I would choose the indignity of them being transported across the world.

It feels wrong to wish that, but I do. It's this kind of thing which makes me realise that my mind is European, the mind of a thief. But it doesn't matter anymore — it's too late now even for thieving. The temple is gone.

Christine Milne's chance to scupper an Abbott Senate

POLITICS

John Warhurst

Christine Milne takes over the leadership of the Greens from Bob Brown at a crucial time for the party. The polls are steady at about 12—14 per cent give or take a few points, predicting a performance at the next federal election somewhat in the same ball-park as last time. In 2010 the Greens polled 13.1 per cent in the Senate and won six seats for a total of nine senators.

But there is a difference between electoral performance and political influence, and therefore the Greens have a particular interest in the overall composition of the senate not just the party's own numbers. This fact is sometimes overlooked.

Recent media reports draw attention to the serious possibility that the Coalition may not only win the next election but win it so well that it would control the Senate without the assistance of the Greens, just as it did from 2005—2008. These reports speculate that even if the Greens won six seats once again for a total of 12 senators the combined Labor-Greens Senate numbers would fall below a majority.

Not only might the Coalition's numbers rise significantly, but the possibility of the addition of a senator representing Bob Katter's Australian Party in Queensland would mean three Independent senators (including Nick Xenophon in South Australia and the Democratic Labor Party's John Madigan in Victoria).

This is where Milne comes in. She brings new characteristics to the position of leader, including her education at St Mary's College, Hobart, and her past connections with the environmental agencies of the Catholic Church.

Milne's first step as leader was to emphasise the need to increase Green support in rural and regional Australia and she backed it up with a well-publicised rural tour. Her public statement after her election emphasised the need for Green support to be not only deep but broad across Australia. She herself has connected well with farmers and the fishing community in the past.

Not all rural Australians vote for non-Labor parties but most still do despite some demographic change that has helped build Green support in certain mainland coastal areas. The Greens also suffer on polling day from the difficulty of organising enough supporters in the big rural electorates to hand out how-to-vote cards. Anything Milne can do to improve the party's situation in this regard is worthwhile.

The Greens need to attract votes from otherwise non-Labor voters rather than the easier task of picking up disappointed Labor defectors. This was one of the

keys to the impact of the Australian Democrats who built their hold on the balance of power from a position somewhat in the centre. Democrats voters split about 60:40 in favour of Labor. The 40 per cent of Coalition-leaning Democrats helped to keep the Coalition Senate vote down.

The Greens vote on the other hand splits about 85:15 in favour of Labor. This is calculated on the preference flow at the 2010 election. The 15 per cent of Coalition-leaning Greens is somewhat forgotten altogether. It has traditionally been built on the attraction of the Greens' environmental credentials plus some anti-war and pro-asylum seeker voters. But it needs to be larger to increase the long-term influence of the party.

Even if it costs the party some votes overall the Greens need the Labor vote in the Senate to hold up (and the Coalition Senate vote to stay down) so that Labor and the Greens together win three Senate seats in a number of states, probably among the southern states. Milne must keep this equation in the front of her mind, though there is little that she can do about it other than contributing to good governance.

Milne is on the right track, though selling the carbon tax remains a challenge. Bearing in mind negative public reaction in 2007 to the way John Howard miscalculated his control of the Senate between 2005 and 2007 to introduce Work Choices, 'Keep the Senate out of Tony Abbott's Hands' strikes me as the sort of slogan which has some real punch.

But it may not be enough to hold onto the balance of power unless Julia Gillard can keep her side of the bargain as well.

The politics of suicide

NON-FICTION

Gillian Bouras

It's happened again. On 27 April a suicide bomber in Damascus stood in close proximity to both a school and a mosque, and detonated the explosives in his belt. At least nine people died and 30 were injured.

Philosophers have always had a lot to say about what might be called private suicide. While Nietzsche remarked ironically that the thought of suicide can get one through many a long night, Wittgenstein considered that suicide was the pivot on which every ethical system turns, because it is life's central issue. Albert Camus agreed that suicide was the one serious philosophical problem in that it poses the question as to whether life is worth living; he went on to suggest that suicide is prepared within the silence of the heart, as is a great work of art.

Suicide is as individual as the person who attempts it: some people simply reach a depth of despair so great that they relocate to another space where they cannot be reached. The threat of suicide can also be coercive: many people make attempts, but never complete the act, often because the so-called cry for help has been answered.

And then there is suicide as public protest: the newspapers of my youth featured pictures of Buddhist monks self-immolating in Vietnam more often than I care to recall.

I am very muddled on the subject of suicide, both private and public. Like many people, I have tended to think suicide bombers are either madmen or irredeemable religious fanatics buoyed by enticing visions of Paradise. Not so. Flinders University maintains a Suicide Terrorism Database, and has kept records since 1981, yet there is no discernible pattern, except that most such suicides are completed by young men.

Religion may play a part, but politics, a sense of humiliation, altruism and a desire for revenge are more important. Also a sense of desperation and impotence, pride, anger and a local tradition of resistance. Such suicides are coercive and strategic, a bizarre exercise in public relations in an attempt to deal with injustice.

Again there are the individual examples. What are we to make of the suicide of Dimitris Christoulas? On 4 April this 77-year-old retired pharmacist took up his position near a tree in Athens' busy Syntagma Square, near the metro station; the Parliament building is clearly visible across the street. At 9am, when crowds of people were on their way to work and to the shops, he took out a handgun and shot himself in the head.

He was an activist who had often attended the protests of the Greek Indignants, and his only child, a daughter, said his death was consistent with the way he had lived. He'd left a *Can't pay, Won't pay* notice outside his flat, and said in his suicide note that he could not survive further cuts to his pension; thus he was ending his life before he had to start scouring the garbage skips, a practice now common among the poor of Greece's cities.

One witness maintains that Christoulas said he was not committing suicide, but was being killed by politicians. His angry note added that he was sure the youth of the country would one day rise up in armed revolt and go on to hang the traitors in Syntagma Square. He'd have taken up arms himself, he had written, but he was too old.

Perhaps Christoulas' death was both a private solution to his anger and despair, prepared within the silence of the heart, and a public gesture that had the drama of a posed work of art. He killed no one but himself, and like a true Greek exercised his rights as he saw them: he had no time for formal religion, and took his life within a culture that has always stigmatised suicide. At the same time his death could hardly have been more public.

While thousands attended Christoulas' civil funeral, politicians reacted with suitable contrition. George Karatzaferis, leader of LAOS, went so far as to say that 'we have all pulled the trigger.' He may well be right.

Priorities of the Press Gang

CARTOON

Fiona Katauskas

Train gaze

POETRY

Various

Contentment is the Enemy of Invention

When my husband told me he was leaving
and moving to Berlin with the au pair

it was then my wall came down and I wrote

Auf Wiedersehen a definite contender

for the Liverpool poetry prize.

