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## Stepping into Maori Spirituality





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Recently the Catholic Church brought back the remains of Bishop Pompallier to Aotearoa-New Zealand. It could have been a simple act to disinter the remains of the Bishop, fly him back, and bury him without much ado. Maori could not accept that approach. For our purposes the event provides an insight into Maori Spirituality. For Maori, this was a *kaupapa* (project) of great spiritual significance that had to be done correctly. Maori chose to travel to Italy and France, to properly address and acknowledge, first the remains of Bishop Pompallier and then his spiritual links with God, with his family, with his country and place of birth, his place of interment, and with the Church of France. Only then could they bring him back.

The *Hikoi* (pilgrim) Group then escorted the remains of Bishop Pompallier throughout Aotearoa-New Zealand travelling from *marae* to *marae*, from town to town. For them, encounter and relationships were of great importance. The escorting group would entrust the remains of Bishop Pompallier to the *hunga kainga* (home people) in each place. Then followed the need to encounter and re-kindle relationships: the relationships their *tupuna* had with Pompallier. There was need too to tell the stories of what had happened since then. They renewed their present relationship with God, with one another, the Church, and with the *Hikoi* group who likewise would tell the stories of journey, and the peoples whom they – and Pompallier – had encountered.

The *Hikoi* was an example of Maori spirituality in action. Its dynamics show how Maori, from a position of wholeness, dignity and strength, encounter God and all people at the same time acknowledging fully each one's links with their own place. Underlying this spirituality is the concept of *tapu*. *Tapu* has many meanings: being, dignity, sacredness, restrictions. These meanings will unfold in what follows. Let us begin with a reflection on *tapu* in relation to *Atua* (God).

#### *Te Tapu i Te Atua and Te Tapu o Te Atua*

God (*Atua*) has and is God's own *tapu*: it is part of God's very being to exist. We call this original being and self-possession of God, *te tapu i te Atua*. But God decided not to be alone. God decided to be-in-relationship, to create our universe and our world, and to set the being of *Atua* in relationship with every aspect of this created reality. We call God's being-in-relationship *te tapu o te Atua*. For Maori, from God's being-in-relationship, there flows forth in love, a spiritual power (*mana*) which

creates all non-divine reality, and sets it up in relationship to God's being. Thus God's twofold form of *tapu* and God's *mana* are the source of all things for Maori, and for the relatedness of all things.

On the *marae* we regularly hear in the opening speeches the phrase, "*Ko te Atua te matapuna o nga mea katoa.*" (God is the source of all things). Another phrase often used is "*Ko te Atua te timatanga me te whakaotinga o nga mea katoa.*" (God is the beginning and the end of all things). In these phrases, Maori take care to acknowledge both *te tapu i te Atua* and *te tapu o te Atua*. The former addresses God's very being (*te Atua*); the latter parts acknowledge God's being-in-relationship (*te matapuna, te timatanga, te whakaotinga o nga mea katoa*).

A similar concern both for being and for being-in relationship is shown in regard to *tangata* (people). Let us look at both of these aspects.

#### Te Tapu i Te Tangata

If God is the source and object of Maori spirituality, then *tangata* (people) are the object of God's love and creative outpouring of *mana*. God loved us enough to create us in our intrinsic being, for ourselves alone. This is *Te tapu i te tangata*. And so we address, acknowledge, enhance and restore *tangata* firstly because they exist. They are constituted by their *ira tangata* (the human life principle). They are living, breathing creatures with life (*mauri-ora*) and *hau-ora* (health). They are body (*tinana*) but also they are spirit (*wairua*). They have mind and heart, and emotions (*hinengaro*). The totality of all this is their *tapu*. This care for the totality of the human person in him/herself is central to Maori spirituality. Our encounters must recognise this, and therefore address and enhance *te tapu i te tangata*. The point of the various stages of the *powhiri* (welcoming ritual), whether it be *karanga, mihi* or *manaaki* is to address the very existence of *manuhiri*, to acknowledge them as they are.

