

Messenger



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Simbang Gabi

This traditional celebration in anticipation of Christmas is spreading beyond the Filipino community, if attendance at Holy Rosary Cathedral Dec. 23 was any indication.

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Hagemoen listening

The recently installed eighth bishop of Saskatoon, Bishop Mark Hagemoen, says he is not presuming anything as he takes over the reigns of the Roman Catholic diocese. In Saskatoon he sees “a dynamic Catholic culture and community,” but his first priority “is to listen, meet and see.”

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Hanukkah

The Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, commemorates an ancient miracle when the menorah remained lit for eight days in the temple when there was only one day’s supply of oil.

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Best films

Beyond the omnipresent blockbusters, year’s end always brings a rush of movie titles competing for recognition on the numerous awards nominations and critics’ lists, writes Gerald Schmitz. Two are reviewed this week.

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Speaking up

The #MeToo campaign is giving people who have been assaulted the courage to speak up so healing can take place. “We are not alone and we are not to blame.”

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Scandal, disgrace

Cardinal Bernard Law’s life “is a cautionary tale of what can happen to an ambitious cleric who loses sight of his duty to



serve the People of God, writes Thomas Reese, SJ. “Pope Francis is

right in identifying clericalism as a perennial sin in the church.”

— page 10

Baby Jesus seen in world’s suffering: pope

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Those who recognize the Lord in the baby Jesus in the manger also should recognize his presence in children suffering today because of war, poverty and immigration, Pope Francis said.

“Jesus knows well the pain of not being welcomed and how hard it is not to have a place to lay one’s head,” the pope said Dec. 25, praying that people would work together to make the world “more human and more worthy for the children of today and of the future.”

Standing on the central balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica on a clear, crisp Christmas day, Pope Francis spoke about the world’s children before formally giving his blessing “*urbi et orbi*” (to the city and the world).

Christmas is a time to live again “the mystery of the God who comes, who assumes our mortal human flesh, and who becomes lowly and poor in order to save us,” the pope said. “And this moves us deeply, for great is the tenderness of our Father.”

The shepherds, who were the first after Mary and Joseph to adore the newborn Jesus, are models for people today, teaching them to not be “scandalized” by his poverty and lowly birth, but to acknowledge him as Lord and learn to recognize his presence in others shivering in the cold, wrapped in rags and without a worthy home, the pope said.

“We see Jesus in the many children forced to leave their countries to travel alone in inhuman conditions and who become



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE’S CHRISTMAS BLESSING — Pope Francis delivers his Christmas blessing “*urbi et orbi*” (to the city and the world) from the central balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Dec. 25.

an easy target for human traffickers,” he said. “Through their eyes we see the drama of all those forced to emigrate and risk their lives to face exhausting journeys that end at times in tragedy.”

“We see Jesus in the children of the Middle East who continue to suffer because of growing ten-

sions between Israelis and Palestinians,” he said, adding a plea for peace in Jerusalem and for a resumption of negotiations “that would allow the peaceful coexistence of two states within mutually agreed and internationally recognized borders.”

“We see Jesus in the faces of

CCC wins standing in court case

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The Canadian Council of Churches, Amnesty International and Canadian Council for Refugees are one step closer to arguing in court that Canada’s Safe Third Country agreement with the United States is illegal.

In July the coalition of churches that includes Canada’s bishops and

represents about 85 per cent of Canadian Christians, along with the Canadian Council for Refugees and Amnesty International went to the Federal Court of Canada asking the court to strike down the deal with the U.S. which bars most refugees from making an asylum claim at any of Canada’s land border crossings.

On behalf of a refugee claimant from El Salvador and her children, the three organizations argue that the agreement has endangered the lives and health of refugees who do not feel they can safely make refugee claims in the U.S.

“The plight and rights of human beings on the move are more important than rules that are enacted for the convenience of governments,” Jesuit Refugee Service director in Canada Norbert Piché told *The Catholic Register* in an email.

Federal government lawyers had tried to get the church and human rights groups thrown off the case with a motion asking they be removed as parties to the litigation. The federal court turned down the government’s motion on Dec. 12.

“The first question to ask is, why did the Canadian government want to prevent those three organizations from having standing?” said Piché.

The Safe Third Country agreement with the U.S. took effect in December of 2004. Each country declares the other safe for refugees and stipulates that refugees must make their claim for asylum in the first country in

Syrian children still marked by the war that, in these years, has caused such bloodshed in that country,” Pope Francis said, adding prayers for a shared commitment to rebuilding the country with full respect for religious and ethnic differences.

Children continue to suffer in Iraq, torn by war and conflict over the past 15 years, he said. And in Yemen, which has been “largely forgotten” by the world, conflict has led to a serious humanitarian crisis with hunger and disease, including a massive cholera outbreak, threatening more than 20 million people — three-quarters of the nation’s population.

Pope Francis also prayed for the children and people of South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Congo, Central African Republic and Nigeria.

“We see Jesus in the children worldwide wherever peace and security are threatened by the danger of tensions and new conflicts,” he said, adding a prayer for the end of tensions and the threat of nuclear war with North Korea.

which they land.

Canadian officials monitor U.S. immigration courts to determine whether the U.S. system meets international standards under the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention.

The Canadian Council of Churches, which includes the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Amnesty International and the Canadian Council for Refugees, won a similar case against the Safe Third Country Agreement in Federal Court in 2008. But that decision was overturned on appeal, not on the substance of the case but on a question of whether the organizations bringing the case to court had standing to make their legal argument against the agreement.

This time the churches and human rights organizations will be allowed to argue that by forcing refugee claimants to cross into Canada at places where there is no official border station, the agreement has the effect of endangering lives. Would-be refugee claimant Mavis Otuteye died of hypothermia in a Minnesota farmer’s field trying to find her way across the border in May. Ghanaian refugee Seidu Mohammed lost most of his fingers after walking into Manitoba in minus-20 degree weather on Christmas Eve last year. Mohammed was granted refugee status in Canada in May.

No date has been set for a hearing before the Federal Court. The case is widely expected to make its way eventually to the Supreme Court of Canada.



Frank Flegel

GOVERNMENT HOUSE — Despite the -31 C temperature and wind chill near -40 C, a solid stream of visitors attended this year’s lieutenant-governor’s levee at historic Government House on Dewdney Avenue in Regina. Vaughn Solomon Schofield was appointed lieutenant-governor of Saskatchewan in March 2012. The appointment has no fixed term, but is generally five years. This was likely Schofield’s last levee, as her term was officially extended and she has continued to serve past the usual five years. The position is largely ceremonial, although the incumbent enjoys some constitutional powers that are rarely exercised. The principal responsibility is to ensure a properly elected government is always in place. A new lieutenant-governor is usually in place well before the expected date of a provincial election. Saskatchewan’s next provincial election is scheduled for 2020.

Gospel message of hope often taught by the poor

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In his ministry as archbishop of Manila and in his travels for *Caritas Internationalis*, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle said he is reminded of the true meaning of hope by people living in situations the world would see as hopeless.

“The poor know the frustration of dreaming and working hard with not much result,” Tagle said. “They are betrayed by persons and institutions. But in their raw poverty, what is left for them is their humanity. They remind all of us that being human is our true and only wealth.”

While anyone can be tempted

to see the fulfilment of hope in accomplishments, improved numbers and bigger bank balances, the poor celebrate the gift of life and praise the giver of life, the cardinal said in a written interview in early January.

“This is the secret of their enduring and persistent hope, which those who enjoy comfortable living, yet complain unceasingly, should discover,” he said.

Pride and self-sufficiency lie on the opposite end from the hope the poor witness to, he said. “Of the many challenges to hope, I consider pride the most dangerous. Pride weakens faith that gives assurance to hope. Pride makes me think I can do better

than God. Pride makes me place my hope in myself. Pride makes me a pseudo-saviour.”

“Whether personal or institutional, pride depletes hope,” the cardinal said.

In addition to serving as archbishop of Manila and president of *Caritas Internationalis*, Tagle also is president of the Catholic Biblical Federation.

Of course, the Bible is the book of hope, and “there are many Scripture verses or prayers that rekindle hope in me,” he said.

“But one that I ‘run to’ regularly is John 21:1-14,” which tells the story of the disciples’ miraculous catch of fish.

The cardinal said he often

turns to the story, and “when I have laboured hard and long but still end up not catching anything, I know the risen Lord is close by, watching compassionately and calling my attention so that he could direct my action.”

The story also brings consolation, he said, because it is a reminder that mission and ministry are Jesus’ work, and “my role is to work hard under his direction. The catch will be his, but I must be there with other collaborators to see the miracle, to haul the net to shore and to declare, ‘It is the Lord!’ ”

In that way, he said, “a seemingly hopeless situation becomes a space to return to my humble role and to witness to the true Lord.”



CNS/Bob Roller

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle

and efforts, there are still the multitude of hungry people we cannot feed, homeless people we cannot shelter, battered women and children we cannot protect, cases of corruption and injustice that we cannot remedy, the long night of the disciples in the middle of the sea continues in us.”

The experience of the long night should make Christians “grow in compassion toward our neighbours whose lives seem to be a never ending dark night,” he said, and it should remind Christians that even when things are not working out as planned, the Lord is near.

For New Year, pope urges help for refugees

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis began the New Year praying the world would demonstrate a marked increase in solidarity and welcome for migrants and refugees.