Last Friday, I lost my job in a downsizing

programme and came up with Guns and Roses,

two hundred lines that will surely get me

a first in the Broadway competition.

For me, misery is conducive to artistic flow.

At present, the washing machine's

on the blink and there's no money for another

but I'm bubbling over, drafting an idea I have

for a series of ten sonnets with a sex and water theme
that I'm certain will be the best I've ever done.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that I don't

get another job, win the lotto, or fall in love again.

Paula McKay

If I could film her reading on the train

If I could film her reading on the train,

the text would be Chagall's biography:

her face a study in expressive reverie,

flickering with shadows from the Central

European pale, the Hebraic industry of small

tradesmen, their synagogues — a reflexive

cosmos, fearing predators, surviving threats,

despite the looming silhouettes of wolves
and bears; then dashed apart — the Warsaw
ghetto's heroism, stoicism torched and charred,
its immolation rendered unto history ...
Her deep eyes glance up from the page
without perceiving me, the hidden camera trained
on her by my unbroken gaze: their depths elude
this shallow century where we shall never meet.
Millennia cohered to shape the consciousness
they now reflect unconsciously as star-
refracting wells in old Vitebsk, glimpsed
by lovers clasped in air's embrace
above dim, narrow streets, smiling as they
skim beneath the moon, in gravity's release.
And so Chagall rests in her lap,
an icon smuggled between stations,
till we alight at different stops
to go our separate ways ...

Jena Woodhouse

Rings of Jupiter

Sculptor: Inge King (National Gallery of Victoria)

Imagine, through aeons, how peoples of the Earth
gazed at the night sky's myriad points of light,
used name and story to help comprehend
their place within the mystery
Imagine, through ages, peoples of the world
with language, observation, instruments
expanding knowledge, shrinking distances,
seeking further out to the vast space
Now Inge King bearing her ninety years of life

has forged a concept into solid form.
We pause in widening cosmology
and ask again what lies
beyond
beyond
Lerys Byrnes

Impossible

I rotate it, piece it back together
that cube of darkness
I try to find the clasp
no catch just knotted
dark
my hands are soaked in
dark
layered ribbon
thick-caked dark
all over my nails
Bronwyn Evans

A tale of two refugee movement speeches

POLITICS

Kerry Murphy

Tony Abbott's address to the Institute of Public Affairs on Friday — 'The Coalition's Plan for more secure borders' — restates the well known mantra 'stop the boats'. Its simplistic announcements do not consider the serious human rights issues, nor add much to discussion in this complex area.

Abbott's solution has one potentially good idea, of increasing the program to 15,000 with some community sponsorship of refugees. The old Community Refugee Support Scheme (CRSS) of the 1980s and early 1990s was a good way of encouraging community involvement in refugee resettlement.

The speech's bad ideas include reinstating temporary protection visas (TPV), reopening Nauru, forcing back the boats where possible, and denying refugee status to those 'transiting through Indonesia who lack identity papers'. Each point needs to be considered in turn.

There is no evidence that the TPV deterred anyone. In fact, what it did was cause major stress for refugees because of enforced family separation, and made the only option for family reunion for women and children to board boats — which is what happened in 2000 and 2001.

The psychological harm was documented by mental health professionals at the time. Administratively, it caused a major backlog of cases in both Immigration and then the Refugee Review Tribunal. In the end most people on TPVs were granted permanent residence, anyway. The TPV was flawed and in my view cruel.

Nauru was also never a 'solution', but a warehousing of refugees, many of whom were later resettled in Australia because they could not be sent anywhere else. It was different to the camps established under the Comprehensive Plan of Action for the mainly Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s; under that system, there was international agreement about resettlement of cases.

Who is going to sign up to a Nauru deal for an issue which is considered 'Australia's problem'?

Turning back the boats is also highly risky because the boats could be scuttled thus endangering the lives of the refugees and naval personnel.

The final idea is even more worrying — a presumption against refugee status for boat arrivals transiting through Indonesia who lack identity papers. What will be needed to rebut such a presumption and what protections will there be to ensure there is no refoulement of a refugee?

The Refugee Convention provides in article 31 that a receiving country cannot impose penalties on people arriving without lawful authority. A presumption

against refugee status because you do not have documents is an even more serious breach of the Convention.

Abbott criticises Labor for being 'more compassionate' but he need not worry about the same allegation being made against him. There are problems with the current system from a human rights and human dignity perspective, and certainly the Malaysian idea would be a major step away from these principles. However, there is little in the Opposition's policy that is better.

In fact, the term 'human rights' does not appear anywhere in Abbott's 3000 word speech. 'Illegal' appears 11 times and 'asylum' once. The failure to even acknowledge that human rights are relevant is disturbing but not surprising. The Government's own rhetoric continues to push for the flawed Malaysia solution, but this seems even less likely given the numbers it controls in the House.

In February this year, Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, gave a 3000 word speech to the Lowy Institute. He counselled against populist approaches to solving refugee movements and encouraged Governments to look at regional, not national solutions. A search of that speech found 'human rights' five times, 'asylum' 21 times and no use of 'illegal'.

The tone and style of both speeches are quite different but sadly for the refugees, the speech that will affect them is that which talks more about 'illegals' than asylum and human rights.

Rupert Murdoch an example for older Australians

EDITORIAL

Michael Mullins

81-year-old Rupert Murdoch has been on display in a London court room during the past week as a possible role model for older Australians. There is a lot not to admire about his business practices, but he stands tall as an elder who is able to maintain his stature in the face of momentous challenge. His 103-year-old mother is another example of a person whose dignity remains undiminished in old age.

Murdoch and his mother are privileged in that personal wealth has afforded them the best aged care money can buy. Obviously Murdoch does not yet receive 'aged care' because his good health sets him apart from many of his contemporaries, who are afflicted with Alzheimer's and other conditions of old age. His well-funded lifestyle and health regime is geared to ensure the longevity of his working life.

Murdoch and anybody else who can afford to fund their retirement and aged care costs should do so. They have a potential to maintain their dignity and quality of life in old age that those of slender means lack. The Government needs to fund the retirement and aged care of those who cannot pay their own costs, but there is no reason why it should give funding to those who can.

That is the thrust of the Federal Government's new aged care blueprint, which was announced last week and welcomed by most stakeholders and, it seems, the Opposition. Tony Abbott's response to the plan is essentially that it's good but too good to be true. Let's hope it's not.

The essence of the blueprint is that aged care is an entitlement rather than a luxury. That is a departure from the rather muddled and undefined position of the past, when a greater number of people died before reaching old age and there was less call for aged care.

There has been an imperative for the Government to update and articulate aged care entitlement as a core value linked to what it means to be Australian. There is no such entitlement in certain other countries, notably in the United States, where there is resistance to the idea of support for those who cannot pay.

