

# Launch Out Letter (LOL)

October 2020

## Family in Mission

By Lucienne Hensel



The Hensel Family in 2010

Growing up in Catholic Malta, faith was always a big part of my life. But it was in my late teens that I experienced the love of Christ in a personal way. It was life changing. I started to pray each day, the Eucharist came alive for me, and Scriptures that I had listened to for years suddenly became relevant to my life. I joined a local youth outreach, and the call to mission began to grow in my heart.

In 1990, aged 21, I joined the ICPE Mission in Germany. There I met Rainer (from East Germany) and we were married in 1994. For 20 years, we lived in an international missionary community. From there we travelled on missions to different parts of the world - working in schools and parishes, with the young and old, in prisons, churches and out on the streets. In '96 we were sent to the ICPE community at St Gerard's on Mt Victoria, and Wellington became our home. Wherever we went – be it the lush jungles of Africa or the streets of western cities, we found the same deep need for the love of Christ.

Being married and living in a missionary community had its challenges. We had few material possessions and no financial security, but we knew we were in the right place. We shared life and space with many others, but the experience enriched our marriage. Our families back home struggled to understand our choices, especially when our first child was born in 1998. They thought we were being irresponsible parents, but we trusted that God would look after us. Our three boys never lacked anything they needed. On the other hand, they possessed riches that could never be counted. They grew up in the knowledge of God in a loving Christ-centred community. They learnt to trust in God's providence, to be grateful and generous. They also learnt at a very young age the joy of sharing His love with others.

Life changed when the kids came along, but this did not limit our missionary call. We travelled less but found that being family opened new doors for us to minister, particularly among youth and young families. Whether at home or on mission, God could use any member of our family to touch someone with His love. Familiaris Consortio (#48) tells us that *"Insofar as it is a 'small-scale Church,' the Christian family is called upon ... to exercise its prophetic role by bearing witness to the Kingdom and peace of Christ...."*

In 2012, with children now aged 14 to 4, we discerned that it was time to leave the ICPE Mission. It was a challenging move and we had countless questions as to whether we could 'survive' as a family in the world. God provided all we needed to make a new start – meaningful work and steady income, a comfortable home, faithful friends to accompany us, and many opportunities to participate in the life of the Church.

When I joined Launch Out in 2014, my family understood that this was another step in the unfolding of God's call in my life. As others on Launch Out will appreciate, the journey requires sacrifice, and I am grateful that Rainer and the boys were so gracious when I spent nights studying, was out for endless meetings and there was no cake in the pantry!

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Early on I understood that to be a missionary, I needed to first be an intentional disciple – seeking to know Jesus in order to make Him known. This means a commitment to a deepening life of prayer, ongoing conversion and formation, and community life. As family we also need to nurture our faith – encountering Jesus in and through each other, being witnesses of hope to each other. This year's unusual events inadvertently helped us to pray more often together, as we gathered for family liturgies and supported each other during lockdown. I hope that this experience will pave the way for our children's own families of faith in the future.

*"The family is an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness..."* Amoris Laetitia #290

Although we are no longer 'full-time missionaries', we are still a missionary family – called to be authentic Christians in the world. In this way we seek to be salt of the earth in our faith communities, our workplace, school and university, and in all our relationships. We make Christ known through our hospitality and openness to others. As we turn to God in our own trials, we can give hope to friends who are struggling. As we seek Jesus in our own moments of doubt and questioning, we can offer real answers to the questions of those around us.

*Note: Lucienne currently works as Consultant, Family Ministry, which is part of Marriage, Family and Young Church*



## It takes a Lifetime to Learn about Mission

By Susan Apathy

What is Mission? What does it mean to be people of Mission?

Let's start with the Gospels as our prime source for understanding the wisdom of Mission. The first story of Mission was when Jesus sent out His disciples on a mission. (Matt 10: 1-21. Mark 6:7-13, 30. Luke 9: 1-6,10.)

In this story the disciples weren't trained, they were very new to what Jesus was doing and saying – it was more of a 'learn by doing' experience for them. Jesus delegated power to them to drive out impure spirits, heal everyday sicknesses and diseases, and even raise the dead. What on earth was Jesus doing? They were told to go in pairs, to pray, to give the blessings of peace to the houses they stayed in (and to simply leave those who didn't want them), and to tell people that the kingdom of God is here.

That's a spectacular list of things to do. When they returned, they were probably crowing about their success – they too had worked miracles!

Well, all that doesn't seem much like mission today, except for the fact that firstly, they took a leap of faith and trusted in God for strength, and secondly they were asked to help people in practical ways, curing physical and mental ailments, with not much preaching – the statement that the Kingdom of God is here was the only message that was theological, and it was embodied in the useful cures that they provided.