“Let’s not extinguish the hope in their hearts; let’s not suffocate their hopes for peace,” the pope said Jan. 1 before reciting the Angelus with a crowd gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

For the New Year’s celebration of World Peace Day and the feast of Mary, Mother of God, Pope Francis had chosen to focus on migrants and refugees and their yearning for peace.

“For this peace, which is the right of all, many of them are willing to risk their lives in a journey that, in most cases, is long and dangerous and to face trials and suffering,” the pope told an estimated 40,000 people gathered in the square around the Christmas tree and Nativity scene.

Pope Francis said it is important that everyone, including individuals, governments, schools, churches and church agencies, make a commitment to “ensuring refugees, migrants — everyone — a future of peace.”

Entrusting the needs of mi-

grants and refugees to the maternal concern of Mary, the pope led the crowd in reciting a traditional Marian prayer: “Under thy protection we seek refuge, holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our needs, but from all dangers deliver us always, Virgin, Glorious and Blessed.”

Pope Francis had begun the day celebrating mass in St. Peter’s Basilica for the Marian feast, which he said was a celebration of “a magnificent truth about God and about ourselves: From the moment that our Lord became incarnate in Mary, and for all time, he took on our humanity.”

“To call Mary the mother of God reminds us,” he said, that “God is close to humanity, even as a child is close to the mother who bears him in her womb.”

God becoming human in the baby Jesus, the pope said, is an affirmation that human life “is precious and sacred to the Lord,” so “to serve human life is to serve God.”

“All life, from life in the mother’s womb to that of the elderly, the suffering and the sick, and to that of the troublesome and even repellent, is to be welcomed, loved and helped,” he said.

Pope Francis also drew people’s attention to the fact that in

the Gospel stories of Jesus’ birth, Mary is silent. And the newborn Jesus, obviously, cannot speak.

“We need to remain silent as we gaze upon the crib,” he said. “Pondering the crib, we discover anew that we are loved; we savour the real meaning of life. As we look on in silence, we let Jesus speak to our heart.”

“May his lowliness lay low our pride; his poverty challenge our pomp; his tender love touch our hardened hearts,” the pope prayed.

Celebrating evening prayer Dec. 31 and offering thanks to God for the year that was ending, Pope Francis gave a special acknowledgment to people — especially parents and teachers — who are “artisans of the common good,” working to help their families, neighbours and communities each day without fanfare.

But, he said, people also must acknowledge that God gave humanity the year 2017 “whole and sound,” yet “we human beings have in many ways wasted and wounded it with works of death, with lies and injustices. Wars are the flagrant sign of this backsliding and absurd pride. But so are all the small and great offences against life, truth and solidarity, which cause multiple forms of human, social and environmental degradation.”

Muslims join Christians for Christmas mass in free Mosul

MOSUL, Iraq (CNS) — Cries of joy and seasonal hymns once again filled St. Paul Cathedral in Mosul as Christmas mass was celebrated there for the first time in three and a half years, following the northern Iraqi city’s liberation from Islamic State militants.

The Iraqi national anthem opened the mass as women wailed with emotion. Armored police outside protected the worshippers.

Led by Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako of Baghdad, Christians and Muslims attended the Christmas mass Dec. 24 in a display of unity.

“My message is to our brothers the Muslims,” said Sako. “I ask them to change their way of thinking; you should know Christianity better. In the past, Christians were the majority in Iraq; today we are minority, but without us, Mosul will never be the same.”

He urged the faithful to pray for “peace and stability to reign in Mosul, Iraq and the world.”

Underscoring Christ’s message of love and peace, he urged displaced Christians to return home and participate in its reconstruction.

“They are not going back because their houses are destroyed or burned, and the church is restoring all of the houses,” Sako said. “We are hopeful that many, many Christians will be back.”

Islamic State militants had

seized and terrorized Mosul and the surrounding areas in 2014, sending most of its Christian population of 200,000 into flight. The militants threatened the Christians, telling them to convert to Islam, pay protection tax, die or flee.

Last July, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the expulsion of Islamic State from Mosul after a fierce, nine-month military campaign.

When Islamic State militants invaded Mosul, they prohibited public Christian worship services and began systematically destroying churches. St. Paul Cathedral reportedly was used as a prison by the militants, the damaged interior walls reflecting some of the destruction.

“With this celebration, we tell them that residents of Mosul are all brothers, whatever their religion or ethnicity, and despite all the damage and suffering,” Christian worshipper Farqad Malko said of the message to the militants.

Meanwhile, in the Ninevah Plain town of Telaskov, Christians celebrated Christmas by gathering for mass at the newly renovated Church of St. George. In church, children dressed in Santa Claus costumes sang *Jingle Bells* in Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

Forty kilometres north of Mosul, Telaskov is one of the oldest continuing Christian communities in the world.



CNS/Rajat Gupta, EPA

COLD WEATHER IN INDIA — A man prepares tea for customers on a cold morning Jan. 2 in New Delhi, India. Winter takes a heavy toll each year around northern India, as poverty forces many homeless people to live outdoors.

Christians returning to Nineveh Plains receive aid

By Deborah Gyapong

MONTREAL (CCN) — Now that ISIS has been defeated in Iraq, about 30,000 Christians have returned to their villages in the Nineveh Plains with help from Aid to the Church in Need.

“The Iraq project is crucial,” said Philipp Ozores, secretary general of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), in an interview Dec. 7 at the Holy See charity’s Montreal office. “We could be facing the demise of Christians in the Middle East”

“Thank God, we are hopeful we and many others supporting us can succeed,” he said.

While tensions remain between the Kurdish Regional Government and the Iraqi government in Baghdad, most of the villages captured by ISIS are empty and people are now returning.

About 100,000 Christians fled to Erbil and the surrounding area in the Kurdish region after ISIS invaded Mosul and the Nineveh Plains in 2014.

“People are now returning to a more and more normal life,” Ozores said.

It is “hopeful” people are returning “in spite of little aid in light of the total need,” he said.

“This is a sign people are willing to stay and rebuild,” Ozores said.

Ozores visited Iraq last April, and saw empty villages and extensive damage. Since then, ACN teams have visited and report people are returning to their homes or communities and

shops are opening, he said.

“What is needed is help for them to rebuild,” he said.

Over the last few years, ACN has helped sustain the internally displaced people (IDP) in Erbil with food and rent, he said. Since the liberation of their former villages, ACN helped create a local committee called the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee along with three major churches in the area: the Syrian Catholic, the Chaldean Catholic and the Syrian Orthodox.

The committee’s first step was to assess the damage, he said. They have developed statistics on about 13,000 houses. “Only 1,233 were totally destroyed,” Ozores said, noting 8,217 were partially damaged and “could be reconstructed with about \$2-5,000 USD per house.”

“Two thirds of the houses are only partially damaged,” he said. This means a total effort of rebuilding would cost about \$250 million USD.

Ozores estimates that with \$20 to \$30 USD “focused on the partially damaged houses, most of them could be made liveable.”

ACN has been involved through the churches in Iraq since the beginning, but now more NGOs are involved in a co-ordinated effort, he said. “Now we’re advocating for support from the international community, because we’re speaking here of human rights.

Two human rights are engaged: religious freedom and the right to return to their homes, he said.

ACN has provided significant support to Iraqi Christians, raising some 40 million Euros since 2014, Ozores said. It is joined by other organizations such as the Catholic Near East Welfare Association and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

“Now what we need is the intervention of governments,” Ozores said. Meanwhile, ACN will continue its worldwide campaign “to support the Christians in the Nineveh Plains while also seeking government help.”

“When we started in 2014, there was no hope at all,” he said. ISIS had made it impossible for Christians and other religious

minorities in the area to remain. “People were stranded. They are now returning to their homes. It’s a miracle this has happened.”

“The dimes of the widows of the world have contributed to keeping alive the Christian faith and sparking the return of Christians,” he said.

Through the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee’s working in “an efficient way,” ACN is able to channel funds where they’ll do the most good, he said.

Ozores calls the Christians he has met in the Middle East as “the most amazing people we’re allowed to meet.”

“It’s really the Catholic Church at the frontier,” said

Ozores, who described the Christians of the Middle East as “heroic and very inspiring to any Catholic but also most in need of support.”

“We could be facing the demise of Christians in the Middle East,” he said. “Thank God, we are hopeful, we and many others supporting us, can succeed.”

ACN hopes to expand efforts in Syria next year, but ISIS and like groups are still operating there and “unfortunately the Syrian civil war goes on on a lesser level,” he said. “ISIS is nearing defeat in Syria but that doesn’t guarantee the fighting will end. There are other parties involved.”



Kiply Yaworski

MINISTRY IN THE NORTH — Born and raised in Saskatoon, Archbishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin-Le Pas returned home recently and spoke about ministry in his northern archdiocese at a gathering held at St. Anne’s Parish in December. Chatlain described the challenges and blessings of ministry in his archdiocese, which covers the northern half of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The archbishop encouraged the faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon to build closer connections with Catholics in the north — by learning about the realities of life in the north and the goodness of the people, by visiting the north to attend pilgrimages or to volunteer to help at northern parishes, by developing a twinning relationship between parishes in the two dioceses, by supporting or sponsoring projects or a northern parish, or by inviting people from a northern parish to homes and parishes in the Diocese of Saskatoon.