#### Te Tapu o Te Tangata

These same people are endowed with sacredness, dignity and worth not only by what is intrinsic to them, but also by their relationships. This is called *te tapu o te tangata*, and is the *tapu* which people enjoy because of their relationships or links. Maori consider themselves to be socially and spiritually related to God, one another, and to their land. Each of these connections gives them a sacredness, dignity and worth which must be

acknowledged if we are to reverence the whole person. To return to our *Hikoi* example, great care was taken to address and acknowledge the many connections that constitute *te tapu o Pihopa Pomaparie* - Bishop Pompallier in his totality. His family in France was acknowledged and their permission received to bring him home. Then the *Hikoi* brought his remains to every place he himself had visited. Each place and its people were acknowledged and Pompallier's *tapu* in their regard acknowledged. In fact, the *tapu* of each was enhanced by the re-kindling of the relationship. There are many stories of new life and growth following his visit.

Finally, his remains were brought to Hokianga, where he had first begun his mission. *Te tapu o te Iwi o Hokianga* (the *tapu* of the whole people of Hokianga) was enhanced by his return, and likewise Pompallier's *tapu* was fully addressed and enhanced by the whole event of the *Hikoi* and by his re-interment in Motuti. In each and every case, the important thing was to acknowledge the total person in all their relationships or links.

This example leads us to understand better another important aspect of Maori spirituality, the importance of *whanaungatanga* (family relationships).

#### The Spiritual Importance of Whanaungatanga

*Whanaungatanga* is the complex totality of blood links and kinship relationships that constitute the person. Dame Whina Cooper used to say that when we are born, we are born into *whanaungatanga*. Even in the womb, as well as being daughter or son, we are also and already brother or sister, nephew or niece, granddaughter or grandson.

*Whanaungatanga* thus holds the key to the multi-faceted identity we inherit from our *tupuna* (our many ancestors) and *matua* (parents). Let us look at the riches they bring to us. From our parents we share in two *Heke Tika Lines*, (direct lines of descent), one from each of them. From our grandparents we share in four *Heke Tika Lines*. From our great grandparents we share in eight. The further we go back in *whakapapa* the more lines we share in and the richer is our identity. Sharing the same surname or even the first name of our parents and grandparents also contributes to our identity. The *karanga* (name) relationship brings in a whole number of other people who are specifically related to us through a common *tupuna*.

Being connected in *whanaungatanga* to our *matua* and *tupuna* also connects us to their spiritual *taonga* (treasures) of *te reo* (language), *tikanga*

(culture), *matauranga* (knowledge), and *tapu* (sacredness) and *mana* (spiritual power and authority).

Not only are we enriched, as it were, by vertical relationships with those born before us, but there are other relationships among those of the present generation who contribute to our identity. On our present generational level there are *tuakana-teina* (brother-sister) relationships within our family, and a wide range of *karanga* relationships which we enjoy with those who are related to us through a common *tupuna* (for example, our cousins).

For Maori, *te whakapapa o te tangata* (the genealogy of the human race) and therefore the lines of *whanaungatanga* begin with *Io-Matua-kore*, the parentless one. *Io-Matua-kore* is the source of all *whanaungatanga* and therefore the basis for the spiritual importance of *whanaungatanga*. Ultimately, we all have dignity and worth because our *whanaungatanga* links us to God.

Some examples may help explain the importance of *te tapu o te tangata* in terms of *whanaungatanga* links. First, on the marae, the *kaikaranga* will call upon their personal knowledge to acknowledge the *whakapapa* links of the *manuhiri*, as well as all other links. Only then will the visitors feel fully acknowledged and welcomed.

A second example. Recently a prison inmate greeted me as I walked along the corridor. When I asked him who he was he informed he was the grandnephew of a particular old lady from Hokianga. It was easy to greet him with a *hongi* (touch of the nose) because of his relationship with the old lady I knew. He was able to call on her to establish who he was.

When I advise a young person seeking their identity, I advise them first to seek out and establish a relationship with those of their present generational level, and then to go back to previous generations. If they do not begin with the present, it can become a mere academic exercise. However, if they establish a relationship with *whanau* of the present generational level they will discover the richness of their identity. There are stories to tell, and there are people of every generational level who can help them discover the full riches of who they are.

