



*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

## LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) November 2022

Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand  
Journal and Newsletter for Lay Leaders and Ministers

Welcome to the November issue of LOL.

We have **Telesia Alaimoana** leading the Gospel reflection. She reflects on our personal resurrection as a way of looking at death. The month of November is the month for 'All Souls and All Saints days'. Life after death and sainthood tend to conjure up images of glowing heavens with angels flying and saints perfect like their alabaster statues in church. Their lives unachievable by the common human like us. **Neil Vaney, sm** challenges the definition of mysticism, through the lives of two well-known people, who could be called "flawed and faithful" saints, - Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day. It is easier to relate to their conflicted lives and be inspired how through the muck and mire of their journeys, God found them and transformed their lives as a gift to many. We also have **Mary-Ann Greaney**, Launch Out Graduate, sharing the charism of Nano Nagle, founder of the Presentation Sisters, an educational reformer in 18<sup>th</sup> century when Ireland was under penal laws. Nano has the same stubbornness and prophetic bent as Merton and Day, as well as an unlikely start to holiness. Then we have articles which bring us back to the present. Our own time calls out for holiness in the here and now. **Bridget Taumoepeau**, for her regular section, reminds us of the promise and challenge of the Synod. It is worth noting that not every diocese in the world is on board and the challenge of making the Church synodal would definitely need the life's work of today's saints. Finally, we have **Cecily McNeill** sharing with us a framework on helping ethnic or cultural communities reclaim their mana or their ground. This is a direct and relevant response to the findings of the Ethnic Review which I shared in the October issue.

The promise of the resurrection comes with the call to holiness. That invitation does not wait until we are perfect, or when the conditions are right. We grow in holiness as we encounter God in the ordinary, mundane and if may I add, the crazy moments of our everyday unassuming lives. Thomas, Dorothy and Nano would definitely agree.

—Maya Bernardo, Launch Out Formator and Manager

### Reflecting on *our* resurrection (Luke 20:27-38) 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

By Telesia Alaimoana  
Launch Out Candidate



Copied from <https://ourdailybread.org/article/jesus-said-i-am-the-resurrection-and-the-life/>

In the gospel, the Sadducees questioned Jesus and use the example of Levirate marriage found in the Law of Moses to challenge belief in the resurrection. In Deuteronomy 25:5-10, if a man died without producing an heir, the man's brother should marry his wife and the offspring of this union would inherit the property and continue the name of the man who died. The Sadducees raised the question based on the "seven brothers" story... "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become?"

Jesus argues from the same Law of Moses to show that there is resurrection. Using the texts from the Book of Exodus (Chapter 3) that described Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush, Jesus shows that God is the God of the living, not the dead.

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In this discourse Jesus shows the limits of our imaginations when it comes to eternal life. The Sadducees argued against resurrection because of the limits of earthly existence. They did not imagine another possibility for existence and relationship with God. Jesus proposes that the possibilities of resurrected life are beyond our imagination. He suggested that to spend time worrying about resurrected life is to miss the point. The point is eternal relationship with God is possible, for God is the God of the living.

An old Catholic belief is that we are only married or coupled once, hence the marriage vows “til death do us part”. Jesus points out that the resurrected state is a new creation where we are sharing in the divine life of God. It is different from our present life, but somehow a continuation of our personalities as moulded by our present life. In death, our human customs and culture disappear for we “become like angels.” This passage reminds us that when we pass on, we do not retain our qualities and it is a mystery what eternal life looks like.

At the doorway of death life is changed, not ended. Jesus himself uses the image of the great banquet where all our yearnings are finally fulfilled, and we become fully alive. When we fear that we have lost loved ones we must believe that they are not lost. The relationship continues. To believe in our own personal resurrection is a wonderful gift in this life. It gives meaning to all that makes up our life. It is expressed also in our prayers that we offer for the souls of all those who have gone before us, which gets great emphasis during this month of November. Spend some time communing with your loved ones who have gone before you.

I will leave you with these questions to ponder upon. Jesus was being hassled by a question from someone who denies the resurrection of the dead. How would we deal with this situation? Do we hear Jesus’ strong affirmation of eternal life? How are we moved by it?