D&P relief fund pushes aid to Rohingya

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Development and Peace has raised \$590,000 to fund its work in Bangladesh and Myanmar with Rohingya refugees, \$450,000 of which is eligible for matching funds from Ottawa.

In total, Canadians donated more than \$12.5 million to various charities to be matched by the federal government through its Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund. So far the Government of Canada has responded to the Rohingya crisis with over \$37.5 million in humanitarian funding.

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace has already received \$750,000 from Global Affairs Canada. The funds have been used by Caritas Bangladesh as part of a \$6 million program supported by the international Caritas network.

As an organization with experience in the region and contacts on the ground, Development and Peace is among the Canadian charities eligible to apply for funding from the Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund.

While Canada has been among

the quickest and most generous in responding to over 600,000 Muslim refugees on the run from village burnings and military sweeps through Myanmar’s Rakhine State, humanitarian assistance will never be enough, said Development and Peace emergencies program officer for the Myanmar crisis Stéphane Vinhas.

“Considering the scale of the crisis, nothing will ever be enough,” Vinhas wrote in an email to *The Catholic Register*.

As of Dec. 12 more than 647,000 Rohingya, most of them women and children, had crossed the border into Bangladesh, according to the Intersector Coordination Group. These are in addition to an estimated 300,000 Rohingya who were already living as refugees in Bangladesh.

A Doctors Without Borders survey of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh found that at least 9,000 Rohingya died in Myanmar’s Rakhine State between Aug. 25 and Sept. 24, and over 70 per cent were directly and violently killed, including 730 children under the age of five.

Nearly 70 per cent of those killed were shot, nine per cent were burned alive in their houses

and five per cent were beaten to death.

“Unfortunately, the fastest growing crisis ever may also become one of the longest lasting crises,” said Vinhas. “It’s important to keep an eye and our attention on the situation, before it becomes another forgotten crisis.”

The Development and Peace response in Bangladesh seeks to avoid replicating the work already being done by United Nations agencies and hundreds of other NGOs. Development and Peace partners are focusing on new or upgraded sites which the government in Bangladesh has designated as priority areas for resettlement. By moving people out of overcrowded existing camps, these projects will allow for upgrades in the existing camps and new camps that are better planned and equipped.

Caritas is trying to ensure women feel safe and families have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, Vinhas said.

“Support to the huge needs created by the humanitarian crisis is very important, but it remains also important to try to reach a diplomatic agreement for the return of the Rohingyas to their place of origin,” Vinhas said.



Tim Yaworski

BISHOPS’ LEVEE — Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon (left) and Bishop Mark Hagemoen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon were the special guests at the Bishops’ Levee on New Year’s Day 2018 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. This annual come-and-go event with civic officials, clergy, religious, and the general public is hosted by the D’Arcy McGee Assembly of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus in collaboration with the Bishop Nykyta Budka and Justice Emmett Hall Fourth Degree Assemblies.

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Action on poverty reduction, climate change deferred

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — While many positive steps have been taken on poverty reduction and climate change, real action has been deferred to 2018 and subsequent years says Joe Gunn.

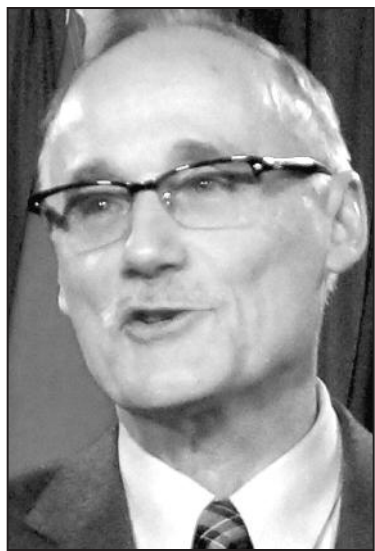
“On climate, we think 2018 is a big year,” said the executive director of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ).

Canada has been working with Britain in efforts to phase out coal, Gunn said. “There’s a bit of posturing on Canada’s part, where we haven’t significantly lowered our own emissions yet.”

“We have to show our own best practices at home,” he said. “In 2018, it’s important to see some real gains there, and that has yet to come to reality.”

CPJ had hoped promised government plans for carbon pricing, a key pillar to fight pollution and mitigate climate change, would be in place early in 2018, Gunn said. But the environment minister announced Dec. 20 the plan, which involves the provinces, will go into effect in September.

“Now the market-friendly idea of charging for pollution that will reward good behaviour by com-



CCN/D. Gyapong

Joe Gunn

panies” has been postponed, even though “80 per cent of Canadians live in provinces already implementing a price on carbon,” Gunn said. “This can be kicked down the road.”

Also Canada’s targets for re-

ducing emissions clash with the approval of billion-dollar projects that rely on fossil fuel production, such as the approval of the Kinder Morgan Pipeline and others.

Some billion-dollar projects will not be going through, either because the government did not approve the project, or, in the case of the Energy East Pipeline, its backer, TransCanada, pulled the plug because the approval process got bogged down.

Ray Pennings, executive vice-president of Cardus, said it will be important to watch the “balance or tightrope on economic development, the national resource sector and the environment.”

The process of gaining approval of big projects is “not straightforward.”

“How do we go about getting approval in an age of evaluating approval based on how people feel in the absence of rights and wrongs,” he said. “We see it most starkly in the area of pipelines and the environment.”

Getting a licence for a project “is no longer straightforward,” once you’ve fulfilled certain obli-

gations, Pennings said. “The rules are changing, and they’re changing quickly and a lot of people are uncertain about what that means.”

It’s also an “age of looking back and apologizing for things done in the past,” he said. “There’s a lot of virtue-signalling and a lot of symbolics.”

Gunn, however, disagrees.

“The old process didn’t work, everybody knew that,” Gunn said. “The government proposal was to make the process a lot easier” by having “one desk where you could go for approvals.”

However, this desk was about “look at more stringent criteria, a range of issues,” such as “the impact of producing fossil fuels on climate change.”

The review was supposed to be “more encompassing,” and include Aboriginal rights, something “absolutely needed,” Gunn said. “How it rolls out in the real world, that’s what we have to see in terms of legislation and how it operates.”

“At least there’s been a consultation process and the report seems to push the right buttons,”

Gunn said.

On the issue of Canadian mining overseas, “it looks like the government is moving toward setting up an ombudsman in 2018,” Gunn said. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and Development and Peace are among groups that have called for an ombudsman to adjudicate complaints against Canadian companies for environmental and human rights abuses.

Gunn said it is good news the government has announced it will index the Canada Child Benefit to inflation and add \$500 million to the Working Income Tax Benefit to enhance the program that helps the working poor.

“What we hoped was having a poverty reduction plan, promised when they came to power in 2015,” Gunn said. “That is nowhere to be found yet.”

Public consultations on a plan ended last summer, but there has been no report on it, he said.

“We did hear last week from a staffer we might be able to expect the plan later in 2018. We would certainly hope so.”

Religious freedom and conscience rights remain hot issues

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Religious freedom and conscience rights will continue to be top agenda items for Catholic and other faith groups as challenges play out in the courts and in the public arena.

Government bodies are continuing to exert pressure encroaching on these freedoms: the Trudeau government will require applicants to its 2018 Summer Jobs program to attest to core principles that support abortion and transgenderism in order to qualify; the Law Society of Upper Canada is demanding lawyers sign a document affirming support for a set of beliefs in addition to committing to uphold the rule of law; and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) and other health care colleges are forcing effective referral on conscience issues such as abortion and euthanasia.

The Ontario Superior Court

may release its decision as early as late January in the lawsuit against the CPSO filed by five Ontario doctors, the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada, Canadian Physicians for Life and the Canadian Federation of Catholic Physicians’ Societies. The case was heard last June.

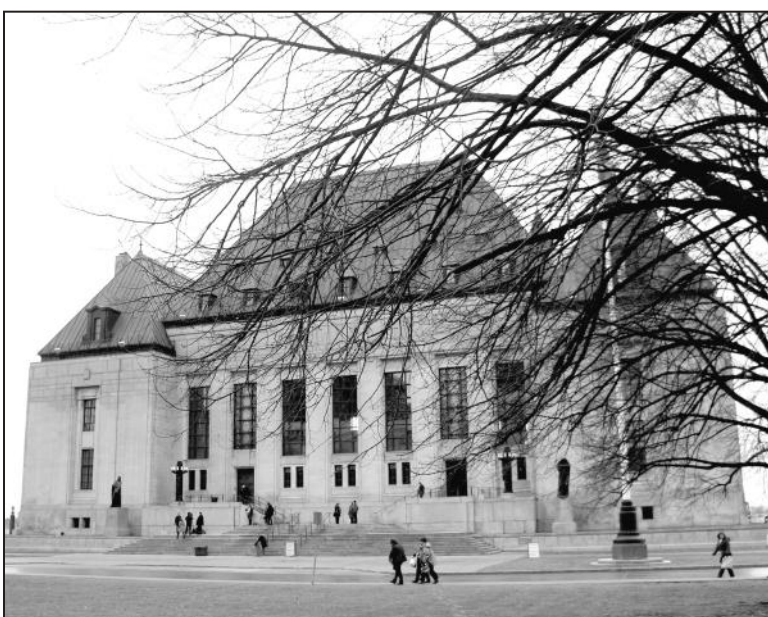
“This case is a critical precedent-setting case for doctors and all Canadian provincial regulators of doctors,” said Dr. Donato Gugliotta, one of the five doctors. Gugliotta predicted the case “will be appealed regardless of outcome.”