In conclusion to this section, Maori view people, not only for what they are as in *te tapu i te tangata* but also for who they are as in *te tapu o te tangata*. The following Maori proverb expresses it well:

*Hu tia te rito o te harakeke*  
*Kei hea te komako, e ko?*  
*Mau e ui mai*  
*He aha te mea nui o tenei ao?*  
*Maku e kii atu*  
*He tangata, he tangata, he tangata!*

*Pluck out the centre of the flax*  
*Where will we find the Bellbird?*  
*You may ask:*  
*What is the greatest thing in this world?*  
*I will answer,*  
*It is people, it is people, it is people!*

We now turn to the third and final aspect of *tapu*, which completes the relationships for Maori.

### *Te Tapu i te Whenua and Te Tapu o te Whenua*

*Whenua* is the land on which we stand, and everything that is part of the land. *Whenua* also has its place in Maori spirituality. A right relationship with the land will acknowledge the land in its own right. This is *te tapu i te whenua*. On the marae, a speaker may address the land as follows: *Tēna koe e te papawhenua e takoto nei*. (We greet the land upon which we stand). Ecological wellbeing is part of *te tapu i te whenua*.

Secondly, we also need to acknowledge the land in all its relationships. This is *te tapu o te whenua*. One primary relationship is that of *Iwi* with a particular *rohe whenua* (territory). An example would be *te tapu o te maunga o Taranaki* (the *tapu* of the Mountain of Taranaki) is acknowledged in its relationship with the *Iwi* of Taranaki. And on the other hand, a person from there would identify him - or herself with the words, *Ko te maunga o Taranaki tenei e tu nei* (This is the mountain of Taranaki who stands before you. I am Taranaki).

### *Tapu Restrictions*

We now turn to examine one implication of acknowledging *Tapu*. It is that of *Tapu* restrictions. These flow from the existence and all relationships (*te tapu i* and *te tapu o*) of *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*.

*Tapu* Restrictions have a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, they control access – generally by setting a restriction in place – to *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*, thereby honouring their *tapu* and their *mana*. On the other hand, they also honour by forbidding or prohibiting violation. When *tapu* has been rightly addressed and acknowledged then there is no fear of violation. *Tapu* Restrictions are then lifted to allow access. The lifting of the restrictions creates a state of freedom whereby encounter can occur, and *te tapu i* and *te tapu o* in relation to *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua* can be acknowledged, respected and enhanced. It is a positive state of being called *noa*.

In this way, Maori people take great care to acknowledge *tapu*, be it that of God, persons, or land, and take equally great care to approach each of these with sensitivity, reverence, and without violation. The dynamics of every encounter must be to address and enhance *tapu* so that the *tapu* restrictions can be lifted.

When some people approach a *marae*, for example, they are aware of the *tapu* restrictions in place with regard to that *marae*. They are not free to enter. Rather, there are rituals to be played out and roles exercised in the *powhiri* (welcome) in such a way that the *tapu* of the hosts (*tangata whenua*) and of the visitors (*manuhiri*) is acknowledged, addressed, and enhanced. Through the dynamics of this encounter, *tapu* restrictions are gradually lifted, until the visitors are greeted with the *hongi*, and are fed at the hosts' table. They are then *hunga kainga*, and have the freedom of the *marae*.

On the other hand, failure to acknowledge or address or enhance *tapu* results in violation of *tapu* and *mana*. Violation occurs because the *tapu* restrictions surrounding and therefore protecting *te tapu i* and *te tapu o* of either hosts or visitors were ignored or trampled on. Home or *marae* invasion occurs when people ignore or trample on *tapu* restrictions that temporarily forbid access to them. People must not be left in a restricted state, especially when there is no fear of violation.

It is obvious that there are principles which must be in place if one is properly to address *tapu*. It is to these that we now turn.

### The Principles for Addressing *Tapu* (and Exercising *Mana*)

*Ma wai ra e taurima*

*Te marae e waho nei?*

*Me te Tika, ma te Pono,  
me te Aroha e.*

*Who will be the guardians of the marae?  
The guardians will be Tika, and Pono and Aroha*

The above *waiata* lists three principles that will safeguard the life and welfare of the *marae* and of all life. *Tika*, *Pono* and *Aroha* are the major principles in addressing *tapu* and for exercising *mana* in every life situation, including prayer. Let us look at each one in turn.