It is a vast understatement to suggest the increasing population of older Australians has stretched resources. Martin Laverty of Catholic Health Australia speaks of 'sustainability deficits'. He said 60 per cent of our aged care services have operated in the red for the past few years, and a paltry 1800 of the 24,000 applications for aged care at home were successful.

'The government fell short of adopting all the Productivity Commission's plans, which, if adopted, would have set up aged care services to meet the needs of older Australians for the next few decades. But what the government did offer is a

blueprint that will improve what is a pretty dire situation.'

There's a lot of work to be done to ensure that the reforms are legislated and implemented without the political and media obstruction faced by that other great reform the NBN. To that end, Lin Hatfield-Dodds of UnitingCare has called for an implementation group with bipartisan representation from federal and state governments, as well as the non government sector.

To catch a despot

POLITICS

Binoy Kampmark

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor (pictured) has become the first head of state since World War II to be convicted by an international criminal court.

The charges were brutal in their scope and grave in their execution — war crimes and crimes against humanity for the arming of Sierra Leone rebels in exchange for what have come to be known as 'blood diamonds'. Those diamonds obtained their grim appellation given the way they were mined and traded, a product of slave labour.

Taylor was found guilty of aiding and abetting 11 crimes connected with the rebel Revolutionary United Front between 1996 and 2002. The RUF was found responsible for a miscellany of acts — sexual slavery, murder, rape and forced amputations. The finding concluded four years of hearings at the special court for Sierra Leone.

Victims turned up to see the proceedings. One was Edward Songo Conteh of the Amputee and War Wounded Association from Sierra Leone. His hands had been removed, the handiwork of child soldiers. 'I want to see this man behind bars for the rest of his life,' he said.

This is the first the conviction of a head of state since the Nuremberg tribunals of Admiral Karl DÃ¶nitz, who led Nazi Germany for a brief period in 1945. As Human Rights Watch has opined with a degree of satisfaction, 'In this trial, for the first time, such a 'big man' was taken into custody and forced to answer for his alleged crimes.'

But there remain problems with bringing heads of state to trial for grave crimes. While we can see the cruel outcomes of unjust policy, the circumstances of their execution tend to be vague. The absence of coherent paper trails suggests a recurring pattern between battlefield atrocities and the boardroom where plans are hatched.

While despots such as Stalin and his henchmen made a habit of penning signatures to mass death sentences (for them, the signature was historically noble and affirming), Taylor was of the slippery sort, shying away from any clear expression of control. The three-judge panel could not, therefore, assume command responsibility. Nor could it identify a joint enterprise with the paramilitary groups.

We encounter similar problems when debating, for example, whether Emperor Hirohito would be tried for war crimes after Japan's defeat. The standard line

offered by 'Japanists' in the US State Department was that the Tenno was purely ceremonial, a figurehead with minimal agency. If he did exercise agential powers, it was to prevent, not initiate, war. That he failed to do so could be taken as a sign of admirable impotence.

In time, the emperor's role in the war was transformed in the discourse of Cold War politics from an arch aggressor keen on international conquest to, as US chief prosecutor Joseph Keenan would claim, 'a man of peace' who attempted to rein in the militarists. He was a cultured man, a friend of the west, as a *Newsweek* editorial from 1945 was at pains to point out.

Taylor's self-portrait for the judges has been similarly one of the peacemaker and cultured, well-attired victim. In Liberia, he has long been seen as an opponent of neo-colonialism and as a one time freedom fighter. International politics, as ever, remains a murky and treacherous field.

Even after a head of state is nabbed — in Taylor's case, that proved formidable and time consuming — the international community remains divided as to how best to stage a trial, if at all. Would such a trial martyr the suspect in question? Might a revolution not take place as a result of it?

The Allied authorities not only refused to try Hirohito in 1945 but allowed him to remain in office for fear of an explosion. 'Speaking entirely in my personal capacity,' recalled a chief American advisor to the mission, William J. Sebald, 'abdication would be politically disastrous.' Similarly, emperor Wilhelm II of Germany was allowed to go into quiet exile in the Netherlands in 1919 to avoid encouraging Germany going Bolshevik.

In Taylor's case, the trial was held in The Hague, much to the fury of Sierra Leone, for fear that it would destabilise the entire region.

Whether this conviction gives traction to efforts to place world leaders before an international criminal jurisdiction remains an open, perhaps even unanswerable question.

Individuals such as Omar al-Bashir, accused of genocide in Darfur, Sudan, remain indifferent, if not openly defiant of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. He is bright enough to realise that the waters of international law and accountability are muddy, and in need of a good cleansing.

Schools confront the globalisation of superficiality

EDUCATION

Greg O'Kelly

We live in an Australia of burgeoning secularism, one where individual choice can be seen as its own justification. Within this context, educators of young people, particularly within the Catholic system, face two challenges in particular: the need to educate for choice, and the need to educate for depth.

Confronting today's young people are choices of an extensive nature, far more than confronted their parents — not just choices of websites, or choices of TV stations, or choices of stores in shopping centres, but also choices concerning values and beliefs and lifestyles.

A choice enables us to be free, but choice is not its own justification. Education about choice is a real challenge for those charged with forming the young.

Five or six years ago, Allen Close wrote an article in the *Weekend Australian* in which he reflected on his generation, which was then just touching 40. He was struck by the childlessness of so many of his social circle and of the failure of himself and others from his circle to have established sustained relationships. He wrote;

What happened that so many of us have ended up entering middle age the way we have, on a grim treadmill of hope and disappointment. Our marriages ending, our families are split asunder, our assumptions about life devolving into confusion and loneliness?

We had choice, is my answer. More, I would suggest, than most of us knew how to handle. We got selfish, or greedy, or something. We left our partners because we could. We terminated our babies because we could. We discarded the rules, loosened the ties that bind, stretched the limits of the allowed, and this left us dependent on instincts, on our untutored human frailty.

In the fight for freedom which we considered our right we lost the quiet skills of commitment and relationships. We lost the gentle wisdom of putting our own needs second ... the art of love.

Unless there is education about discernment, the consideration of what directions and consequences choices will lead us to, students may make disastrous options or at the least become mired in indifferentism.

Another challenge is the need to educate for depth.

When in Rome for the canonisation of Saint Mary MacKillop in 2010, the then recently deposed prime minister, Kevin Rudd, visited Fr Adolfo Nicolas SJ, the present Father-General of the Jesuit order. In the casual way that one employs

when having morning tea with someone, Rudd asked Nicolas what he believed to be the major challenges facing western society. Nicolas replied 'the globalisation of superficiality'.

In a world of massive and instant communications and distractions, it is possible never to go beneath the surface, never to go in to those deeper places where our humanity registers.