“The courts will rule on the balance of patients’ access rights and physicians’ conscience rights,” he said. “It will determine whether maintaining the integrity of health care practitioners is vital to the preservation and protection of the therapeutic relationship.”

If the CPSO wins, Gugliotta warns of serious consequences for medicine. “Some doctors will be

forced to leave their medical calling or restrict their practice, especially palliative care,” he said. “Some students will avoid the profession. In fact, this outcome would select out and exclude the most conscientious people within medicine and change the face of the profession.”

Also in 2018, the Supreme Court of Canada will release a decision on Trinity Western University’s proposed law school and whether the B.C. and Ontario law societies were right in refusing to accredit future graduates because the private evangelical Christian school has a mandatory community covenant that insists all sexual behaviour be confined to traditional marriage. It will also release a decision on the Wall case, involving the associational and communal religious freedom rights of Jehovah’s Witnesses to determine their membership without state interference. Both cases were heard in



CCN/D. Gyapong

SUPREME COURT DECISIONS — The Supreme Court of Canada will decide on two important religious freedom and associational rights cases in the New Year.

November 2017.

“Historically we’ve taken religious freedom almost for granted, and have reacted to the exceptions, or the violations,” said Ray Pennings, co-founder and executive vice-president of Cardus, noting the same applies to other foundational freedoms such as freedom of speech and of conscience.

“I think challenges are coming at a time in which these foundations freedoms are no longer fully understood,” he said. “It’s not the exceptions that have to be defended in the public square, it’s the very existence of these core freedoms themselves.”

Cardus and Angus Reid conducted a number of surveys over 2017 on religion and the public square to mark Canada’s 150th birthday. Pennings said a poll they did in early November showed about 20 per cent of the Canadian population are “hostile to religion” and any kind of religious expression in the public square. The most religious Canadians were the most accepting of other groups, such as

Islam, he said.

But Pennings said he believes leadership in many institutions is “disproportionately held by those who are not active in religion.”

He also sees a confusion of defending rights with a defence of “amorphous Canadian values that we’re nice to each other and we’re tolerant.”

On conscientious objection, he said one of the “more alarming things,” in the polling had to do with how little individual and institutional religious freedom and pluralism based on conscience is respected.

Forcing doctors to act against their conscience, or forcing lawyers to “say things they may not believe” used to be “the definition of totalitarianism,” he said.

Pennings also noted how free speech is now being diminished on university campuses that were once bastions.

“Now somehow it’s celebrated in terms of the silencing of speech instead of the engagement of ideas,” he said.

Young spirit willing, but wallet is weak

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Young Canadians are in a giving mood, but not in a position to give much, according to a new study by the Angus Reid Institute on behalf of the CHIMP Charitable Impact Foundation.

Instead, Canadians 18 to 35 years old are volunteering more and turning to social media to support the charities that matter to them.

In each of 11 different categories of charitable causes, youngsters are out-volunteering their elders. For religious, church and faith group causes, 23 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds have volunteered, compared to an average of 14 per cent across all age groups. On poverty relief, 26 per cent of

18- to 24-year-olds have volunteered compared to just 12 per cent for the population at large.

But when it comes to money, “Canadians under 35 are less likely to donate to charity than other generations, and generally donate less money when they do give,” said the Angus Reid study released Dec. 6.

Only 23 per cent of millennials (18 to 34 years old) have given money to a religious charity, compared to 29 per cent of boomers over the age of 55.

The survey results show Canadians view themselves as a little more generous than their actual tax filings show. Statistics Canada reports that in 2014 just 21.4 per cent of tax filers claimed a charitable donation and the average annual claim was \$280.

In lieu of money, an increasing number of Canadians are support-

ing charities on social media with hashtags, retweets and likes on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and similar sites. Sixty per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds and 58 per cent of 25- to 34-year-olds believe this activity is either “very” or “fairly” meaningful.

A big generational difference is that millennials trust that charities are spending their money wisely. Where 82 per cent of over-55 boomers agreed with the statement “Charities waste too much money on salaries and admin and fundraising,” only 62 per cent of millennials would go along with that statement.

“We are far too defensive when we present ourselves to the public,” said Rev. John Pellowe, CEO of the Canadian Council of

— YOUNG, page 10

Simbang Gabi reaches beyond Filipino community

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — The Filipino tradition of Simbang Gabi continues to attract more than just the Filipino population, if attendance at the final night of this year’s celebration was any indication. Holy Rosary Cathedral had few empty seats for the Dec. 23 evening service. The cathedral congregation was liberally sprinkled with non-Filipino faces who came from all over the city.

“My wife, Claire, and I went to the Philippines a few years ago with some Filipino friends and took part in the tradition there,” said Joe Zerr, one of the white faces in the crowd. “I guess it’s about being with Filipino friends. It’s a nice tradition.”

Archbishop Donald Bolen celebrated the closing mass and thanked the Filipino community

for bringing their faith and “this beautiful tradition” to the Regina archdiocese.

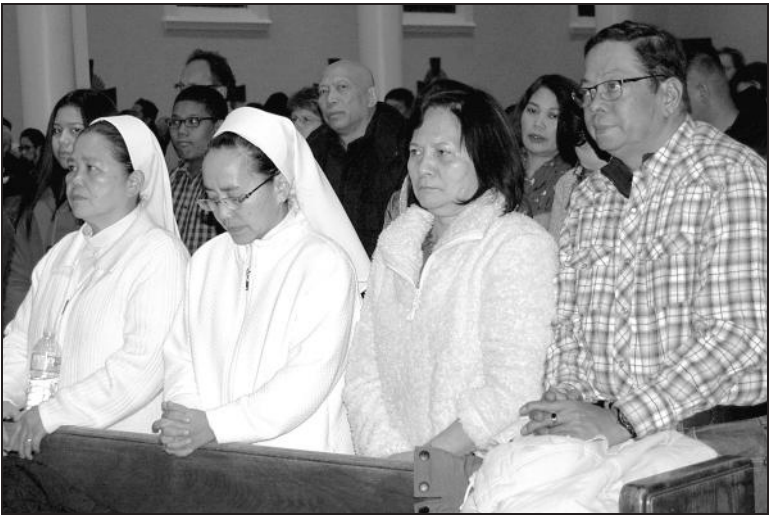
Simbang Gabi (Tagalog for night mass) was first celebrated in Regina in 2014 at St. Mary’s Church when Filipino priest Rev. Danilo Rafael was pastor. He continued the tradition when he moved to Holy Child Parish and then to Holy Rosary Cathedral, where he now serves as rector. It was at Holy Child that the tradition caught on with the non-Filipino population, even though most of the prayers and readings were in Tagalog, the Philippine language. A Filipino choir sings traditional hymns at the masses.

The tradition appears to be growing in attendance in Regina as well as in several rural areas in Saskatchewan. A number of parishes with large Filipino populations but non-Filipino pastors

celebrated the tradition in 2016, and it is believed that the number of participating parishes increased in 2017.

The tradition of Simbang Gabi goes back to Spanish colonial times. In urban centres, parishes celebrate in the evenings for the convenience of workers in day jobs. The tradition is in anticipation of Christmas and to honour the Blessed Virgin.

Each evening service in the nine days leading up to Christmas is followed by a potluck supper. The food available after the Holy Rosary service was a mix of traditional Filipino dishes and western foods, and there was lots of it. People sat at the long tables traditional to church suppers, waiting for their number to be called so they might partake of what can rightly be called a selection of gourmet buffet delights.



Frank Flegel

SIMBANG GABI — There were few empty seats at Holy Rosary Cathedral for the Dec. 23 evening service of Simbang Gabi (Tagalog for night mass), a Filipino tradition celebrated in anticipation of Christmas and to honour the Blessed Virgin. Archbishop Donald Bolen celebrated the closing mass and thanked the Filipino community for bringing their Catholic faith and “this beautiful tradition” to the Regina Archdiocese.

Hagemoen ‘not presupposing anything’

By Darlene Polachic

SASKATOON — As the eighth bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, Mark Hagemoen is “not presupposing anything. My first priority is to listen, meet and see.”

Born and raised in Vancouver, Hagemoen was intrigued with the idea of the priesthood as a youth, then put it out of his mind. “But God quietly, persistently called me to ministry, and when I said yes, I found great peace in the knowledge that I was being called to serve God’s people.”

He was ordained in Vancouver, where he served in several pastoral positions and spent 10 years as director of the Office of Youth Ministry before being appointed bishop of the northern diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

“The process of selection for the position of bishop is a lengthy one,” he explains. “Regional assemblies of bishops meet every two years *in camera* to discuss potential candidates for episcopacy. A list is forwarded to the papal nuncio and comes into play when the need arises. The nuncio oversees the whole selection process.”

The needs of the specific diocese come into play. Consultations are held to discern such things as the people within and beyond the diocese, and the current profile and features of the diocese in question.

“When I was appointed to Mackenzie-Fort Smith, for instance, the requirement was for someone who was comfortable working with indigenous people, someone with a background, experience, and competency in that area. My pastoral ministry had given me first-hand work and interaction with many indigenous groups in southern British Columbia.”

Hagemoen says job descriptions for bishop are set out in the *Directory of Bishops*, which is also a theological and pastoral document. It outlines the theological, pastoral, and fundamental qualities sought in candidates being considered for the role of bishop.