### *Tika*

*Tika* consists, in the first place, in the right ordering of relationships among *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*; secondly, in the right exercise of *mana*; and thirdly, in responses of people that are right, proper, fitting and worthy of *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*. *Tika* seeks to address, acknowledge, respect and enhance what exists, and everything about their existence including their relationships. It is therefore a fundamental principle in our encounters with people, with *whenua* and with *Atua*. We are failing to act with *tika* when we fail to acknowledge or when we ignore *Atua*, or people, or *whenua*, and when we fail to acknowledge them in their relationships. It also means that our responses are not worthy of them, and not worthy of ourselves. These failures constitute violation.

Maori always consider it *tika* to begin a *hui* or meeting with a *karakia* in order to acknowledge the existence of *Atua*, *te kaihanga me te kaihomai i nga mea katoa* (the creator and giver of all things). Likewise, it is common practice for speakers to acknowledge the dead in their opening speech with the phrase: *ko te mea tika me mihi ki nga mate o te wa* (it is right that we acknowledge the dead). It is *tika* to acknowledge not just the dead but also the relationship of the dead with the living, who may be present, and with that particular place where a *tangi* may have occurred. To avoid violation by omission the speakers will be inclusive in their *mihi* by acknowledging all the dead (*nga mate o te wa*), all those present (*nga hau e wha* – the four winds), and the *whenua* (*te marae e takoto nei* – the *marae* on which we stand).

On its own *tika* cannot achieve all that is right, proper, fitting and worthy of *tapu*. *Tika* needs *pono* and *aroa*. We will make the connection when dealing with *pono* and with *aroa*.

### Pono

*Pono* is the principle that seeks to reveal reality as it truly is. To that extent *pono* is truth. *Pono marika* is a commonly used phrase meaning 'true indeed'. "*Pono marika, kua tae mai nga manuhiri.*" (True indeed, the visitors have arrived). Great efforts are always made to verify the truth. *Hunga kainga* will send a scout to the gate to find out if they are the expected visitors or not. When the reality has been verified then there is freedom to proceed with the *karanga* to the *manuhiri*.

*Pono* also means integrity. *Te tangata pono* is the person who shows integrity between what he or she says and their actions. It is a requirement of *pono* that there is one reality between the situation that is and the situation that ought to be. If we say it is *tika* to welcome *manuhiri* to the *marae* then it is a matter of being *pono* to be at the *marae* in time to do the *powhiri*. *Kaupapa* (protocols) such as Policies, Mission Statements and Charters may well be based on *tika* but if they are not implemented then there is a failure to exercise *pono*. The lack of *pono* erodes and eventually destroys integrity of relationship, and that is not *tika*. There are always victims where integrity is lacking. Here, *pono* is in support of *tika*. We need to have integrity towards what is *tika*. That requires *manawanui* (steadfastness and consistency). Paul says to the Thessalonians, "Never grow tired of doing what is right" (2 Thessalonians 3:13).

*Pono* is essential in striving for the goal of addressing *tapu*, and restoring *tapu* because it focuses on reality, truth and integrity. The one who fails to exercise *pono* is a *hianga* (a humbug), and a *teka* (a liar).

### Aroha

*Aroha* is the principle of relationship between *Atua* and *tangata*, on the one hand, and between *tangata* with *Atua* or with other *tangata*, on the other. It expresses itself in empathy, compassion or joy. *Aroha* is sourced in *Atua* and is directed towards *te tapu i te tangata*. *Te aroha o te tangata* flows from *te tapu i te tangata* and is directed towards both *te tapu i te Atua* and *te tapu i te tangata*. The greater *te tapu i te tangata*, the greater is the ability of *tangata* to have and exercise *aroa*, or to be the object of *aroa*. A person who enjoys wellbeing is a person happy to share the joy of *aroa*. That person is also more likely to be compassionate towards others in their sufferings. On the other hand, the person who is diminished in any way finds it difficult to express the fullness of joyful *aroa*.

*Aroha* needs *tika*. Our *aroa* may be misguided and misplaced if it is not directed according to *tika*. *Tika* requires that the expression of *aroa* is right, proper, fitting and worthy. The parent who claims to have *aroa* but spoils the child to the extent that the child will not accept correction has failed to be *tika* in *aroa*. *Aroa* also needs to be *pono* if it is to be exercised with integrity and consistency.