Copied from <https://friendsofthefoxriver.org/2021/07/05/time-for-some-cleansing-and-renewal/>

*“We believe in the Risen One who conquered evil and death! Let us have the courage to “come out of ourselves” to take this joy and this light to all the places of our life! The Resurrection of Christ is our greatest certainty; he is our most precious treasure!”*

Pope Francis

## Are you excited?

By Bridget Taumoepeau  
Launch Out Mentor



*Copied from <https://www.synod.va/en/resources/communication-tools/logo.html>*

The last couple of years could be said to have been pretty dismal, with the Covid pandemic. This resulted in concern about our health and the health of our loved ones; the cancellation of lots of events; the inability to travel; the lack of face-to-face time with our family and friends and so on. But, in amongst all this we have witnessed, and/or been involved in, an exciting time in the Church - the Synodal process.

Those of you who are students of Vatican II, will know that it was considered the largest meeting in the world, and the synodal process is similarly called the largest consultation that has occurred. Both events attracted naysayers, and both had Popes who took very positive attitudes. Pope John XXIII opened the Council with '*Gaudet mater ecclesiae*' (Mother Church rejoices) and specifically mentioned that he knew there were "prophets of doom," with whom he clearly disagreed. The Holy Spirit was indeed present at VCII, which has shaped the Church in a new way from that time on. In our present time, we are aware of many critics including in the church hierarchy. As I write this, I am aware that a Cardinal has described the Synodal process as a "hostile takeover of the Church," which "We must resist."

Pope Francis knows the importance of VCII, and the work of the Holy Spirit. He is following in the Council's footsteps with the Synod on Synodality. The processes of *aggiornamento* (bringing up to date) and *ressourcement* (looking to the sources, especially in Scripture) are clearly being replicated in the Synod. It would appear that some are finding it hard to move from Councils that addressed doctrine and authority, to the idea of a Council (VCII) that looked at the Church in the world, in a pastoral sense. That is now being followed up by an invitation for all the baptised to discern and to speak with '*parrhesia*' (candidly or boldly), as Pope Francis implores us to do.

Despite concerns that there would not be much of a response (and unfortunately some dioceses have not entered into the process with any enthusiasm), 112 out of 114 Bishops conferences worldwide have submitted synopses to Rome, which have been compiled into a document to go to the Pope and back to the dioceses, before the Synod itself takes place in 2023. The Pope considers this such an important movement in the Church, deserving of much contemplation and discernment, that he has divided the Synod meeting into two parts – October 2023 and October 2024.

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## I'm so excited.

*Are you excited from page 3*



*Copied from <https://www.chariotlearning.com/get-excited-about-your-big-tests/>*

So why is this exciting? It is good to see that the work of VCII is being continued; particularly that the laity continue to be given a voice, and their knowledge and education is being recognised; that pastoral skill, not just academic theology, is important and respected; that reform is possible, and probable; that we are learning about discernment; that the Church is alive and active. Interestingly, similar themes, no doubt facilitated by Pope Francis' attitude of openness, have emerged from all different areas of the world - namely anti-clericalism, the importance of formation, and the need to expand the role of the laity, especially women.

But we all have to take part – it is not enough to think that we have participated in discernment groups and that our work is done. We must continually reflect on what we learned and what we heard from others; how we can continue to listen; how we can contribute to a dynamic and outward looking church – remembering the logo of the Synod – communion, participation, mission.

Are you excited? I hope so.

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## What is a Mystic?

By Neil Vaney, sm  
Launch Out Spiritual Director



*Copied from <https://www.learnreligions.com/mysticism-definition-4768937>*

### The Shadow of the Past

When we come across the word mystic, we often dredge up memories of stories we heard or read about when we were kids or setting out on the road to holiness. Vivid pictures come to mind: Bernini's statue of St Teresa being transfixed by the arrow of God's love; or Padre Pio's hands held out in prayer, Christ's wounds clearly evident on them.

We are easily inclined, therefore, to associate holiness with manifestations such as ecstasies, miracles and extraordinary graces in prayer. Some reflection will show

us how narrow such ideas are. The wonderful 14th-century English woman, Julian of Norwich, whose cell I was privileged to visit, said bluntly in her *Shewings*, "Visions aren't really important. Many of my fellow Christians are far closer to God than I am, despite my visions."