With feedback and input from bishops, priests, and laity — all



Tim Yaworski

BLESSING — Bishop Mark Hagemoen blesses participants during his official installation ceremony as Bishop of Saskatoon at the Cathedral of the Holy Family Nov. 23.

done under the papal seal of confidentiality — the papal nuncio pulls it all together and suggests three candidates, who are then proposed to the Congregation of Bishops in the Vatican. After rigorous vetting, a recommendation is made to the pope, who, in turn, gives it his careful consideration.

“I had no idea I was being considered for the role of Bishop of Saskatoon,” Hagemoen says. “It came as a big surprise, especially since I had only been in the north for four years.”

Hagemoen says working in the north changed him, especially in terms of pastoral process and pace.

“In Vancouver, I was very busy, had demanding pastoral jobs and college positions. In the north, the whole pace and approach was different. Any suppositions I had about what the north needs were quickly put to rest. Judgment was put on hold. Every region is different; contrasts are great. I had to learn what the real needs of communities were, and the appropriate diocesan responses.”

“Parishes there have very limited means and personnel,” he goes on. “How to come at existing needs is a big issue. I put a lot of energy into raising up and training lay leaders, especially indigenous leaders, and I also worked to aug-

ment the healing ministry in the areas of addiction support from a spiritual perspective and dealing with anger and grief. Solutions were also needed for deteriorating infrastructure. The buildings there are old, not well maintained, and severely affected by climate shift. Permafrost is melting under some of our buildings, causing them to sink into the ground.”

All things considered, Hagemoen says, leaving the north was bittersweet. He learned there is no word in Dene for “goodbye,” and he believes that’s a good thing.

“Because the Diocese of Saskatoon has a direct connection with missionary ministry in the north, I like to think that my work here and what I learned there will work together to have a direct benefit in the north.”

In the Diocese of Saskatoon he sees “a dynamic Catholic culture and community, and a strong legacy with many features. I am energized and very excited about serving as bishop, and I look forward to meeting with all the Catholic organizations and institutions, and with indigenous leadership and the ecumenical community as well.”

This article was previously published in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix, Dec. 30, p. D7.

Hanukkah commemorates ancient miracle of menorah

By Frank Flegel

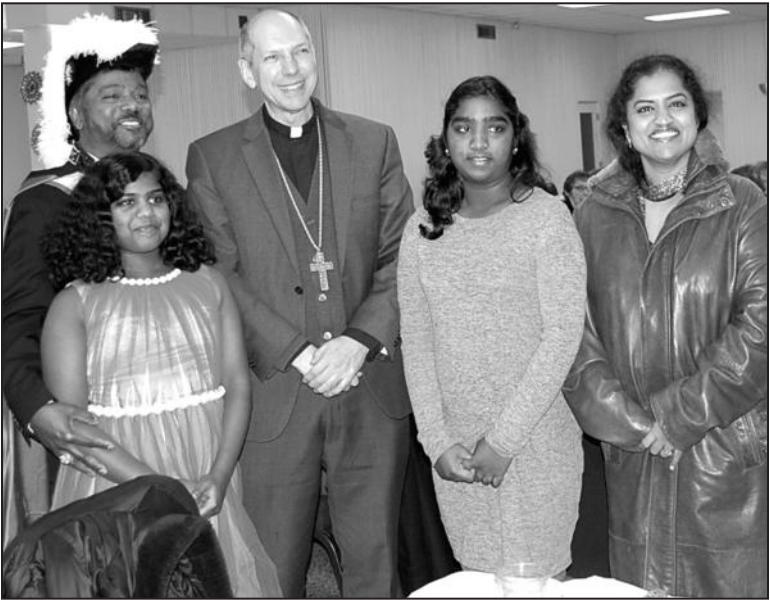
REGINA — Children and adults from the Regina Jewish community gathered Dec. 17 at Beth Jacob Synagogue for a community celebration of Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights. It commemorates the miracle of the menorah remaining lit for eight days in the temple even though there had been only sufficient holy oil for one day.

The miracle occurred during the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem following a successful rebellion against Antioch IV in the first century BC. Hanukkah begins on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which can occur in late November or early December according to the Gregorian calendar. It is celebrated over eight days, and began this year on Dec. 13 and ended Dec. 20.

The celebration included the lighting of menorah candles which many people brought with them. A few children made their own candles from beeswax, using a hair dryer to soften the wax so it could be rolled around a wick.

Rabbi Jeremy Parnes led the lighting of the menorahs while those present recited a blessing as they lighted their own small menorahs at their tables. Prior to that a group of children, gathered together and led by Miriam Friedland, sang several traditional songs and invited everyone to join in.

The celebration included several foods, such as Sufganiot, which is a hollow doughnut with a filling of fruit compote, similar to a bismarck; and latke, potato pancakes served with sour cream and apple sauce. Other dessert-type dainties were available at the party that followed after all the candles had been lit.



Frank Flegel

ARCHBISHOP’S LEVEE — The cold weather did not prevent the Regina Archbishop’s annual New Year’s Levee from attracting a steady stream of people to the Holy Rosary Cathedral auditorium to greet and receive a blessing for the New Year from Archbishop Donald Bolen. The levee traditionally takes place in the cathedral auditorium. The Father Huguonard and Father Riffel councils of the 4th degree Knights of Columbus in their capes and plumed hats provided an honour guard for the archbishop at the 11 a.m. mass that preceded the levee, then they staffed the sherry table while the cathedral Catholic Women’s League provided light food for attendees. Both the cathedral and the auditorium were cool as a result of some burst pipes which affected the heating system, but Saskatchewan people are accustomed to dressing for the weather and didn’t let it prevent them from enjoying the event.

Faith, hope and beauty seen in Ukrainian icons

By Chris Berthelot
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — Jelena Pogosjan looks fondly at a worn icon of the Virgin Mary with two saints, hanging on an eggshell wall in downtown Edmonton.

The artwork, stripped of paint in places and surrounded by similarly worn pieces, made its way from Ukraine to Canada over 42 years ago.

“When you are bringing an icon like that, not only are you bringing your heritage, but you’re also saving an icon.”

Entitled “The Mother of God with Saints,” the piece is one of several featured in Images of

Faith, Hope and Beauty, a new exhibit of Ukrainian icons presented by the University of Alberta’s Kule Folklore Centre and the Ukrainian Pioneers Association of Alberta. The exhibit will run until Jan. 28 at the U of A’s Enterprise Square location.

“Today, the Ukrainian community is growing very fast,” said Pogosjan, the director of the Kule Folklore Centre and one of two curators of the exhibit. “And when communities grow, the question of the roots of the heritage and the history becomes very important.”

Images of Faith, Hope and Beauty features five collections, from artists like Wadym Dobrolige, who grew up in the Soviet-con-

trolled Ukraine and escaped to Canada, where he painted icons and designed iconostasis (a wall of icons) that now permeate Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox churches in Alberta.

Dobrolige’s collection includes initial sketches and a “black book” of ideas, which inspired the Images of Faith, Hope and Beauty exhibit. Also featured is Oleksander Klymenko’s Icons on Ammo Boxes, a series of icons painted on wooden boards from ammunition boxes from the Donbass War, the ongoing armed conflict with pro-Russian forces following Russia’s annexation of Crimea.

“For me, what’s really unex-

pectedly interesting is that when you put together pieces from different collections, they suddenly explain each other,” said Pogosjan. “This is for me, something really special.”

Included in the exhibit is a wall of icons, an embroidered vestment, and an authorized copy of the Shroud of Turin provided by the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, one of only 10 authorized copies in the world. The shroud is a length of linen cloth bearing the image of a man believed to be Jesus.

“It’s not a Ukrainian icon. However, we heard from Catholic schools that they would love to be close to it, and explain to students, to children, the significance and the history. But in a church setting, it’s very hard to do. Here, you can have a proper lesson, you can have a discussion.”

One of the most important aspects of this exhibit, according to Pogosjan, is the accessibility of the exhibit for those who may not visit Ukrainian churches. “It’s nice to have this loud space, where you

can approach sacred objects which were taken out of this holy space and can be looked at closely.”

Several of the icons, including “The Mother of God with Saints,” were smuggled out during the Cold War, when Ukraine was controlled by the former Soviet Union.

“Most icons were kept hidden,” said Pogosjan. “And it doesn’t take very long for an icon to be destroyed.”

Though the exhibit ends in January, the icons might travel once again, with the exhibit possibly moving to Calgary and other locations outside of Edmonton in the future. Regardless, the information gleaned from an ever-increasing collection inspires Pogosjan to look toward the future.


“We’ve already collected a lot of interesting information about the pieces, and it looks like we need to share them.”

More information about the exhibit can be found by visiting the University of Alberta’s website at <http://www.ukrfolk.ualberta.ca/ProjectsandResearch/Exhibits/icon-exhibit.aspx>




Grandin Media/Chris Berthelot

ICON FROM UKRAINE — This small and worn icon of the Virgin Mary with two saints was brought from Ukraine to Canada over 42 years ago.



in
collaboration
with



HEALING THE HEALERS WORKSHOP SERIES

This series explores the art of diagnosing and responding to the human experience of spiritual suffering, which has universal applications for everyone, particularly professional and family caregivers. These four workshops focus on forgiveness, relatedness, meaning, and hope. Circles of Trust will be held monthly between each of the workshops for participants who wish to continue learning in a supported environment (included in workshop fee).