Without the empathy, compassion and joy that *aroa* can bring, it will be humanly impossible to enter, maintain or resolve encounters with people, with *whenua* and, indeed, with *Atua* guided only by the principle of *tika*.

Thus far we have considered the concept of *tapu* to be fundamental in the *kaupapa* of Maori spirituality. But where there is *tapu* there is *mana*. Let us now reflect on the topic of *mana*.

### Mana, Spiritual Power and Authority

Another concept of central importance to Maori and their spirituality is the exercise and acknowledgement of *Mana*. *Mana* is spiritual power and authority. It is inextricably linked with the *tapu* of the one who exercises *mana*. That is the meaning of the phrase 'where there is *tapu* there is *mana*'. Where there is *te tapu i te Atua* there is *te mana i te Atua*; or where there is *te tapu o te tangata* there is *te mana o te tangata*.

The spiritual importance of this essential link is that when *tapu* is acknowledged, enhanced and restored so also is *mana*. When *tapu* is ignored and diminished *mana* is blocked and is no longer effective for action. When *mana* is ignored so also is *tapu*. The source of *mana* is *tapu*. *Te tapu i te Atua* is the source and highest form of all *mana*. *Tangata* and *whenua* can share in *te mana o te Atua* by virtue of sharing in *te tapu o te Atua*. *Mana* is imparted to *tangata* and *whenua* because of the relationship with *Atua*.

The purpose of *mana* is to achieve the goal of addressing, acknowledging, enhancing and restoring *tapu*. The consequence is a greater *mana* for achieving the goals of life. *Mana* is not to be sought for its own sake. We all need *mana* in order to achieve goals that are beneficial to others and ourselves.

Just as *tika*, *pono* and *aroa* are the principles for addressing *tapu* they are the same principles for the exercise of *mana*. *Mana* must be exercised with *tika* to create, maintain and restore right relationships. There is need for

*pono* to ensure that *mana* is exercised with integrity and consistency. *Aroha* allows for empathy, compassion and joy in the rightful exercise of *mana*. *Hunga kainga* have the claim in *tika* to exercise their *mana* when they decide who the speakers will be on their *marae*. At the same time they can exercise *aroa* and share their *mana* to invite others to speak. That is called an exercise in *mana tuku* (*mana* which they *tuku* or share with others). On the other hand, a speaker who does not have the requisite *mana* (either the *mana* of the *hunga kainga* or spiritual *mana*) to speak, brings forth empty words and will find no response. The policeman has *tika* on his side when he locks up a suspected criminal in the cell. It is a matter of *tika* that he performs his duty. It is a matter of *aroa* that he executes it with empathy or compassion.

Thus far we have been considering mostly the positive side of Maori spirituality. But how do we deal with the negative aspects? We now turn to this question which has already been hinted at in the word, violation.

#### Violation, *Tu kino*, *Takahi i te Tapu*, *Takahi i te Mana*

Maori often use the phrase *te takahi i te tapu* (the trampling of *tapu*) when they speak of violation. Another word often used is *Tu kino* (treat badly or abuse). One of the sad realities in life is that people are knowingly or unknowingly violated on a regular basis. We can often violate people in our encounters even though we may have the best will in the world. In terms of Maori spirituality, perpetrators violate the intrinsic being (*te tapu i tangata*) of the individual victim. But they also violate the victim in all his/her links (*te tapu o te tangata*). The act of violation weakens or severs the relationship of the victim. It violates the sources of those links viz. *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*. When one violates the child one also violates the parents. When one violates people one violates the God who created and redeemed them. The recent violence in Bethlehem can be seen to be an act of violation of *whenua* that is *tapu* in its links with Jesus.

The effect of violation is the diminishment of *tapu*, of the wellbeing of *tangata* or of *whenua*. Physical violation of *te tangata* also affects the *wairua* (the spiritual), and the emotional wellbeing *o te tangata*. But violation of *tapu* does not affect just the obvious victim or his/her *whanau*. It also diminishes the perpetrator and the perpetrator's *whanau* and friends in the same way. Symptoms indicating diminishment of wellbeing of victim include some or all of these - the lack of order, peace, joy, love and *mana*. More often than not the sign of violation is the lack of *mana* of victim or

victims to achieve their goals. For this reason violation is also called *te takahi i te mana* (the trampling of *mana*). In Maori terms, sin is always violation (*takahi*) of *tapu* and *mana*.