St John of the Cross, famed for his descriptions of the night of the senses and the night of the spirit, was adamant about this insight: to draw near to Jesus is to surrender all desire for special graces and revelations, but rather to yield totally to Jesus' oneness of mind and heart with his heavenly Father.

### Two Contemporary Mystics: Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton

Born in New York in 1897, Day came from a struggling middle-class family, not particularly religious. At ten, however, she experienced a profound moment of God's closeness that never left her.

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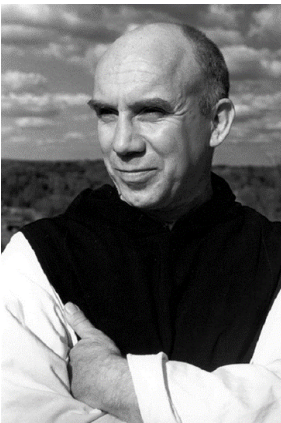


In her teenage years, however, she became increasingly moved by the poverty and despair of many exploited immigrants and people out of work. This led her to embrace socialism and communism, writing and protesting to publicise their plight. Her own life fell increasingly under the thrall of promiscuity and heavy drinking. She entered a common-law marriage with Forster Batterham, and their daughter, Tamar, was born in 1927. Despite fierce opposition, she had Tamar baptised, then realised she needed to join her. A chance meeting with an itinerant French Catholic, Peter Maurin, led to the launching of the Catholic Worker movement. The broadsheet that bore this name and the social centres and rural farms that soon followed began to make a considerable impact on the American Catholic Church. Always radical, she withstood intense opposition from fellow Catholics, both laity and bishops, because of her adamant anti-war and civil rights stands. As she grew older and her reading and her relationship with Jesus became wider and deeper, so too did her holiness. Nevertheless, her great stubbornness often led to the estrangement of friends (shades of St Paul!), and she herself admitted that she failed miserably in trying to be a good mother to Tamar.



Copied from <https://www.osvnews.com/amp/2020/03/04/documentary-gives-intimate-portrait-of-catholic-activist-dorothy-day/>

Thomas Merton (1915-68) was a wanderer and a pilgrim. Born in southern France to a New Zealand father and an American mother, the death of his parents, Ruth when he was six and Owen when he was sixteen profoundly shaped his life. After a disastrous year of study at Cambridge University, when he fathered an illegitimate child, he moved to his mother's family in New York. There he experienced a conversion to Catholicism which led him to become a Cistercian monk at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. Ever a journalist, his abbot saw his potential as a publicist for the Order and encouraged him to write his autobiographical *Seven Storey Mountain*, which to everyone's astonishment, went on to become a million-plus best seller. The trajectory of his life changed dramatically once more when he went on a trip to nearby Louisville for a passport to certify his American citizenship. He had a profound experience of his oneness with his fellow citizens and all humankind. This led him to write powerfully against the Vietnam war and racism; some of



Copied from <https://guides.library.duq.edu/thomas-merton>

these writings had to be withdrawn after adverse reactions from his Cistercian superiors and various bishops. He was allowed to attend an international seminar on monasticism and Marxism in Bangkok, where he died accidentally from an electric shock.

In many ways, Merton was a paradoxical figure. Always longing for greater solitude and allowed at last to move to a hermitage in the woods, he remained the most famous and controversial monk in the world. Vowed to silence, he poured out numerous books, corresponded internationally with world-acclaimed writers and critics, and documented his inner life in a series of intimate personal journals. Committed to celibacy, a year or two before his death, he fell in love with a nurse Margaret whom he met in the hospital, sharing a brief fling with her. Yet right till he died, it was his continuing journey into union with Jesus Christ that marked and shaped his life.