In year 12 classes I used to employ the Cro-Magnon cave paintings, which show the earliest homosapiens to be tool-makers, lovers, thinkers and worshippers.

You can see evidence of the axe as the tool; see the lover in the flowers that were laid around the bodies of the dead; the thinker in the scratchings and calculations made on the walls; the artist in the paintings; and the worshipper in the subjects conveyed by the paintings.

In essence one might say that nothing has changed, that human nature appears to have a consistency and a constancy. There can be no full humanity without those dimensions of creativity, of love, of thought, and of worship. To be fully human we must develop on all fronts.

To help our young people mature we should guide them on what Teilhard de Chardin called that most difficult of journeys, the journey within.

Educators live in a world these days of NAPLAN, of issues affecting numeracy and literacy, and of where their school comes on a league table. This is increasingly to the detriment of education for depth and discernment. I do think it is time for principals to look closely at the phenomenon and to see what can be done about it.

Letter from a lost soldier

BY THE WAY

Brian Matthews

When you move house — really move I mean: garage sale, auction, innumerable trips to the dump, massive book culling, the full catastrophe — you encounter, slowly and over the months of gradually diminishing disruption, two contradictory results. One is you find things that you hadn't seen for ages or scarcely knew you possessed, and the other is you lose things, sometimes, it would seem, forever.

Probably because Anzac Day was looming, I became aware a week or so ago that I had not seen anywhere a framed photograph of my grandfather, Alexander Murray.

He gazes out from an ornate, scrolled oval frame with a gentle slightly bemused look to him. The face is thin, boyish and overshadowed by the too large military cap. On either side of the portrait hang his medals on faded ribbon and beneath is a citation in which futility grapples with dignity:

He whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of self sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.

Alex married 21-year-old Annie Carroll, a slim, dark, Irish immigrant, in Glasgow and they lived in Glasgow's grim slum, the Gorbals, where, in due course, their two sons and two daughters were born. Alex was planning to take his impoverished but close and happy family to Canada or Australia when, with bewildering urgency, he became 17051 Private Alexander Murray, Driver, Army Service Corps, and, after some training, went to France.

By the beginning of 1918, Alex was surviving but shattered in spirit. 'My dearest Ann,' he wrote:

... leave is still stopped, but when it starts I shall get away on leave, it is hard lines. My dearest Ann, if it is not too much trouble you might send me on a small parcel and when I do come home I shall give you as much money as I can. I wish this war was finished for I am fed up. My dear Ann, you and the children try to be as cheery as you can. I feel all buggered up but I shall just have to carry on the best way I can ...

We are not on the same front now, we are on another front and it is actually hell. I could tell you more but this letter might be opened ... I remain your ever loving husband, Alex.

Who knows what ambiguous solace Annie could derive from Alex's letter, but if

it gave her hope at the beginning of April 1918, that hope was soon lost. A month later she received this letter from the Reverend P. J. Kilduff:

Madam, I regret to inform you that your husband 17051 Pte A. Murray 1/6 Duke of Wellington's was admitted to No. 10 Casualty Clearing Station last week suffering from shell wounds to head and chest, and that he died on 28 April. He received the sacraments during his illness, and was very resigned and patient.

He desired me to say that he sent his love to you and the children. He was interred on 29 April in the local military cemetery according to the rites of the Catholic Church. I beg to offer you and your family my sincere sympathy in your sad bereavement.

Of course, neither Alex nor the Reverend Kilduff could mention any specific location in their letters, so no one — least of all Annie after she had migrated in 1920 to Australia to begin 50 years of widowhood — had any idea where that 'local military cemetery' might be.

Working at the University of London 75 years later, with access to records, war histories and experts willing to discuss my theories, I eventually decided that when Alex moved to 'another front' he must have been part of the immense concentration near Ypres where the fighting in those last months of the war was 'actually hell'.

I presented my research, such as it was, to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Buckinghamshire and — they found him. In a small British War cemetery just outside the village of ArnÃ¨ke near the Belgian border and a few kilometres from Ieper, as Ypres is now called.

17051 Private Alexander Murray's meticulously tended grave is over near one of the cemetery's low stone walls. Cypresses cast their shade across some of the white headstones and tall corn crowding up to the walls briskly rattled in the breeze. Bees lazed through the lavender nodding across Alex's engraved name; summer sun radiated from the stone.

My wife and I signed the visitors' book, took photos to show the family and, in a nondescript bar back in the village of ArnÃ¨ke, held a small, long-overdue wake for my grandfather, Alexander Murray. It was as if we knew him at last, as if he had struggled home ('My dearest Ann ... I shall get away on leave') years too late, with no one to meet him, but home nevertheless, home from his 'actual hell'.

Dismembering the dead in Japan and Afghanistan

HISTORY

Walter Hamilton

The publication by the *Los Angeles Times* of photographs of American servicemen in Afghanistan posing with the body parts of dead insurgents has provoked a lively exchange of opinion in the media. Some feel the newspaper did wrong by exposing troops to possible retaliation. Some are appalled by the corrupting effect of war on young minds. Others defend the trophy-hunters: 'war is war'.

But how did this ghoulish practice start? My interest in this began afer I was asked by a Japanese veteran, while on a reporting assignment to Iwo Jima, whether it was the Western custom to mutilate the bodies of the dead.

In June 1944, the syndicated Washington columnist Drew Pearson described an informal gathering held at the White House on the eve of D-Day in Europe:

Representative Francis Walter of Pennsylvania presented the President with an odd gift during the visit — a letter opener made from the forearm of a Jap soldier killed in the Pacific.

'This is the sort of gift I like to get,' the President said as it was placed on his desk.

Representative Walter apologised for presenting such a small part of the Jap's anatomy. But the President interrupted him. 'There'll be plenty more such gifts,' he said.

A fortnight earlier, *Life* magazine's 'Picture of the Week' had shown a young woman admiring a souvenir from her serviceman-boyfriend in New Guinea: a skull inscribed 'This is a good Jap — a dead one'. Some American church leaders were appalled and called for an end to 'isolated acts of desecration', but their appeal had little effect.

Just as in Afghanistan, American and Australian soldiers fighting the Japanese saw themselves pitted against an opponent who acted by a different — inhuman — set of rules.

You shot rather than captured them because a surrendering soldier was likely to be foxing. You poured automatic fire into the dead and dying in case their bodies were booby-trapped. You hurled phosphorus grenades into their hiding places because they did not have the sense to come out. 'We learned to kill them before they killed us' and 'They made you do it' were common refrains.

The rubric does not stand up to closer examination. It fails to explain, for instance, the cutting of the throats of wounded enemy; the souveniring of ears,

limbs, skulls and gold teeth; the torture and murder of prisoners; the decapitations; the urinating into the mouths of corpses; the dismemberment of the dead; the target practice on women and children; the letters home to Mum that bragged 'To us they are dogs and rats — we love to kill them — to me and all of us killing Nips is the greatest sport known'.

