



Te Rau-o-te-huia (Tail feathers of the huia) –A Structure for expressing a (Cistercian) spiritual journey in 12 pieces.

Introduction

This is a structure for expressing an Associate's spiritual journey. It is designed to be shared with other Associates. This can be a tool for building stronger connection between us, though separated by geographical distance.

Background

Our Associates handbook comments "...the Rule of Benedict is all about community.." and also comments "...authentic spiritual community among associates is slowly building as we become vulnerable to one another and pray for one another more and more.." It has been the example of Cistercian community at Kopua that has drawn us all together. All the Cistercian values (A) and practices, "which are means of liberation and internal conversion" can be incorporated in the life of "Associates". St Bernard of Clairvaux's Four Degree of Love (1) reminds us that we are made in God's image and are called to be like God as daughters and sons in the places we live. We can support each other in this journey through our diverse experiences and efforts. The Huia (B) with its twelve tail feathers can represent the many paths we are walking in our faith journey in collaboration with the Kopua community. A 2020 Cistercian Associates Survey highlighted there was a willingness to share an individual profile with other Associates. Profiles are more authentic if expressed in the individual's own voice or words.

Method.

This list is divided into the four groups of Sir Mason Durie's ONZ (C) Whare Tapa Wha model (2). This is a widely used in New Zealand to support a health and wellbeing focus for individuals and families/whanau. Pick **up to 12** questions to write about. **Up to three from each section.** You may wish to work on this with another Associate or member of the Leadership Team or a Spiritual Director.

Te Taha Wairua (Spiritual Realm/Health)

1. *Do the heavens, the stars or the rising sun impact your spirit? Explain.
2. What has been your journey in the Cistercian tradition?
3. How were you introduced to Kopua Monastery?
4. What does the Kopua Monastery mean to you?
5. How do you express the Cistercian values and practices in your everyday life?
6. How does your Cistercian identity/commitment give balance to your life?

Te Taha Whanau (Family-Relationship Realm/Health)

7. *What land grounds your home and what river does your whanau like best for swimming? Explain.
8. Describe your family/whanau.
9. What nourishes your family life?
10. What roles do you have in your parish, church or wider community that express your Cistercian Charism?
11. Who are the people who nourish you?
12. How have other Associates supported your Cistercian journey?

Te Taha Tinana (Physical realm/Health-This includes your body and your immediate or material environment)

13. *Do you enjoy tramping over the hills or working in your garden, or fishing in the sea? Explain.
14. Describe yourself and your environment/dwelling.
15. What role does physical activity, work or service have in your life?
16. What are some taonga (treasures/resources/disciplines) that nourish you physically?
17. How do you bring simplicity to your lifestyle?
18. Where are the places that nourish you?

Te Taha Hinengaro (Mind Realm/Mental Health)

19. *Apart from reading books, do you increase your understanding of the world by observing the stars, or watching the tides flow, or identifying our native trees? Explain.
20. What are the interests that nourish your mind?
21. What interests help to inspire you or connect you to people and place?
22. What books/journals/writers nourish your mind and what collections do you have?
23. Tell us why you have become an Associate.
24. How do you bring stability to your lifestyle?

Appendix:

A. Cistercian Values include.

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|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| • Prayer and praise, | Confidence and abandonment to God | Work | Joy |
| • Silence and solitude | Obedience | Chastity | Austerity |
| • Simplicity | Hospitality and service | Stability | Poverty |
| • A balanced Life | Simplicity of Life | Humility | |

B. The Huia

The Huia was the most sacred bird to early Maori and its feathers indicated the highest esteem and mana. The bird was also remarkable in its friendly nature and feeding habits. The male bird would pick away bark from a tree trunk enabling the female with its much longer curved beak to probe and to feed. Huia with deformed beaks were examined and it was noted that only with the assistance of another bird could the injured bird have survived. Kopua is at the northern edge the great forest --Te Tapere nui o Whātonga (or seventy-mile bush), once the densest podocarp rainforest ecosystem in the world and home of the Huia. Early Kopua settlers described the birds feeding on rimu trees in the area. The bird is becoming a national symbol of the reciprocity and collaboration sometimes lacking in more human communities, but desperately needed. The huia has 12 tail feathers. The number 12 has many references in a variety of faith and wisdom traditions around the world. The Cistercian tradition began in the 12th century and St Benedict wrote about the 12 steps to Humility. The Maori Madonna, painted by Sister Mary Lawrence RSM, features a huia feather in Mary's head and is seen in the Kopua Monastery Chapel. (Front page). Check out NZ Sound and Vision Archive-ngataonga.org.nz and type in reference 27558 for a documentary on the Huia. Many of the interviews featured impressed Dr John F Findlay a regular visitor to Kopua monastery and a nationally recognized conservationist. Dr Findlay was also mentioned in "The Book of the Huia" by W.J.Phillips



Mā ngā huruhuru ka rere te manu

It is the feathers that enables the bird to fly.

Check www.ngataonga.org.nz and type 26325 to hear the call of the huia. In 2020 the most requested sound recording held within – Ngā Taonga is the [re-creation of the call of the extinct huia bird](#), recorded in the late 1940s by Hēnare Hāmana.

C. We are fortunate that Sir Mason Durie ONZ KNZM has contributed to **Te Rau-o-te-huia** by suggesting indicators marked with *. These indicators are a reminder that it is also in the natural world that we do find God.

Please forward your profile to Mike Stone. stonem@xtra.co.nz

Do you give consent for your profile to be posted only within the Kopua Cistercian Associates website for only other Associates to view? Let me know if you need help to work on your profile.

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Huia e huia, tangata kotahi!
Huia, your destiny is to bring everyone together!
Maori Proverb

Bibliography

1. St Bernard of Clairvaux. The Four Degrees of Love. www.soulshpherd.org
2. Whare Tapa Whā. www.health.govt.nz