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP: Series Overview

Sunday, January 28, 2018 (1:00 pm to 4:00 pm)
Registration: \$25.00

Workshop 1: UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL PAIN

Friday, April 6 and Saturday, April 7, 2018 (9:00 am to 5:00 pm each day)

“Understanding Spiritual Pain” explores how facing or leaning into spiritual pain has a profound impact on those receiving and giving care. Tools for detecting and alleviating spiritual and emotional distress in times of loss, transition, illness, and at the end of life will be provided along with a total pain management model that reduces anxiety and improves the quality of living. Our understanding of spiritual pain has implications for our lives and the lives of all those around us.


Registration: \$475.00/workshop

Includes refreshments, lunch, a manual, and an opportunity for support between workshops.

Group registration discount available for 5+ people.

Overnight accommodation and meals available at an extra cost.

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For more information or to register, call 780-701-1854 or visit our website at www.providencerenewal.ca



A Sacred Space in a Busy World

Winter to Easter ...

QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL – Men’s Retreat

Friday, Jan 26 (7:00 pm) to Sunday, Jan 28 (1:00 pm)
Richard Groves
\$280.00 (suite) \$240.00 (single) \$190.00 (commute)

SACRED ART OF LIVING AND DYING: HEALING THE HEALERS – Series Introduction

Sunday, Jan 28 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
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LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

Spiritual Care in a Media-Saturated Culture

Wednesday, Feb 7 9:30 am to 4:00 pm (lunch included)
Richard Leonard, SJ \$95.00 or \$75.00 with a valid student ID

GOD’S MERCY SEEKS AND SAVES – Lenten Retreat

Friday, Feb 23 (7:00 pm) to Sunday, Feb 25 (1:00 pm)
Fr. Raldy Jhack Diaz
\$280.00 (suite) \$240.00 (single) \$190.00 (commute)

PRAYING IN PEN – A Lenten Journey

Tuesdays: March 6, 13, 20 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm
Carol Sebastian \$50.00 for 3 weeks

LENTEN SILENCE

Friday, March 9 (7:00 pm) to Sunday, March 11 (1:00 pm)
PRC Spiritual Directors
\$280.00 (suite) \$240.00 (single) \$190.00 (commute)

PRAYING WITH MYSTICS

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Tuesday, March 13 10:00 am to 3:30 pm
Faith Nostbakken \$60.00 includes buffet lunch

Holy Week Retreat


DRAWN INTO THE MYSTERY OF JESUS

Sunday, March 25 (7:00 pm) to Sunday, April 1 (8:00 am)
Alfred Groleau, omi

Full Week: \$675.00 (suite) \$550.00 (single) \$375.00 (commute)
Triduum: \$310.00 (suite) \$270.00 (single) \$165.00 (commute)
Day Commute: \$60.00 per day

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More of the best films of 2017 reach the screen

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Beyond the omnipresent blockbusters like *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* — mostly deserving of the love it’s been getting — year’s end always brings a rush of movie titles competing for recognition on the numerous awards nominations and critics’ lists. Many have yet to open outside a few major metropolitan markets. I won’t say more except that worth watching for are: *Molly’s Game*, *I, Tonya*, *The Post*, *All the Money in the World*, *Phantom Thread*; less so *Downsizing* and *The Greatest Showman*. What follows is my take on two other

room across from Elio, sharing a bathroom. At first Elio finds Oliver to be somewhat arrogant and offhand. Elio plays it cool and spends time with Marzia (Esther Garrel), a girl his own age he has known since childhood. At the same time, as the guys go shirtless in the heat and cool off by swimming, the reedy hollow-chested Elio can’t help notice Oliver’s attractive masculine physique — of the kind celebrated in classical Greek sculpture, the professor might add. In these luminous and sensual surroundings, slowly and

empathetic movie is among the year’s best. Writer-director Guillermo del Toro loves monsters and it’s a human one that’s really to be feared in *The Shape of Water* (<http://www.foxsearchlight.com/theshapeofwater/>). The setting is September 1962 in damp, dreary Baltimore (Toronto locations, actually) where a mute orphaned woman, Eliza Esposito (Sally Hawkins), works as a lowly cleaner in a secretive subterranean Cold War facility alongside a supportive and talkative co-worker, Zelda (Octavia Spencer). Eliza lives over a movie theatre called the Orpheum that’s playing *The Song of Ruth*, a quiet existence limited to solitary pleasures, except for a friendship with another gentle, solitary soul in a neighbouring apartment. Giles (Richard Jenkins) is a middle-aged struggling graphic artist, a closeted gay man who wears a toupee and is used to rejection. One day a sinister government agent, Richard Strickland (Michael Shannon), brings in a “sensitive asset,” a scaly amphibian man-creature — taken from the Amazon where it was revered as a god — held captive in a briny tank. When Richard tangles with the monster, losing several fingers, Elisa and Zelda are called to clean up the mess. But Elisa isn’t repulsed. Instead she is drawn to it, as if sensing another wounded, trapped spirit, feeding it boiled eggs and finding a way to communicate. Meanwhile the laboratory’s head scientist, Dr. Hoffstetler (Michael Stuhlbarg again), is actually a Russian-speaking Soviet spy. Matters come to a head when both sides order the creature to be destroyed — the sadistic Strickland wants a vivisection performed and Hoffstetler’s handlers want to prevent the Americans from learning anything. Eliza, helped by Giles, Zelda and Hoffstetler, pulls off a daring rescue, keeping the creature in her bathtub. Indeed she finds love with it until release becomes possible. In a fantastical black-and-white sequence, she even finds a voice. And in the depths, there is a mystical watershed moment to come. Interviewed by *Filmmaker* magazine at the Venice film festival, Del Toro explained the title’s genesis: “Water is the strongest



CALL ME BY YOUR NAME — Armie Hammer (left) and Timothée Chalamet star in *Call Me By Your Name*, a film which has been nominated for three Golden Globes and will be a sure contender when the Academy Award nominations are announced later this month.

highly recommended releases, both unusual love stories. I somehow missed Italian director Luca Guadagnino’s justly acclaimed *Call Me By Your Name* when it premiered at the Sundance festival almost a year ago. Adapted by Guadagnino, James Ivory and Walter Fasano from André Aciman’s eponymous 2007 novel, the idyllic summer setting is “somewhere in northern Italy,” Lombardy, to be more precise, at the villa shared by a multilingual American Jewish family, Professor Perlman (Michael Stuhlbarg), whose interest is classical Greco-Roman archeology and culture, his French wife, Annella (Amira Casar), and bright, musical 17-year-old son Elio (Timothée Chalamet). Every summer the professor hosts for six weeks one of his graduate research assistants, and so arrives the confident 24-year-old Oliver (Armie Hammer), who is also Jewish. He is settled in a

subtly Elio is drawn to Oliver. Something is stirring in him he cannot resist, or distract through a sexual flirtation with Marzia. The desire only grows stronger, even as he knows it can’t last once Oliver leaves. There are awkward moments in this kind of mutual seduction and a parting that is such sweet sorrow, the pain of which is eased by some wise words from an understanding father. The performances by the two leads are exceptional. Chalamet, who was the boy in *Interstellar*, has grown up into an actor capable of rare emotional nuance. (He plays the boyfriend in *Lady Bird* and also has a small part in the forthcoming *Hostiles*.) Hammer brings just the right touch to his role. Stuhlbarg’s character mostly stays out of the way but delivers the masterful scene of a father speaking to his heartbroken son when it counts most. Visually captivating, with a poignant musical score, this entrancing

she is drawn to it, as if sensing another wounded, trapped spirit, feeding it boiled eggs and finding a way to communicate. Meanwhile the laboratory’s head scientist, Dr. Hoffstetler (Michael Stuhlbarg again), is actually a Russian-speaking Soviet spy. Matters come to a head when both sides order the creature to be destroyed — the sadistic Strickland wants a vivisection performed and Hoffstetler’s handlers want to prevent the Americans from learning anything. Eliza, helped by Giles, Zelda and Hoffstetler, pulls off a daring rescue, keeping the creature in her bathtub. Indeed she finds love with it until release becomes possible. In a fantastical black-and-white sequence, she even finds a voice. And in the depths, there is a mystical watershed moment to come. Interviewed by *Filmmaker* magazine at the Venice film festival, Del Toro explained the title’s genesis: “Water is the strongest



THE SHAPE OF WATER — Sally Hawkins and Octavia Spencer star in the film *The Shape of Water*. It has been included on many lists of the top films of 2017.

element there is, because it has no shape. It takes the shape you need. It’s soft and malleable, but it can cut through rock. And exactly the same thing can be said about love. Love has no shape. It takes the shape or the entity of

bloody, rain-soaked climax, it is an adult one. That caution aside, blessed with evocative dreamlike cinematography and virtuoso performances, *The Shape of Water* stands as another of the year’s best movies.

Call Me By Your Name (Italy/France/Brazil/U.S.)
The Shape of Water (Canada/U.S.)

the person that you put it in. I very much wanted to show the story of a love that seems to be between two creatures that are completely opposite of one another.” This may be a fairy tale, the bookends of which are narrated by Giles, but with some sexual and violent content, including a

*As a footnote, the amphibian-man monster is realized by Del Toro regular Doug Jones, coincidentally the namesake of Alabama’s newest senator, who defeated the monstrous far-right Republican candidate Roy Moore a few weeks ago. You might say the better man prevailed in both cases.



