

Joinings and Partings



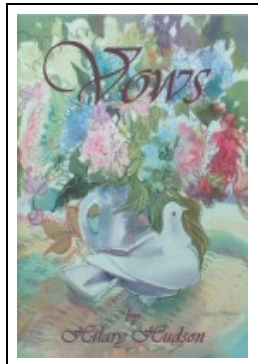
Vows, Hilary Hudson, Priory Press 2001 ISBN 0-958-2289-0-6

Earthly Farewells: A Funeral Planning Guide, Hilary Hudson, 2004 ISBN 0-582-289-1-4

[The review copies are deposited in the Resource Centre]

THIS IS AN APPRECIATION of two books by Hilary Hudson who is a personal friend of the editor. She is a civil celebrant of over 20 years experience and is also a broadcaster and lecturer. Hilary set the context for both books when she wrote: **“Western society has moved from a world where everyone went to church every week — and for all major occasions — to one where this is less common. The aim of this book has been to bridge the gap between a churched and an unchurched world.”**

Vows was published in 2001. It describes the requirements for weddings, ceremonies, renewal of vows and name givings. It draws on material first published in her 1995 book *Civil Rites and Ceremonies*. *Vows* can be bought for \$19.95 from Priory Press, 70 Dixie Street, R.D. Otaki 5560. Send email enquiries to HUDSON@XTRA.CO.NZ



Earthly Farewell was published in 2004 and deals not only with funerals but with wills, Powers of Attorney, and Trusts.

In reading these books I was struck by the number of recital pieces which appeared in both books — I counted these four: Paul’s hymn to love in *I Corinthians 13*; a fragment of the *Desiderata*; and a quote from the *I Ching*. And, given the levity encouraged at funerals and life celebrations nowadays, even *The Owl and The Pussy Cat* is offered as part of an earthly farewell.

Given the demographic statistics of SoF you might suppose that *Vows* might take a back seat, but your editor finds it personally relevant at this time.

Hilary asks and answers, “Why Marry?” and “Who Can Marry?” She also deals with getting a licence and choosing a celebrant. Then on to the nitty-gritty of venue, wedding rings, photographs, music.

A set of sample ceremonies provides templates for one’s own planning.

A collection of readings, prayers and verses ends the section on marriage.

While not dealing with Civil Unions (a possible new edition is under consideration), “Ceremonies of Commitment” cover similar ground.

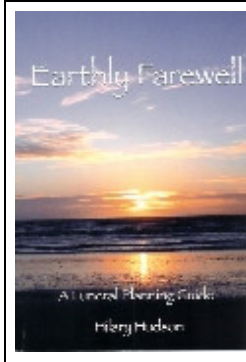
“Name Giving”, a non-religious alternative to baptism, is dealt with as is the “Renewal of Vows”.

Any couple contemplating any form of marriage or alternative, will find much good practical advice and inspiration.

Earthly Farewells gives specifics of formal religious ceremonies (Roman Catholic, Anglican and Congregationalist). It shows similarities and differences between these and civil funerals. Sample eulogies will prove helpful for those not quite sure what to say and practical advice is given about scattering ashes.

A short section deals with “Ceremonies to Console for the Loss of a Companion Animal.”

A generous collection of readings rounds out an attractive and useful book.



Earthly Farewell is available for \$34.95 rrp from most religious and spiritual bookshops. The ‘Contents’ and ‘Index’ can be viewed at www.earthlyfarewell.co.nz/ Send email enquiries to HUDSON@XTRA.CO.NZ

We live in an age of “Do It Yourself”, where initiative and authority has been

tugged from the hands of the professionals (someone wrote grumpily that “all professions are conspiracies against the laity”) and is exercised by we, the people. But, whether it is plumbing, re-decorating, marrying a friend from decades ago or farewelling a person who has had a profound effect on shaping one’s life, we need practical advice and stimulating examples of the kind found in *Vows* and *Earthly Farewell*. I was attracted to “An American Indian Prayer”

When I am dead cry for me a little,

Think of me sometimes,

But not too much.

Think of me now and again as I was in life,

At some moment it is pleasant to recall,

But not for long.

Leave me in peace, and I shall leave you in peace;

And while you live let your thoughts be with the living.

Noel Cheer