#### The State of Negative *Noa*

The act of violation does not just diminish the *tapu* of victim, perpetrator and their relationships, it also disempowers them because violation blocks and renders *mana* ineffective. All are placed in the state of negative *noa*, the state of diminished *tapu* and weakened *mana*. For example, when a person knows he or she has violated, and experiences that their *tapu* and *mana* are diminished, they decline to play the roles that they should on the *marae*. Others can then perceive their state of negative *noa*. That is the first sign. On the other hand, someone who is a victim of violation can often also be recognized, because they too declined to play roles on the *marae* - roles that they may have comfortably fulfilled in times past. Other signs may also be discerned. The violated ones do not just suffer from lack of wellbeing and the loss of order, peace, joy and love. They also lack outreach, which is the exercise of *mana*. In their personal lives, they are not able to achieve their goals. Left to themselves they do not have the *mana* to free themselves from that state of *noa*. This negative *noa* can disempower and hold in a diminished state whole families down the generations. *Tika* and *pono* then require the exercise of *mana* and *aroa* from those who perceive this state of negative *noa*. The greatest tragedy we could ever do is to place or leave other people and ourselves in this state of *noa*. Care must be taken not to violate further, however, and the appropriate role-players should be sought.

At times, people in the state of *noa* cannot even imagine goals, let alone have the *mana* to achieve them. As a consequence of diminishment of *tapu* and *mana*, *tapu* restrictions are no longer effective in protecting them from further violation. They become even more vulnerable to violation.

#### *Hohourongo*, Restoration through Reconciliation

*Hohourongo* is the principle and process of restoring *tapu* and *mana* through reconciliation, facilitated by role players (*kaiwhakakapi-tu ranga*) with *mana* to initiate (*kokiri*), to support (*tautoko*) or to issue challenges (*whakatara*) to ensure that *hohourongo* is achieved. We have already seen one example above.

*Tika* is an integral part of the principle and process of *hohourongo*. It is not *tika* to leave people in the state of negative *noa*. It is *tika* that all are made whole again. *Pono* reveals the reality and truth of the violation and the need for *hohourongo*. *Pono* is also essential to the monitoring process so that there is integrity in the resolutions made during *hohourongo*. *Aroha* is also essential. Unless there is empathy, and unless there is some form of compassion towards those who suffer the effects of violation, there can be no healing. Down the track, *arohe* may find its expression of joy in relationship restored.

An example may make this clear. There was a case of serious violation of a member of one community by a member of another. A third party had to be brought in as a role-player to bring about reconciliation because neither the perpetrator nor the victim in their diminished state had the *mana* to do so. The role of the third party was to identify the sad effect of *noa* on both persons and on both communities, and to enable them to see the urgent need for *hohourongo*. Deep and sincere *hohourongo* did take place, thanks to those who exercised their roles. Both persons and their communities then were able to celebrate being free from their state of negative *noa* and being restored to a state of wholeness, and renewed relationships.

I would like to highlight two significant applications of the process of *hohourongo*. The first is that of restorative justice. For Maori, violation affects not just the individual victim and the individual perpetrator, but also their respective *whanau*, and diminishes the *mana* of each. It follows that true *hohourongo* must always take place in a context of bringing together all those who have been damaged, together with the appropriate role-players, who have the *mana* and *arohe* to guide them through to a just conclusion, one that is also filled with *arohe* for all concerned.

A second application or challenge would be that of the sacrament of Reconciliation, which at present seems to lie largely outside of the entire dynamics of this process, so essential to Maori spirituality. How can we find ways of renewing this sacrament, so that it will address the spiritual needs of Maori in an appropriate way? It has been known for processes of *hohourongo* on the *marae* to be concluded with sacramental absolution by a priest.

### Ritual

This leads me to offer some thoughts and challenges concerning Maori experience of Sacramental ritual moments. The ideal is that Word and

Sacrament come together in a Maori way; that the moments of Baptism, of Eucharist, of Marriage or Ordination, celebrated in the context of *Karakia*, *Waiata* and *Wairua*, become truly expressive of who Maori are and in their links with *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*.