Leigh Sassi

For The New Year
Dawn’s latest hues wash over the land.
Frost, like sheers, lays over windows.
Snowed roads are almost empty now.
Swallows flutter by in search of food.
The town is quiet, after the parties.
Life has moved inside, to the quiet round the warmth of fond memories.
We are stilled with new resolutions.
But the stilled self is not complete.
Live whole — love children,
visit the lonely, ladle soup,
plant trees — any, any action
that holies our world this year.
By Michael Dallaire

Website:
<http://www.prairiemessenger.ca>

Become ‘rock solid’ in the face of life’s challenges



Liturgy and Life

Brenda Merk Hildebrand

“What are you looking for?”

When this question is posed to us we are usually in the middle of a scramble to locate something. Sorting through and tossing aside everything in our way, our face reveals the intensity of our search. The questioner is often indicating a concern for our situation, hoping they have the answer or expressing a willingness to join us in our search.

John’s disciples were searchers. They followed him, obviously wanting something more, something different than life was currently offering. Sincere and honest, John made it clear he was not the Messiah; he was simply making way for the One to who was to come.

When Jesus walked by, John did not say much. His disciples were primed, ready for this moment. They did not glance up and turn away. They looked to the one of whom John was speaking. Scripture scholars explain that the word translated for us as “look” refers to a careful and intentional searching, a “sizing up” sort of gaze.

Merk Hildebrand has a passion for education, spiritual and palliative care. She is a Benedictine Oblate of the House of Bread Monastery in Nanaimo, B.C. Contact Brenda through her website: www.thegentlejourney.ca or via email: thegentlejourney@gmail.com

Jesus would have felt it in his being, similar, I imagine, to the times we have looked directly into the eyes of someone who is studying us. Jesus would have known they were looking with more than idle curiosity. There is an intensity in Jesus’ question, “What are you looking for?” Imagine listening to the ensuing conversation and feel the power of a simple roadside exchange that led to an invitation: “Come and see.”

We might slip ourselves into the drama. We have been primed, we have heard about the Messiah. We stare after Jesus and he turns and faces us. The moment of truth arrives. Everything else drops away as the sincerity of our search is considered. What am I looking for? Do I honestly call him Teacher? Do I want to know where he is staying and see how he lives? Do I really want to follow him?

At every age and stage of our lives, we are invited to come and see. Some of us are like Samuel. In the first reading, Samuel had the experience of being awakened in

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time January 14, 2018	1 Samuel 3.3b-10, 19 Psalm 40 1 Corinthians 6.13c-15a,17-20 Mark 1:21-28
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the darkness by a voice he didn’t recognize. We are fortunate if, like Samuel, we have a wise elder who guides us to answer, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

There are also those who see us and follow us, wondering who we are and what we are about. Some will be sincere in their search, some will approach in idle curiosity, and some will be looking for a way to discredit us and to condemn the way we are living. We must be alert to the intention. Both John and Jesus looked carefully at their questioners before answering.

In her book *Poustinia*, Catherine Doherty advises us to be polite with curiosity seekers, to briefly answer them, and to end the conversation kindly but firmly. There are

those who are sincere, pilgrims in whom we recognize the search for the Christ. These are invited to remain. With them, we may choose to share our faith, and the particular story of our faith journey.

Some careful discernment is required. Just last week the gospel reading told the story of Herod and his seemingly honourable intentions. Wisdom came to the magi, and wisdom will guide us. Gentle nudges will let us know when, where and how to share the gospel, the good news of our lives. Wherever we are, we also remain in the heart and mind of Christ; we attentively listen for the quiet inner voice that will guide our words and actions. We can hope that our lives become like Samuel’s, and that no words will fall to the ground.

The coming of the Messiah, celebrated less than one month ago, brought a fresh reminder of the light and hope that comes into the world. Carried in our minds and hearts, it is revealed in our words and actions. The opportunity to bring light and hope comes when we least expect it.

On one winter day I saw flashing red lights in the rearview mirror of my vehicle. I was soon to be reminded that the speed limit in special zones in my new community was 30 km per hour and not the 40 km limit of my previous community. An angry officer gave me the full force of his frustration. Somehow, in the face of an onslaught of words, I was mysteriously made upright and solid inside. We ended up having a conversation after which he commented he was glad he had pulled me over. Offering that it had been “an exceptionally bad day,” he explained that he now felt ready to go home and celebrate Valentine’s Day with his wife. The world was a tiny bit brighter for both of us.

When Simon, son of John, met Jesus, he was given a new name. At times, we are called to receive that name for ourselves: Cephas (Peter) meaning “Rock.” May we be made rock solid, sure and strong in the face of the many challenges life brings our way.

Rolheiser shares his annual list of top 10 books from the past year

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Taste is subjective. Keep that in mind as I share with you the 10 books that most touched me this past year. This isn’t necessarily a recommendation that you read them. They may leave you cold, or angry at me that I praised them. Be your own critic here and one who isn’t afraid to be critical of my taste. Nobody buys everything that’s advertised in a store.

So, what 10 books most touched me this year?

First, I single out some wonderful religious biographies:

— Kate Hennessey’s *Dorothy Day, The World Will be Saved by Beauty*. To my mind, this book is a treasure. As Dorothy Day’s granddaughter, Kate Hennessey had a privileged, intimate relationship with Dorothy, but that relationship also had its headaches and heartaches. Dorothy was a complex person who when called a saint, reacted by saying: “I don’t want to be dismissed that lightly!” This book captures both the saint and the woman resistant to that label.

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— Jim Forest, *At Play in the Lion’s Den — A Biography and Memoir of Daniel Berrigan*. A great insight as to who Daniel Berrigan was as a man, as Jesuit, as a friend, and as a prophet. There will be numerous biographies still written on Berrigan, but none, I venture to say, will surpass this one. Forest knows his subject well.

— Suzanne M. Wolfe, *The Confessions of X, A Novel*. This is fictional biography, a story of St. Augustine’s mistress, Augustine’s love for her, their child, and St. Monica’s role in breaking up that relationship. Not historical, but researched well enough to make it credible.

Next, some religious autobiographies:

— Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, *Coach Wooden and Me, Our 50-Year Friendship On and Off the Court*. You may wonder why I list this book as religious autobiography, but it only needs to be read to answer that question. This isn’t a sports book, but a book that reflects deeply on life, meaning, friendship, race, and religion. Raised a Roman Catholic, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar shares candidly on what prompted his religious move to Islam. There are lessons to be learned here. This is a wonderfully warm story amidst all the pain it shares.

— Macy Halford, *My Utmost, A Devotional Memoir*. As an

Evangelical Christian, Halford grew up with a deep faith, but one that wasn’t strongly challenged in her youth. As a young woman she moved to New York and then later to Paris to become a writer. Surrounded now mostly by friends and colleagues who consider faith a naiveté, she struggled to root her childhood faith more deeply so as to withstand the challenge of the new world she lives in. Her struggle and her eventual solid landing within the faith of her childhood can be a help to us all, regardless of denomination, as we struggle to keep our faith in an overly adult world.

— Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy, A Story of Justice and Redemption*. Bryan Stevenson is a Harvard-educated lawyer who has chosen to put his talents to work in helping the poor, in this case, prisoners on death row who don’t have any means of helping themselves. The issues of racism, poverty, inequality, and how we blind ourselves to them, are front and centre in this powerful book.

— Nina Riggs, *The Bright Hour — A Memoir of Living and Dying*. Nina Riggs died in February and this book shares her blogs as she, a young mother with two pre-teen children, journeys through terminal cancer, alongside her best friend, also a young mother, who is dying of cancer as well. They died a week apart. While Riggs doesn’t write out of an explicit faith, she faces both life and death with a courage, buoyancy, and wit that will make a saint envious. A delightful, deep book: you’ll laugh, you’ll cry — and you’ll learn how death can be faced.

A fine book in the area of Existentialism:

— Sarah Blackwell, *At the Existentialist Café, Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails*. This is one

of the best books written on Existentialism that’s accessible to a non-professional reader. It will introduce you to the giants of Existential philosophy: Sartre, Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, Husserl, and Jaspers. Bakewell believes you will understand a thinker’s philosophy much more accurately if you also have a picture of his or her life: “Ideas are interesting, but people are vastly more so.” Those without a background in philosophy will get lost occasionally, but if you continue reading you will soon find yourselves again fascinated by the lives of these famous, colourful thinkers.

Finally, two books in spirituality, where the author’s pedigree is sufficient recommendation:

— Tomas Halik, *I Want You to Be — On The God of Love*. Halik, a Czechoslovakian priest, is a renowned spiritual writer, winner of the Templeton Prize. This is a book of rare insight and depth.

— Henri Nouwen, *Beyond the Mirror, Reflections on Death and Life*. Nouwen needs no introduction, though this is a unique book within his corpus, chronicling his near-death experience after a serious accident.

Taste may be subjective, but these are good books!

Rule of Faith
As we worship, so we believe, so we live
(Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi)
By Andrew Murray Britz, OSB

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Rule of Faith

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By Andrew Murray Britz, OSB

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For spiritual reasons, we should not drill in Arctic

By Tom Martinez
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Being chased by a grizzly bear was not something I intended for my bucket list, but a trip to the wilds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge changed that for me.