Such deeds, committed by Allied soldiers, were witnessed in campaigns from New Guinea to Okinawa.

Attitudes were fed by racial hatred. Japanese soldiers were belittled as 'cockroaches', 'rats', 'termites', 'gooks'. The US Marines combined 'Japanese' and 'ape' to come up with 'Japes'. The question arises: Did the troops' attitudes and behaviour derive principally from battlefield experience or from racially motivated preconceptions?

This became the subject of a comprehensive study which looked into the motivations of American ground troops during the Second World War. It concluded that 'differences in hatred felt toward Japanese and Germans seem not to have been the result of actual combat experience'. Soldiers fighting in the Pacific were no more likely to have seen enemy atrocities than those in Europe (13 per cent in both theatres), but many more had heard about them (45 per cent in the Pacific, compared to 24 per cent in Europe).

The study also found that soldiers based in Europe or the United States professed greater hatred for the Japanese than the troops who were actually fighting them. Two thirds of enlisted men in the US wanted to 'wipe out the whole Japanese nation', while only 23 per cent were content to 'punish the leaders but not ordinary Japanese'. The reverse was true of Pacific veterans: a greater proportion chose the more lenient option.

If we take a line from this research, it would seem that the soldiers in Afghanistan — closest to the killing — are not the main problem. Nor is it correct to assume that atrocities are the inevitable by-products of battlefront trauma. They are more likely to be the result of homespun prejudices and bellicose rhetoric put out by drill sergeants, media commentators, politicians and others — well out of harm's way.

Separating art from war in Iran

ARTS

William Gourlay

Iran attracts a lot of media attention related to its nuclear program and the implications thereof. Sabre rattling, both by the Iranian leadership and by Western politicians and pundits, dominates the headlines and steers public discourse. But these offer a narrow prism through which to analyse and define a nation as multifaceted as Iran.

For the first time in recent years the spotlight was brought onto Iran for something other than the nuclear issue when the Iranian production *A Separation* won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film earlier this year. A domestic drama built around a moral conundrum in Tehran, it is the first Iranian film to claim an Oscar.

Capturing the clamour of life in modern Iran, the movie highlights the divides that exist within Iranian society, between the haves and have-nots and between the urban middle classes and devout working classes. Each of its protagonists, while flawed, has their own moral compass by which to navigate 21st-century life.

They are preoccupied with day-to-day concerns rather than with the nuclear issue or with any adherence to the ideology that underpins the Islamic Republic. As such, the film may do something to redress the notion that the broader Iranian populace is comprised of minions blindly obedient to the mullahs and antagonistic to the West.

At the Oscars, writer-director Asghar Farhadi implicitly addressed this. He accepted the award on behalf of his compatriots, 'people who respect all cultures and civilisations and despise hostility and resentment'. Iran was at last being recognised for its 'rich and ancient culture that has been hidden under the heavy dust of politics'.

Love and Devotion: From Persia and Beyond , an exhibition currently at the State Library of Victoria, is similarly bringing to light an alternative view of Iran.

The exhibition brings to Australian shores a collection of illuminated Persian manuscripts from the Bodleian Library, Oxford; objects of intense beauty and refined artistry produced in the princely courts of Iran and the Persian-influenced domains of Turkey and India from the 13th to 18th centuries.

The inspiration and subject matter for the manuscripts were the works of the master mystic poets including Nizami, Sa'adi, Hafiz and Rumi.

The manuscripts' recurring motifs and themes of gardens, flowers, songbirds and notions of romantic and mystical love are not popularly associated with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nonetheless, the works of the mystic poets and the ideas they espouse retain wide currency in modern Iranian society.

At the conference associated with the exhibition, Iranian-born, Adelaide-based artist Hossein Valamanesh remarked that 'I am a lover and I'm not ashamed of it', before presenting a range of his own works that incorporate evocations of mystical love and Persian calligraphy.

A constant theme at the conference was how Persian ideas and sensibilities have entered into and influenced Western art and thinking, evidence of 'contact zones' that have long existed allowing a two-way transfer between East and West, Islam and Christianity, of ideas, scholarship and creativity.

Mario Casari, from Sapienza University of Rome, recounted how the director of the 16th century Medici Oriental Press in Rome claimed that Persian was a gift from God to mankind in order to express the 'conceits of poetry'.

Marcelo Stamm, senior research fellow at RMIT, described how the poetry of Hafiz moved the great German poet Goethe to write his *West-Eastern Divan*, which in turn inspired Franz Schubert's love songs 'Suleika I' and 'II', the first of which was described by Brahms as the most beautiful love song ever written.

In the exhibition itself, the biblical Joseph, of technicolour coat fame, appears in the tale of Yusuf and Zulaykha in manuscripts of the 11th century *Shahnama* (*Book of Kings*), as does Alexander the Great, recast as Iskandar, recognised by the Persians he conquered as a noble warrior and just king.

The romance of Layla and Majnun is depicted in several manuscripts; Byron described this tale, with its motifs of unrequited, unconsummated love, as the *Romeo and Juliet* of the Islamic world.

Such are some of the elements of the 'rich and ancient culture' that Asghar Farhadi recognises. This culture is not entirely alien to the West, and yet is largely overlooked in the thunder of current media headlines.

Getting personal with Anzac Day

NON-FICTION

Philip Harvey

This gets personal. In fact, should I even be saying all this to people I have never met? What do I say? How far do I go? These are things I never talk about with strangers.

Anzac Day is one of those mysterious days. We know the meaning, only what is the meaning precisely? I relate more readily to certain family birthdays and to Easter; more readily to All Souls' Day with its call to remember the departed, surely one of the things that makes us more human, than to Anzac Day. The day *is* a memorial for the dead, especially now that none of the original men at Gallipoli are alive to tell the story, but what else is it?

My paternal grandfather, Edgar Harvey, was not only an Anzac but among those who landed nearly 100 years ago at the Turkish cove, later named Anzac, on 25 April 1915. Yet the family almost never talked about this, or subsequent events in his wartime experience. It was passed over in silence. It still is, largely.

In a country where Gallipoli is treated as a moment of great national importance, it might be expected that I would feel proud to have a grandfather who fought there and survived. While that is the case, it was never instilled in me to feel that way.

My father rarely if ever talked about his father Edgar's wartime experience. Silences in childhood may come to say that there must be secrets, or there are feelings too hard to express. Just being alive, I came to learn, is what is important, not being proud about knowing someone who was there.

One thing my father, an Anglican, did repeat while I was growing up in the 1960s was Daniel Mannix's claim that the Great War was nothing but a trade war. The vehemence with which he repeated this assertion told me it stung, he was hurt by the truth of it.