It also occurred to me that these disciples were probably fairly young, and had not spent a lot of time thinking about what it means to be part of the Kingdom of God. I remembered my own youth in the early 1960s. I didn't think I would join a religious order and go out to 'the missions' (the concept I had learned as a child), but I thought I was going to get together with others my age and set the local world on fire for God (or at least, set up a Common Worker house of hospitality in Cannons Creek.) We wanted a practical project for God that we could devote our lives to. However, it turned out not to be what God wanted of us. Members of the group departed to other places to do other things.

From then, my life involved a lot of years teaching English in State secondary schools, raising children and teaching English in Catholic secondary schools, finally working in the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, (which included writing and organising to support the Catholicity of Catholic schools, and policy work to ensure Government and integrated schools functioned well together.) Most of this is not obvious ministry, in the way we have traditionally thought of it.

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I found I did a lot of listening to God and to the people round me, of all ages, praying, and opening myself to God's will. As a result, it turned out I was on a very unexpected (to me) but very ordinary path, looking after the people close to me while I did all the ordinary things people do. There were twists and turns, some heightened moments, some spells of feeling lost and miserable. The only thing to do was to accept it was all part of God's plan, that is, the mission God wanted me to do - but I wasn't sure if theology would interpret it as mission.

Recently I have been reading material by Stephen Bevans SVD, (particularly a lecture, Mission as Prophetic Dialogue) and thinking about how he defines mission as working to bring about the Kingdom of God/heaven.

He tells me (and us) that everyone has this mission, which is basically to make real God's love for us, for everyone, all the time. He writes of mission as the transformation of the world, partnering with God, to show God's love in action. He says "Mission dialogue is ultimately about ministering out of real relationships, about making friends." He quotes Claude Marie Barbour, on "letting the people among whom we work be our teachers and even evangelists." This resonates with my awareness day after day of the many wonderful New Zealanders who do so much for us, and show such love for each other as we live our lives in this time of Covid 19.

Bevans' writing feels like an awareness I have spent my life growing into. Our career path is secondary to our awareness of sharing love with others, providing, as we can, what they might need - understanding, a smile or kind word, a major project, silent prayerful support. Mission, the Kingdom of heaven, is not limited to Catholics or Christians or those of some sort of faith. It is for and with every single person in the world. We preach the Good News by living out God's love for every person, and the whole planet.

Bevan suggests that we do mission in a world of grace, helping people understand the spiritual experiences that they are already having, or the haunting questions that grace raises. And that brings me to the DVD we watched recently, *A Beautiful Day in the*

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*Neighbourhood*, about the life and work of Fred Rogers, a Presbyterian Minister, whose daily work was the making of TV shows for small children, to help them cope with the big issues of their life. I think the film says it all. Do watch it, and reflect on the sort of mission lived by teachers, parents, ordinary folk, with such stunning effect.



# From knowing mission, to doing mission, to being a mission

by Mary Ann Greaney

Like many children of my generation who went to a Catholic School I knew all about the missions. They were the *black babies* in Africa. Every classroom had a collection box, covered with pictures of *black babies* that we could put pennies in. Missions were far away, and it was the task of religious sisters, brothers, and priests to save them. When I reached my teenage years, I understood a little more was demanded and organised some fundraising events to send money to support the work of the Columban Missionary Society. My juvenile understanding of what it is to be a missionary stayed with me well into adulthood.

My awakening came when reflecting on homelessness with a group of parishioners. We decided there were no homeless in our city. One enlightened person suggested we go out one evening to see if we could find 'rough sleepers'. We found many under bridges, in shop doorways and, to our dismay, on parish property under a tree next to an unoccupied three-bedroom house that belonged to the parish. We had the solution. We all pledged money to rent the house from the parish at market rates for a short period with the hope the challenges the family was struggling with would be resolved. When we took our plan to the pastoral council, we were told we could not rent the house and the tree was cut down. This experience was my 'road to Damascus' moment. Indeed the scales fell from several pairs of eyes and today there is a charitable trust that welcomes 70 homeless people each night – the parish council was not consulted!

In 1998 I was part of a small team who discerned a need in the local area for ongoing education of young mothers unable to continue at school because they were pregnant. In collaboration with other like-minded people we set up a full-time school for 30 teen parents with a licensed early childcare centre for their babies. From one paid employee there are now 20, plus many volunteers. This particular way of 'being with people' and 'doing things' was recognised as different from that which is happening elsewhere. To our delight the early Childcare Centre won an award in 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4dazlb5LoU>

I am grateful to have been part of the Teen Parent adventure that has flourished and now stands without my help. I delight at the way God leads us from one step to the next without us knowing the final outcome. However, there is one mission that is my life-mission and one that continuously transforms me and feeds into the public mission I do. It is my family. Like numerous women, as a mother and grandmother, I am constantly called upon, albeit hidden in the public eye, to unconditional generosity and compassion, and one I cannot plan, take a break, or walk away from. But it is there I see God's wisdom transform me and give me the deepest fulfillment. It is seeing my children, who rarely go to mass, notice people most in need and bring them home, invite them to join us for Christmas, and to stay with Mum and Dad until they find their feet again. It is in these little moments, where my Mission, the Gospel and my life intersect.