## Conclusion

What, then, is a mystic? Our own century, marked as it is by the shock of the Covid pandemic, the climate crisis, and continuing wars, has highlighted how deeply all of nature and humankind are interlinked. Against this background of one interwoven world, I think it is now possible to see what a mystic might be in our time. They are profoundly rooted in an awareness of God, seeing all creation, and every human as part of the God-given shape of this planet – and live out of this conviction. This is the vision that each of us is being invited to embrace and share with all others whose lives we touch.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- Bethlehem University Vice-Chancellor, Taranaki's own Br Peter Bray FSC, will give public talks about Palestine when he visits Aotearoa NZ early next year, but meanwhile, he is making videos for the bishops on the subject for a Kiwi audience. You can watch the first -- **Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Place; Palestinians in the Holy Land** -- on YouTube here now: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2S\\_A4kBfeU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2S_A4kBfeU). Read more about Br Peter and the video project: <https://www.catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/palestine-video1/>
- Wanting to know more about **Nano Nagle and the work of the Presentation Sisters?** Visit <https://www.presentationsistersnz.com/>
- The NZCBC released a landmark document that guides how schools are to be a place of safety and wellbeing for LBTQI + children. Read **Aroha and Diversity in Catholic Schools** <https://www.catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/diversity/>
- <https://vocationvacationz.squarespace.com/>
- Here's a good video for parish leaders "**Transforming the Parish through Communities of Practice**" by Jane Regan of Boston College <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/stm/sites/encore/main/2016/where-two.html>



Copied from <http://beamcountypriaryschool.org/online-subjects>

## UPDATES

**Pastoral Presentation Day** : 19 November 2022, 9:00am to 4:00pm at Pa Maria Spirituality Centre (78 Hobson Street, Thorndon) . Open to Launch Out Graduates and members of Parish Pastoral Council members where Launch Out Candidates serve. Please email [m.bernardo@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:m.bernardo@wn.catholic.org.nz) to register.



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## BIRTHDAYS

### November

- 10 Jude McKee
- 15 Lucienne Hensel
- 23 Barbara Rowley

## Nano Nagle— A thoroughly modern leader

By Mary-Ann Greaney

Launch Out Graduate

International Animator,

Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary



*Copied from <https://www.ceist.ie/resource/presentation-day-nano-nagle/>*

When Nano Nagle founded the Presentation Sisters in Ireland in 1775, her life was dominated by English penal laws aimed at destroying Irish Catholic identity in land ownership, civic position, culture, and religion.

The law forbade, among other things, “popish nunneries,” Catholics were not allowed to teach, attend school, or go overseas for education. Many bishops, priests, and religious were exiled. The law was so draconian government officials could say “the law did not exist for an Irish Catholic nor did the law presume an Irish Catholic to exist”. Penalties included heavy fines, transportation, imprisonment, and death.

Her congregation was the first founded essentially for education and the first native foundation of religious women in Ireland for more than 1200 years since the time of St Brigid (451-525). She was 32 when she started her schools, but it was not until 25

years later that she founded her order. Most of Nano’s ministry was undertaken as a lay woman with just the last nine years as a religious.

Some may find it puzzling that an 18th-century woman would be of interest in today’s world. Without a doubt Nano would have been extremely comfortable in the Archdiocese of Wellington today and would have supported the lay pastoral leader model and may well have applied to become one.

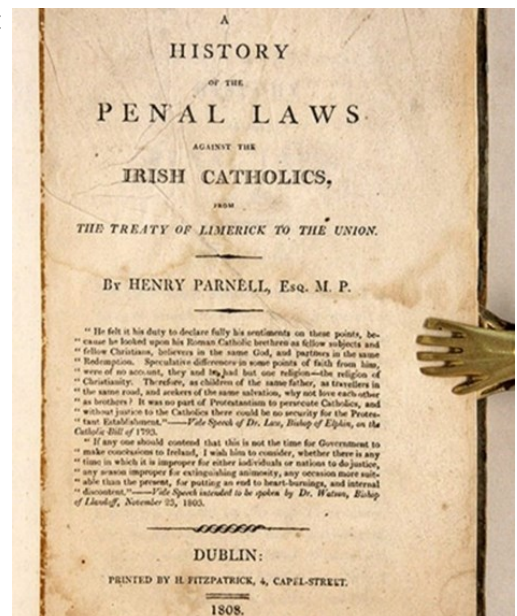
This overview on Nano is not intended to cover **WHAT** she achieved, though it was significant in revolutionizing Catholic education in most of the world and her impact is still being felt in the 21st century.

As the daughter of a wealthy landed merchant, Nano was expected to marry well and take her place in Irish society, and she had many opportunities. Both parents were connected to Irish aristocracy in Ireland and France. After receiving an education at home and overseas, Nano joined other family members in Paris where she enjoyed an active social life centred round the court of Louis XV. Returning to Ireland, in her late 20s, she was confronted with the effects of the penal code: poverty, ignorance, hopelessness, oppression and religious superstition of the majority of Irish Catholics. A woman who enjoyed significant wealth and privilege, Nano left it all behind and poured her energy and money into the most disadvantaged of her time.