Such vehemence, I could see that probably Edgar himself agreed with the archbishop's proposition. It was for someone else's interests that young men had died in the trenches. It was an experience they had to go through, that they treated as an adventure, or took as it came. But did they know what they were doing? They were told it was for God, King and Country, but did they understand the politics?

After Gallipoli, Edgar was moved to the Western Front. Wounded at the horrific theatre of Passchendaele, he remained unattended in No Man's Land for one and a half days. He was shipped quickly over the Channel to Wandsworth Hospital, where subsequently his right leg was amputated. That much I always knew.

It was there he met a Hospital Visitor, Elsie Crabtree, my grandmother. This was a familiar pattern for the young men sent into that strange European nightmare. It was the familiar story for me. That most of the survivors came home halfway sane is itself a wonder.

By talking to your family you learn more. For my mother, Edgar was part of the forgotten generation. The Returned Soldiers' League was the driving force behind pensions and repatriation, working at a level that the average politician would not have thought about. Edgar was president of the Blackburn RSL, went in the local marches, and did everything he could as a member of the Limbless Soldiers Association for fellow amputees and others in similar condition after the War.

To their credit, consecutive governments to this day have supported these people.

Edgar took it as it came, be it the war, or life afterwards. He was a vicar's warden, a chorister in church and chorales, and played golf regularly. But the loss of his leg meant for the rest of life there were episodes where for two days at a time he was on morphine, would stay in his bedroom, with total silence required. The phantom leg pains never went away. He always had a walking stick.

Edgar was like many healthy young men who were permanently damaged for the rest of their lives, both privately and in their career. I will never know what he really thought of Anzac Day.

My maternal grandfather, Charlie Hulme, also went to the Great War. The silver teaspoons from Beaulieu and Ypres gleam in the family cabinet. Charlie's experience was different from Edgar's. He was a machine-gunner, and I was often told as a child that most machine-gunners survived the war for the very simple reason that they were protected by the gun shield.

He used to say that he was only wounded once, when he cut himself in the mess with a tin-opener. This story is family folklore. One can only imagine the things he must have seen.

Charlie hated war and never talked about what he really saw. He rarely mentioned the brother who was killed in 1917; the loss was important to his silence. The war was not a point of conversation at family occasions, even if he wanted to talk about it. He also detested the jingoistic patriotism that came later.

He never attended an Anzac Parade. He avoided the march, probably because the men would all reminisce and drink. It was all about getting drunk and Two-Up later, as far as he could see. Charlie was abstemious, but not a wowser. Self-indulgence was not an option for that generation.

Charlie was a leader of Blackburn Rover Scouts and laid wreathes at the Shrine of Remembrance on behalf of the Scout movement, out of honour and to demonstrate to the boys how to show true respect.

For Charlie the whole experience of the war was about survival. Young men, thrown together, quickly came to depend on one another. Themselves a mixed-up lot, they worked together in the trenches simply in order to get through it. Sticking together made tolerable a situation that was hostile, vicious, and ludicrous. You could die at any moment. They would watch their brothers and friends being shot to pieces right before their eyes.

It was in these baffling and desperate circumstances that the men worked together. Later the term 'mateship' would be used of this behaviour, which is why the term today has changed. Mateship was about dealing every day with meaningless terror.

Once arrived on the Front it quickly became obvious to these teenagers that the officers didn't know what they were doing. An acre of mud could be won then lost again within days. Consequent disrespect for the officers informed Charlie's disapproval too of making the chaplains officers, because they became distant from the soldiers. It tended to make it difficult for the chaplains to minister effectively to the men.

Charlie married Evelyn McKeown in 1921. She never talked about the war either, but when I visited her at Cabrini Hospital in the 1980s she was on powerful painkillers and not her usual composed self. Staring out over the rooftops of Malvern her mind was fraught by the past.

I might have said something about her youth because she suddenly burst into uncontrollable crying and yelled out, 'Oh the waste! All those boys! The waste! The waste!' I was silenced by the sight of her distress.

I still think about that day when I hear our glib modern throwaways like 'Haven't you got over it yet?' Trauma can never go away, it stays inside and changes how people relate to the world, how they understand everything, sometimes. Sixty years later my grandmother still mourned the young men she had loved and lost to the war.

The war affected everyone's lives, got into every family. Two brief lives are presented here, the lives of two skilled artisans who were lucky and came back. One became dedicated to helping those in a similar wounded condition, the other to nurturing the next generation.

Armistice Day (now Remembrance Day) was more significant than Anzac Day for my grandparents' generation, because it commemorated the end of a traumatic experience in their own lives. There was an ending.

Those who came later ponder the distance between our way of remembering the War and theirs. Many of us live with uneasy thoughts about what our grandparents actually thought of Anzac Day, and the critical things they would say about how Anzac Day is celebrated now. It's a different world.

Profound silence of a conscientious objector

NON-FICTION

Brian Doyle

I remember the day my older brother came back from the navy. This was long ago. He was 20. I was 11. He had been in the navy for the summer. I had a postcard he had written me under my pillow and I read it every night and never folded it or let any of our other brothers touch it because it was mine and it had been sent to me from his ship and it was mine.

He slouched in his chair, my older brother, tanned and weary and dismissive and friendly. I wanted to say something amusing to make him see me but no words came so I just sat there and stared. His eyes were closed.

I knew nothing of what was happening, that soon he would quit the navy, and so be eligible to be fed to the war, and that he would stand before the draft board and speak bluntly about his conviction that war was a criminally stupid way to solve problems, and that he would serve his nation during the war instead as a teacher and coach in a school in mountains so remote that many people there could not read or write.

He seemed much taller and leaner since he had come back from the ship. I sat there staring. He must have felt my gaze because he opened his eyes and said something witty and dismissive and I laughed although I was not sure what he meant. I asked him if he wanted a sandwich and he said sure and I ran to get one. Sandwiches were a way of talking in our family.

He was in the navy and our dad had been in the army. Our dad had been in not one but two wars. Our dad was proud of my brother when he left the navy. He was proud of my brother when he stood before the draft board and spoke bluntly about war being a criminally stupid way to solve problems. That's the kind of dad he is.

He came home from work a few minutes later, after I had given my brother the sandwich and resumed staring at him from across the room. When our dad came through the front door he took his hat off with his left hand and brushed his son's left shoulder with his right hand and my brother opened his eyes and reached his right hand up and touched my dad's hand.

You would think that you could never remember such a small gesture after so many years but I remember it as if it happened one sentence ago.

You would think such a gesture would get lost but it did not get lost and there is my father saying something with his hand to his son and my brother saying something back to his dad.

A minute later our other brothers ran in because they heard dad come home,

and probably then there were words spoken, we were never a family at a loss for words, but I don't remember anything else spoken that day except that which was spoken without words. You would think not much can be said bluntly without words but it turns out probably the most articulate things we say are what we say without words.