Once transformed, it is not possible to go back. Catholic Social Teaching has sharpened my awareness and gifted me with a language that may be used in many situations. Some of my most useful phrases are: *every person has intrinsic dignity, all people are made sacred in the image and likeness of God, people have the right to participate, we need a consistent ethic of life ...* I am drawn to scripture passages that speak of Jesus weeping for his friend who has died (John 11:34-38), where Jesus is filled with compassion and raises the widow's only son to life (Luke 7:13). Matthew's gospel tells of Jesus being moved with compassion – healing the sick and restoring sight to the blind. There are no stories of Jesus sending money overseas but many of his ministry with the people around him. I recognise I have been blessed with a conversion of the heart. I too feel compassion and see the many faces of Jesus in others. I am called to do something for those outside my own front door – my transformation deepens when I respond to those in need whether that is to my family or to my ministry in the Church.

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The Greaney family with their six children and some of the grandchildren

I am in awe at the way God continues to accompany me on my missionary journey, transforming my understanding and drawing me closer to the heart of Jesus. From knowing Mission, to doing Mission and by God's grace, to be Mission. It is not easy, Mission unfolds with my own maturity, taking shape alongside my personal struggles and search for meaning. Pope Francis explains

*Mission unfolds with my own maturity, taking shape alongside my personal struggles and search for meaning.*

my transformation in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "God, by his sheer grace, draws us to himself and makes us one with him. He sends his Spirit into our hearts to make us his children, transforming us and enabling us to respond to his love by our lives (#112)."

## Guess who I found in the local news?

8 Wednesday September 2, 2020

### 5 MINUTES WITH



**Bernadette Patelesio**  
Mum of 5, Grandmother of 7, Health Analyst and Pianist. I have lived in Wainuiomata for 30 years.

- What food do you crave most often?  
Wicked Wings
- When you have had a bad day, what do you do to feel better?  
Buy wicked wings. Go for a walk somewhere where there is no reception. Pray.
- What's one thing on your bucket list?  
To go to Tokelau with my husband.
- Who has been the biggest inspiration in your life?  
I can't choose one. Currently Pope Francis.
- What's the most beautiful place you've ever been?  
Abel Tasman
- What was the last photo you took?  
My vacuum cleaner!
- What thing do you really wish you could buy right now?  
A new vacuum cleaner.
- What is the best or worst purchase you've ever made?  
In the 90s we owned a Ford Falcon that could seat 3 in the front. It had cookie monster blue fluffy car seat covers and owned the hill. Very Wainui and I loved it.
- Favourite programme currently watching?  
Masterchef Australia and Ozark
- If you had to flee the country, where would you choose to live?  
Nukunonu, Tokelau.



- Last Prayer Day for 2020 is on 10 October 2020, 9:30AM- 4:00PM at Pa Maria. We will be accompanied by Regina Daly.
- Please pencil in 6:30 PM, 20 November for our Christmas get-together, venue TBD.
- Our next Zoom meeting is on 12 November, 6:00-6:45. Agenda is to prepare for your Project Presentation. Please keep your mentors on the loop regarding your Project Presentations.
- Good luck to all of you who are working on the assessments of your courses from Te Kupenga. Kia kaha 😊



Readers Digest

## Happy Birthday!

Birthday blessings to **Lisa Beech** on 20 October.

## Online Resources

Article on Leadership in Cathnews

<https://cathnews.co.nz/2020/09/10/how-narcissistic-leaders-destroy-from-within/>

Online Resources- Sr Elizabeth Julian

<http://melbournecatholic.org.au/parish-resources>.

Webinars – Bridget Taumoepeau

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/3715998510466/WN\\_DtEDqbLERqehRCDr\\_g3Mzg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/3715998510466/WN_DtEDqbLERqehRCDr_g3Mzg)

Receive daily quotes from Pope Francis – Mary Ann Greaney : [Missio](#)

Facebook pages managed by Lucienne (please support)

Family Ministry <https://www.facebook.com/familyADW>

Clergy Vocation <https://www.facebook.com/wellingtonpriests.org>

***God behave like this: he does not look at the time and at the results, but at the availability: he looks at the generosity with which we put ourselves at his service... Everything is Grace. Our salvation is Grace. Our holiness is Grace. In giving us Grace, he bestows on us more than what we merit. And so, those who reason using human logic, that is, the logic of the merits acquired through one's own greatness, from being first, find themselves last... May Mary Most Holy help us to feel every day the joy and wonder of being called by God to work for him, in his field which is the world, in his vineyard which is the Church. And to have as our only recompense his love, friendship with Jesus.:***

Pope Francis ANGELUS SEPTEMBER 20, 2020



Painting by Julia Lynch (Sr M. Lawrence rsm) copied from <http://thejesusquestion.org/2015/11/06/maori-depictions-of-the-madonna-and-child>



*When he had finished eating, he said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch".*

Luke 5: 4

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