What is most significant for leaders today, lay and ordained, is **HOW** Nano achieved what she did in such a hostile environment. We could view Nano’s ‘how’ as a blueprint for success. You will recognize that

Nano’s response to the world around her was remarkably like the way we are called to minister in our local Church.

Nano was primarily a **woman of prayer**. She was faithful to her prayer time and everything she did came from her relationship with God. She was very much attuned to the voice of God and **responded to the cry of the poor**.



*Copied from <https://hibernianmetropolis.humspace.ucla.edu/travel-diary/penal-laws-against-irish-catholics/>*

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Copied from <http://internationalpresentationassociation.org/nano-nagle/>

Nano was born more than 170 years before the Church's first social encyclical (*Rerum Novarum* 1890) was written and certainly before the term Catholic Social Teaching (CST) was ever used. Those who study her life know early on that she had the principles of CST firmly ingrained in her being before they were ever written. We see it in the dignity and respect shown to everyone she met; how she treated the most vulnerable; how she made it possible for people to participate in decisions that affected their lives; the power of her simple presence; and the list goes on.

**Succession planning** is another term that would not have been part of Nano's vocabulary. For her work to continue after her death, Nano founded The Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Perhaps this step has been the most significant for, had she not taken it, the great ministry she started might have died with her.

Nano **did not conform to the norms of her day** but did what she believed was just and would improve people's lives. In the 18th century education for girls focused on the arts of a companion to her husband – music, painting, and dancing. Nano's approach to education was holistic: all children learnt their catechism and were prepared for the sacraments; they learned how to read and write, to keep accounts, to sew – which could give them an income. Education was the key to enabling the poor to break the cycle of poverty, for people to help themselves, and to raise their status in society.

Nano sometimes had difficulty obtaining support from the hierarchy for her ventures and was **prepared to challenge Church and civil authority**. The most serious conflict was when her friend and collaborator, Father Moylan, threatened to destroy the convent she was building. After Nano suggested she would move the sisters out of Cork to a more welcoming diocese, he allowed her to continue and was fully supportive. Within a year of being made Bishop of Kerry, Francis Moylan was asking Nano for some of her nuns to minister in education in his diocese.

**Collaborating and networking** with others are hallmarks of Nano's ministry. This way of working meant she had a larger pool of wisdom than relying on herself alone. Those Nano ministered with could moderate each other and the workload was shared so stress levels were reduced. They could work to each-other's strengths building on the life-giving insights and values of the past. So much more was possible.

In this paper you have been given just a glimpse of a remarkable woman. When I formally ministered in the archdiocese, Nano was my constant reference point. Her missionary blueprint neatly dovetailed with all our synod outcomes and the direction Cardinal John Dew, and Cardinal Tom Williams before him lead us in. I was delighted when in 2003 Nano was named the "greatest Irish person of all time". A wonderful role model for me – Nano, a thoroughly modern leader.



This picture was taken on 21 Feb 2021 during the 70th anniversary celebration of the Presentation Sisters' arrival in NZ in 1951. In the photo from the left – Ruth Coleman, Veronica Casey, Noreen McGrath, Regina Daly, Josie Conlon (Mary's sister), Fran Nicolle and Mary Tait.

**Note:** Among the Presentation Sisters, we are most familiar with is Regina Daly who is spiritual director based in the Hutt. Rule Coleman used to be the Chair of the ADW Ecology Justice and Peace Desk. Veronica Casey is the current NZCBC Senior Prison Chaplain. Noreen McGrath is a spiritual director based in Mosgiel and used to be the RE Educator for ADW and Dunedin. Fran Nicolle is involved in various community ministries. Retired sisters are Mary Tait and Pauline Maloney.





*Copied from <https://www.taiuru.maori.nz/branding/>*

This framework is originally devised for Māori women's groups by Sister Makareta Tawaroa rsj of Whanganui who worked in the 1980s and 1990s with a number of women on the protection of whenua, awa, tangata and Te Ao Māori.