The fact remains, however, that often Maori experience these moments as alienating and not truly theirs. We need to work at ensuring that Maori develop their own forms of ritual appropriate both to themselves in the first place, and to the Church. As an example, the use of *te reo* (Maori language) in Church rituals is an excellent principle but *te reo* needs to be used with imagery and expressions that make Church rituals culturally relevant. All these elements should come together for Maori in spiritual relationships, where respect for the sacramental connectedness of each person with God, with each other, and the created universe will safeguard from violation, enhance freedom and *mana*. But it is also here that sacramental celebrations can violate and introduce all sorts of negative *noa* into the dynamics of the person and his or her relationships.

This is also why it is so important for Maori, who reach out to the Church for the baptism of their children, to first be acknowledged in their links, and in their being, before any conditions for baptism be laid down. After that has been done, and the *tapu* restrictions have been lifted, permission is given for some honest talking about the connectedness of themselves and their children with their *whanau*, with their spiritual *whanau*, the Church, with *Atua*, and indeed with their own land and history. Sacraments celebrated without this acknowledgement can contribute to further violation, whereas when they are celebrated in full acknowledgement of who this person and this *whanau* is, the way is open for their *mana* to be restored, and for them to be active members of their Church.

### Te Wa, Moments in the Journey of Life

A final aspect of Maori Spirituality is the concept of *Te Wa*. *Te Wa* is a moment in the lives of people, marking stages in their journey of life when their *tapu* was addressed, enhanced and restored, or they addressed, enhanced and restored the *tapu* of others. Once one has completed one stage with one's *tapu* thus honoured, one has the *mana* to move onto the stage in life that lies ahead. If one tries to by-pass the challenge of a particular stage, one will not have the *mana* for the next stage and one will have to return to address the missed opportunity.

This is true not only of individuals on their life's journey, but of groups and social organizations. Many such groups find their way ahead blocked, because they have not addressed and completed earlier stages in their development. *Te Wa* would tell them that they need to go back and find out what first needs to be done before they can move on to the stage that they thought they were at. An example might be in the timely exercise of *hohourongo*. Had people not reconciled the day before, celebrations on the day after would not have been successful. The stage had to be gone through at the appropriate time, in order that people could be free to celebrate.

Let us recall the event of the *hikoi* and the return of the remains of Bishop Pompallier as an example of *Te Wa* and its stages. One can correctly and confidently say that the interment in Hokianga was an awe-inspiring moment of *Te Wa*. It marked a final stage in the faith journey of the Catholic people of Aotearoa-New Zealand and especially of the Hokianga people. *Te tapu o nga tangata katoa* (of all people) was enhanced and restored in their contact with the physical remains of Bishop Pompallier and in the establishing of new relationships as well as the rekindling of past relationships between him, the land and their ancestors. *Tapu* was enhanced even more in the welcoming encounter with the *whanau* from France. What marked this occasion was a deeply rich and joy-filled experience of spiritual wellbeing over-flowing from a right and joyful relationship with *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*. The event was, indeed, the moment of *Te Wa*. But the return and interment of the remains of Bishop Pompallier was only possible because stages were initiated and supported by many people over two or more generations in at least two countries that brought the stages to fulfilment in *Te Wa*.

### Goals in Life and the Kingdom of God

We have come to the end of our reflection on key elements of Maori spirituality. The fulfilment of *Te Wa* is in the full possession of *tapu* and *mana*, while enjoying the fullest possible relationship with *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*. All enjoy the full knowledge, possession and exercise of their God-given roles. In the fulfilment of *Te Wa* is the completion of *hohourongo*. What is *tika* and *pono* have been subsumed in *aroha*, and God is all in all. The dynamic interrelationship of *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua* one with another is open, full, and free of negative. This vision may perhaps be identified with the symbol that Jesus uses so often to indicate, explain and sum up his own mission. It is for the sake of the

Kingdom of God that he came, for its sake he died, and for its sake he rose again. It is to be hoped that Maori can see themselves in this specific vision of *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*, of life and death in Christ, and can enter freely into it, and develop their own Maori way of being Christian.