This is an amazing thing and the only way I can get close to explaining it is to say sit here with me on the couch and watch as my tall quiet father comes through the front door and removes his fedora with his left hand and reaches down his right hand like a net and touches the mountainous ridge of my brother's shoulder and my brother opens his eyes and reaches up his long tanned hand and touches our dad's hand.

See? There they are, reaching for each other again and again. They'll never stop.

Nuns bucked by papal bulls

RELIGION

Andrew Hamilton

Last week the Vatican announced that the union of the United States Leadership Conference of Women Religious (USLCWR), which had been investigated, would be placed under the guidance and oversight of the Archbishop of Seattle. The Vatican found fault with its fidelity in promoting church teaching particularly on life issues.

The news called to mind a spat many years ago between Sydney Bishop Thomas Muldoon and a visiting religious sister who was lecturing in Australia. Muldoon, an attractively larger than life figure with a reputation for being a bull in a china shop, criticised her views. *The Bulletin*, reflecting the then courteous attitudes of Catholics to women religious, awarded the bishop the Congolese Medal for Bravery.

Tensions between enterprising women religious and church authorities go back a long way. In the early 17th century, when the only form of religious life open to women was of enclosure within a convent, Mary Ward (pictured) felt called to gather a group of educated women who taught young women, engaged in pastoral work, were international in scope, and were not under the direction of men.

She wanted to adopt the Jesuit rule. This was a step or two too far for the Jesuits or the Vatican. Her congregation was suppressed and she was jailed for a time.

The papal bull that suppressed the congregation was direct. It described the women as 'workers who rashly betake themselves to the field of the Lord, scatter what has been sown, root up what has been planted, introduce cockle and spread false weeds through it...'

'Free from the laws of enclosure they wander about at will, and under the guise of promoting the salvation of souls have been accustomed to attempt and employ themselves at many other works which are most unsuitable to their weak sex and character, to female modesty, and particularly to maidenly reserve — works which men of eminence in the science of sacred letters, of experience of affairs of innocence of life undertake with much difficulty.'

It concludes, 'we totally and completely suppress and extinguish them, subject them to perpetual abolition and remove them entirely from the Holy Church of God... And we wish and command all Christian faithful to consider them and think of them as suppressed, extinct, rooted out, destroyed and abolished'.

In those days they made contempt into an art form. Mary Ward's sisters continue today.

The intervention into the USLCWR is mercifully less spectacular and follows an investigation into the organisation in 2008 followed by a critical report last year.

The executive of the sisters were in Rome to meet the Congregation of the Faith to discuss the serious issues raised in this report, only to be told the appointment of the Archbishop had already been communicated to the American Bishops. They were assured the appointment would be kept under wraps until they could inform their member congregations. But it was immediately published on the Bishops Conference website.

All this seems lacking in due respect.

To an Australian reader it all sounds rather like the sackings at Toyota. There was the same summary action, broad-brush charges and humiliation built into the process. The doings at Toyota were received with predictable support from those who wish to enlarge the freedom of employers and predictable opposition from those who want to enlarge the rights of workers.

There will no doubt be the same instinctive response to the treatment of the Leadership Conference.

But if the church is to be judged by its commitment to reconciliation, it is hard to rejoice at this action. The Bishops may be able to establish an effective office for dealing with women religious, but it is hard to see how the religious themselves could see the revised institution as effectively representing them. Their communication will be increasingly through social networks and informal gatherings.

And their trust in the male leadership of the church will inevitably be weakened.

More broadly the Vatican action raises the same questions about respect and process as did the dismissal of Bishop Morris in Toowoomba. But its potential consequences are much larger because the women's religious orders in the United States are so involved in medical care and education.

If relationships between the Bishops and these institutions are marked by distrust the capacity of the Catholic Church plausibly to defend human dignity in the public sphere will be eroded. And the mistrust of the Catholic Church among Western women from a Catholic background will grow.

At first sight it seems that the china in the shop has been broken, and that to put it together again will be a great labour.

Poets in wartime

POETRY

Various

A walk in the park

Sunday afternoon, summer, sunny, almost
clammy, the little hand stretched up for
companionship, security across the generations.
The Shrine seemed to get in the way as we walked
up the hill to the Botanical Gardens, all lush
green and refreshed after the heavy mid-week rain.
And so it was, happy families, ice creams, Potter
children's playground, wriggling children
congregating in their uncoordinated steps up the
flowing stream, like insects at a creek. Eventually
it came, on the way home, gently. He and I were
thanked for taking off our hats as we entered
at the top of the steep steps of the Shrine,
the solemn darkness of the main columned space,
the light streaming in past bas reliefs of war, bravery
and valour from an earlier age. Outside it was the simple
questions about war and death and injury. Somehow
the answers did not fit the logic of the four-year-old.
Down at the bronze 'Cobbers' sculpture, death
and life became clearer and muddier. This week
unable to sleep he walked in on the news and
the war in Afghanistan, but was swiftly ushered
away; too much reality in one week.

Tony London

Those who stayed behind: an ANZAC poem

We are those who remain, once callow now bent in weariness

Life's breath no longer robust

The single purpose once so clear, now confused

Our futures so simple but overthrown

Cowering in sacred fields, ducking the booming retorts from those murderous machines we cradled our weeping brothers

We miss not the cloying sludge, the stench, the bleak resignation

Your ultimate gift is not lost in a fluttering of years

O for a day without comrades bloody fallen

Lovers in guttural grief, shrieking, sobbing

And mothers in stoic dignity, mantillas drawn tight

Our heroic flame, corralled colts brazenly waiting, cruelly snuffed

Have we learned nothing my friend?

Lives torn, bodies twisted and broken, need we ask

Ruing life's slips and trips and misused chances

Lamenting faltering love and starry optimism unfulfilled

John Templeman

Poets on strike against another war in the Middle East, 2012

Strike! What else can you do to stop war as a poet

And the prologue to carnage gets going? so bleak coming on

The familiar old tension builds up and the wild surge below it

Turns leaders to strutting and pomp they're ripe to bestow it

The US is bristling with weapons which want for a song

And a strike is about all you can call if you're only a poet

A grenade in your hand? Is there nothing to do but to throw it?

We poets seem slight? but we recognise war-ringing wrong

As the pressure builds up from the energy surging below it

Yes call us all wets but where wickedness speaks then we know it

It's the same human species to which we cling fast and belong

There's not much one can do to stop war as a lesser-known poet

If we put pen to paper with words it might even blow it

Should we try calling ‘halt’ with a blast of a horn or a gong?
Speechless we’ll stand and we’ll query the need that’s below it
And we’ll ask you to ponder a symbol a lone muted poet

Jill Sutton

Unlocking the culture of clergy sex abuse

EDITORIAL

Michael Mullins


SECRET POLICE REPORT
THE AGE
Church's suicide victims

We do not criticise the police force as a whole when there are revelations of corruption. We tend to believe that police men and women protect us and do at least a fair job of upholding the law. Our condemnation is confined to police drug rings and the like and, most importantly, the evil culture that sustains them.