For Māori it is vital to look at the strengths the culture has gained through a growing awareness of the need for self-determination, for greater control over resources that originated with Māori. If you are not Māori, how could you adapt this programme for a different group, a group of Samoan or Palagi, perhaps? Follow the different steps in the programme with a group that is close to you and think about what changes you might make. One of the strengths of this method of social analysis is its adaptability.

## **Who we are—Culture Tree**

The culture tree helps to deepen an understanding of culture. Draw a tree with branches. These become elements of culture for example:

- People to people – language, education, housing, ceremonies, rituals, conflict, war, song, dance, art leisure
- People to the Gods – the supernatural, spiritual, religion, life, and death, meaning of life
- People to the environment – land, forest, sea, technology, cooking, housing, clothing.

Then comes the fruit or values of the culture. For example:

- Externals such as carving, song, dance, art
- Institutions of the culture – marae, rituals, protocols
- Values of the culture – whanau, attitude to land, spirituality, Te Reo.

Having grown the culture tree to this extent, it is important to look at the pressures both outside and in. We ask what are some of the pressures outside our own culture that work against our vision? These might include the invasion of foreign values, cut-throat, non-caring behaviour. Consider the influence of American fast-food institutions such as McDonalds and the pervasiveness of the red Coca-Cola brand. How strong is this influence? Is it beneficial for your own culture? If not, why not? Put roots under the tree:

- Who decides our needs, values, and understandings?
- What are some of the pressures from within our own culture that are working against our vision?
- What elements hinder our progress? Can we live in alternative ways based on earth-sustaining, people-centred values that come from our own culture? How can we create greater spaces for ourselves in education, health production, based on our spirituality to resist foreign pressures?

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Copied from <https://training-conditioning.com/news/what-the-science-says-about-grounding-its-benefits/>

### What do we stand for?

Brainstorm a list of key human values of our culture that benefit our people. List the ways people have resisted invading cultures. Reclaim our own history by naming the heroines/heroes that have resisted invading values. How did our people survive? Look at other models, such as the indigenous model of production alongside the capitalist economic model or other educational models. Contrast the two: one for need, the other for profit. Look at the values of the two models. Identify the system that carries the capitalist values (education, media, songs, the people-centred values). How have our people adapted traditional values from pre-European times?

### Effects of colonisation

Look at colonisation and its effects on our own tupuna during their lifetime. Now look at Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Three periods of underdevelopment/development: (a) acceptance 1840-1847; (b) rejection 1847-1975; (c) redefinition 1975– present. Sovereignty/rangatiratanga issues are now on the national agenda through iwi claims. How are different iwi expressing their rangatiratanga?

For further insights read James Belich *Paradise Reforged* (2002) and his earlier work *Making Peoples* (1996).

### Visioning the future

The final step in this programme is to look at the future and generate a vision. In a brainstorm exercise, write down what is important for the new world, dreams, goals, hopes, aspirations, i.e., skills, attitudes, understandings, insights. What Māori (Samoan/Palagi) values will assist us to live in a new and challenging environment? Name them. What kind of Aotearoa do you want for your mokopuna, short-term, mid-term, long-term? Classify under one of four headings: economic, political, socio/cultural, religious. Write a vision statement in about fifty words. Be specific and concrete.

### Strategies for action

Those who suffer have the most energy for change. An important principle of self-determination is that poor people do things for themselves, are active participants in their own liberation/self-determination. In groups, brainstorm:

- What will we do? Short-term, mid-term, long-term?
- What issues will we respond to? Classify under economic, political, socio/cultural, religious
- How can we mobilise our people, form groups, raise awareness, build support networks?
- How will we form alliances, gain support from others who are working for change?
- How will we evaluate our work? What are we doing to keep ourselves honest?
- Are we taking steps to *decolonise* ourselves? Or do we still insist on being *comfortable* in our own oppression?

Express these findings in some way – write up, act out, compose song, artwork etc. What do we really want?

Which suits the new Māori society best?

- Adaptation : more of the same
- Evolution : widening horizons
- Devolution: giving away, letting go
- Revolution : creating something totally new

Finally, summarise these actions. The usual steps shared by those who go through this workshop are consultation, negotiations, decision-making, support, forming alliances, restructuring, reclaiming, and evaluating.