There is every reason why we should apply the same principle in our response to sexual abuse within the Church. In other words, let's avoid scapegoating the Church in general and focus instead on convicted abusers and, most particularly, the culture that has sanctioned their actions, even if identifying it is a lengthy and costly process.

Bishop James Moriarty led the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin in Ireland until he resigned in 2009 after he was criticised in the Murphy Report into the handling of clerical child sex abuse in the Dublin Archdiocese. He was one of many church leaders who effectively allowed sexual abuse to occur under his watch.

'With the benefit of hindsight, I accept that, from the time I became an auxiliary bishop, I should have challenged the prevailing culture,' he said in his statement of resignation.

Identifying and describing the culture that prevailed should count for almost everything in the investigation of clergy sex abuse (as indeed with corrupt behaviour in the police force and other professions). Individual abusers, and those in authority who failed to act, were a product of a culture that accepted, at best, the existence of sexual abuse as an abhorrent fact of life and, at worst — among offenders — that sexual gratification at the expense of those subject to one's authority was a 'perk' of the job (like funds from crime for corrupt police).

Specifically every inquiry into sexual abuse should draw significantly on ethnographic and historical expertise. Ethnography — referred to as ' thick description ' — aims to provide a detailed, in-depth description of the unwritten rules by which we live our lives. It has the potential to unlock the secrets of a culture and, in connection with sexual abuse, explain why some church personnel abused minors.

History is important because much of the abuse occurred at a time when social and religious mores were very different, even though it may have been only two or three decades ago. Irish Jesuit Father Gerry O'Hanlon describes it as 'trying to understand how a truth that seems so blindingly obvious now [but] was, at another but quite recent period, so opaque'.

O'Hanlon has written several essays on sexual abuse and the Murphy Report in

the theological journal *The Furrow*. He uses the poet Seamus Heaney's well known line about the Irish Troubles — 'whatever you say, say nothing' — to characterise the behaviour of many Irish bishops in relation to sexual abuse. 'This, in the terms used by the Murphy Report, is the culture of 'don't ask, don't tell'. And so bishops, for example, did not talk about this even among themselves and were unaware of how widespread the problem was.'

Victoria's parliamentary committee has much it could learn from a study of the Murphy Report and the analysis of O'Hanlon and others. It has already been heavily criticised for lacking expertise and resources, and there is widespread expectation that the result will be superficial and lack credibility.

One committee member, Frank Maguire, has already resigned after declaring he was not up to the job. It could take further resignations before the State Government rethinks its decision to act in haste.

Imagining nationalism through Anzac suffering

REFLECTION

Ben Coleridge

Every year Anzac Day comes around and events held across Australia attract ever growing numbers of people. At dawn services proportionately more youthful and larger crowds venerate the memory of young men (and some young women) who died in the many wars Australia has fought since the late 19th century.

The growth in popularity of Anzac Day is an intriguing phenomenon. It occurs in a period when the vast majority of Australians have never had anything to do with the armed services and have never experienced violence, other than perhaps in the street or the pub or the home.

Australia no longer has conscription or national service and most young people, especially those with tertiary education, would not consider the military as a future career path. The Australian Defence Force has been struggling to meet its recruitment quotas for some time now.

So the reason Anzac Day draws such large numbers cannot be that those who attend have a personal connection to the services. There are also some underlying cultural currents at work.

There is no doubt that Anzac Day represents a form of nationalism — this is not to belittle it, only to recognise its true nature. Anzac Day is part of a process of national imagining that takes place through ritual commemoration — a process described by historian Eric Hobsbawn in his book *The Invention of Tradition* and by Benedict Anderson in his famous exegesis of nationalism, *Imagined Communities*.

By paying tribute to the Anzacs, Australians reinforce their sense of common identity: in doing so the Australian nation is imagined as a sovereign and limited community defined by certain ideals.

Arguably this focus on ideals is what makes Anzac Day so popular. Day to day political affairs and cultural and social debate is often antagonistic — democracy as a process of public argument rather than public reasoning. And in the realm of morality, modern life is defined by a plurality of moral perspectives so that it is difficult to form a moral consensus on a wide variety of issues. Anzac Day, by contrast, is an occasion for public concord and consensus — it is marked by displays of solidarity.

The 20th century political theorist Isaiah Berlin argued that nationalism often manifests itself most strongly in a community that has suffered some wound. Certainly Indigenous Australians have suffered a great wound. But on first reflection it appears that other elements of contemporary Australia have not so

suffered. Unlike in Russia, Japan, China or Germany, modern Australians do not have a vivid collective memory of suffering.

Of course those who returned from the World Wars and the various other conflicts of the 20th century were marked forever by the knowledge they had acquired of human life and death. Today, in a period of unparalleled wealth, in which most Australians are far removed from war, Anzac Day is a way of instructing ourselves about the place of suffering in Australia's historical experience.

But perhaps modern Australian society has in fact suffered a wound, for which Anzac Day is a balm of sorts. Perhaps the wound suffered is a hollowing out of our moral and political culture, what the Scottish philosopher Alasdair Macintyre has described as the severing of our contemporary moral vocabulary and moral concepts from their philosophical and cultural roots.

We have plenty of ideals. We celebrate 'courage', 'mateship', 'loyalty' and 'fairness' but it is not clear how these ideals are integrated into a broader moral system or how they actually shape and ground our social life. Without being rooted in a conception of the 'good society', concepts like the 'fair go' (which is essentially a conception of justice) are readily interpreted according to the political priorities of the day.

In this context of disagreement and confusion about the nature of a moral vocabulary we might share, Anzac Day acts to sooth and smooth over the hollow.

As a day of commemoration it has distinctly moral themes in its focus on the virtues thought to be epitomised by the Anzacs, namely courage and loyalty. But it also allows people to get a grasp on what these ideals might mean beyond rhetoric — they are shown to us in action in the stories of sacrifice, compassion and heroism that Anzac Day brings forth.

So we have Simpson and his donkey who helped bring in the wounded, and we have the statue at the back of the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance of a soldier carrying his wounded mate over his shoulders.

Anzac Day is a day on which many of us can imagine Australia as having some kind of moral being in which we are all connected — and connected by virtues such as those we learn were evinced by the Anzacs. But we need to keep on interrogating the virtues and moral ideas evoked on Anzac Day. In the context of our actual social life, what do they mean? And to what moral vision do they orient us? Do they suffice?