Grizzlies hold a special fascination for me, in part because when you are in their territory you realize that you are not at the top of the food chain, which is something industrialized North Americans rarely experience. No matter what kind of gun you have (my wife and I had a 12-gauge shotgun with slugs — recommended by the locals), when you lie down to sleep inside a sheer little tent you can't help but feel like a daintily wrapped morsel.

Before taking our month-long, 482-km trek, we thought a lot about bears. Once there, we realized how they had become a lightning rod for a complicated mix of feelings about the wild. It was this complicated relationship with God's creation we had set out to explore.

Growing up camping up in the Florida Panhandle, I swam with alligators, but despite being immersed in God's natural world I always felt somehow removed from it. I hungered for a deeper intimacy, one that would uncover a true relationship with God's creatures and the wilderness that God created. And so with that hunger for connection, my wife and I set off on our adventure to the Arctic, one of the last really wild places in North America.

The refuge spans over 19 million acres of wilderness and, as one of the most biologically productive ecosystems in the world, has been legally protected from the oil industry since 1960. In addition to being home to grizzlies, polar bears, Arctic foxes and 200 bird species, the refuge is also home to the Gwich'in people, a Native American tribe that has subsisted on the Arctic landscape for millennia.

On our first few days travelling down the Porcupine River, we were puzzled by the complete absence of wildlife. Then one day as we sat on boulders eating our lunch, a fox passed by almost close enough to touch. What was so striking was its attitude. It looked at me as if I were the curiosity, a look that I am confident a different fox would receive were it to traverse the urban or suburban areas we humans mainly inhabit. The encounter with the

fox reminded me that humans are not the sole inhabitants of God's Earth and indeed there are numerous places where wild paw prints in the dirt vastly outnumber our own.

We took to travelling on our river journey by night, which never grew completely dark. The sun lowered in the sky and then rose again, plunging us into a kaleidoscope of natural beauty and wonder. One night we heard wolves howling and we spontaneously howled back. Then to our surprise the wolves appeared along the riverbank and ran alongside us. What followed was a howling back and forth — human to canine — which served to reconnect my wife and me to the wild depths from which we all emerged. It was a brief glimpse into how the untaming of ourselves can reunite us with our created selves.

In our modern world we have become alienated from our integral relationship to the ecological systems of God's Earth. Perhaps the physical, emotional and spiritual distance we have put between ourselves as humans and the natural world allows us to approach the wild as a place to conquer. A place we can guiltlessly raid as we extract resources such as oil and gas.

The Arctic Refuge will be opened up for drilling, according to the GOP tax bill compromise announced Dec. 20. But the price we pay for our disconnection with God's creatures and wilderness is vast and life-threatening. Our physical bodies pay a toll as the impacts of pollution seep into our being, ravaging some of our most vulnerable communities that sit on the fence lines of our industrial society. Perhaps most profound is the spiritual price we pay as we desperately seek for what we have lost, tormented by our disconnection and isolation as a species.

With an expanded awakening to the meanings we have heretofore lost, there comes a growing sense of urgency and a call to deepen our understanding of our true place in God's creation — moving from a place of dominance to one of stewardship and caregiving. As we begin to shift our consciousness from a view of the planet as an object to be conquered to one more akin to how the Gwich'in experience it, as "the sacred place where life begins," only then can we find our true selves as God's created beings.

As I fled the grizzly, the question that lingered afterward was whether we will come to see that the monsters we fear in the wild are really projections of our own grasping. Can we learn to live in

right relationship with God's creation — giving up calls for drilling in pristine and sacred places like the Arctic Refuge — and allow our children and grandchildren the beautiful experience of wilderness? Luckily for me, in that

encounter with the grizzly, when she got close enough she stopped in her tracks, perhaps recognizing me for the inferior meal I would provide. We beheld each other for a few brief but unforgettable moments, moments that allowed a

glimpse of my relationship with her not as monster to man, but as God's creature to God's creature. Then, she turned and disappeared into one of the last vestiges of the wild, a place I pray we never dare to drill.



Design Pics

GOD'S WILDERNESS — "The Arctic Refuge will be opened up for drilling, according to the GOP tax bill compromise announced Dec. 20. But the price we pay for our disconnection with God's creatures and wilderness is vast and life-threatening," writes Tom Martinez.

Just writing #MeToo can be tough

This column titled "Just writing #MeToo can be tough" is from the Dec. 14 issue of The Catholic Messenger, newspaper of the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa. It was written by Kathy Berken, who writes a monthly column called "On Deck" for the newspaper.

I enter this column with some trepidation because this is the first time in 50 years that I've written my story for strangers. The recent flood of news reports about sexual misconduct moved me to step up to the plate.

Rest assured I won't share any explicit details about the 10 years of my childhood spent at the hands of a pedophile. During the 1950s and '60s, a man who worked for my uncle as a masseur molested me and most of my male and female cousins, and was never caught. Back then, our society was nearly silent about such behaviour, except for whispered references to "dirty old men in bars" or "perverts in the park."

We know now that most perpetrators know their victims. According to RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), "Of sexual abuse cases reported to law enforcement, 93 per cent of juvenile victims knew the perpetrator: 59 per cent were acquaintances; 34 per cent were family members; seven per cent were strangers to the victim" (www.rainn.org). CNN reports that one in four females in the U.S. will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime ("Sexual harassment: How it stands around the globe," Nov. 25, 2017).

The whole family knew him, but only the kids knew the dirt, including his classic pedophile behaviour called "grooming." When I was seven, he touched my knee briefly as I sat at a table,

playing in my room. That exact moment — which otherwise could seem innocent — burned into my memory. I still remember the scared feeling in my gut, but had no reference to judge it with. I kept playing; he patted me again on my knee and walked out. Thus, it began.

Each time he'd visit, it became more personal. This was "our little secret," he'd say and then give me gifts for being a "good girl." For those 10 years I lived two lives, clinically referred to as "dissociation." In one, I enjoyed school, worked on our farm, played with friends, learned skills and helped around the house. My other life — dark and filled with shame — took a sharp turn one morning when I was 17. That Friday when he visited he looked very ill and, oddly, he didn't touch me. Early Saturday I heard a scream coming from the living room. Our family rushed in to see him push his hand against the wall, collapse and die. My brother and I smiled. The funeral director arrived with a body bag and told us kids to leave the room. I obeyed, imagining this liberating scene of him being zipped up and carried away.

Finally, I was free. Or so I thought. Intense shame and guilt overwhelmed me so much that I went to confession. It didn't help. Years of therapy, talking with close friends and educating myself, did. I learned that absolutely none of it was my fault. I also learned, too late, that

"fight and flight" are not the only natural responses to fear/trauma. Psychologists have added "freeze" to that list, which eventually explained the paralysis I experienced.

The first person I told was our young assistant pastor, who patiently listened as we walked around the high school track one rainy evening. He wanted me to tell my parents, but I said I wouldn't hurt them with information they could do nothing about, as the man was dead. My parents both died eight years later spared of that pain. I never regretted that decision.

Over the years, talking to people I trust has proven extremely therapeutic. Thirty years ago, feeling safe and supported, I spoke publicly about it during my Cursillo talk. How wonderful when several women came forward saying it also happened to them. One just wrote me a note stating, "We're sisters."

Just as our children need to learn about boundaries, so too do we adults need to learn that none of us has the right to touch anyone without their permission. Here's an excellent article at www.girlscouts.org: "Reminder: She Doesn't Owe Anyone a Hug. Not Even at the Holidays."

I pray that, no matter what happened to you, or when, you can tell someone you trust. The #MeToo campaign is giving people like us courage to speak up so we can heal. We are not alone and we are not to blame.

Millions of us — men and women — belong to a club none of us ever wanted to join, but we are connected and we can support and listen to each other.

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Martinez is senior pastor at the Desert Palm UCC in Tempe, Ariz.

Bernard Law, a cardinal of scandal and disgrace

By Thomas Reese, SJ
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Beginning his priestly life as a journalist, Bernard Law rose quickly up the ecclesiastical ladder only to come crashing down in scandal and disgrace. May God have mercy on his soul.

As editor of the Natchez-Jackson, Miss., diocesan newspaper in the 1960s, Father Law bravely supported the civil rights movement. He even had to hide in the trunk of a car when his life was threatened. He also spent

Reese, a Jesuit priest, is a senior analyst at RNS. Previously he was a columnist at the National Catholic Reporter (2015-17) and an associate editor (1978-85) and editor-in-chief (1998-2005) at America magazine.

time at the U.S. bishops' conference in Washington, where as head of the office of ecumenism he worked on improving relations with Protestants and Jews.

As a result, by the time he became bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau in 1973, he had solid progressive credentials in both ecumenism and social justice. While in Missouri, he became friendly with the Bush family through George H.W. Bush's brother, who had financial interests in the state.

In 1984, Law was promoted to Archbishop of Boston, where he was the first archbishop to have attended Harvard University. His arrival was greeted with great hope.

He soon saw his role as a national and international leader. His connection to the Bush family proved invaluable and probably moderated his political views. He strongly supported the pro-life agenda of the

pope and the American bishops, but not the consistent ethic of life espoused by Chicago Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

Even so, Law was not afraid to use his influence to support the policies of the bishops' conference. One staff person reports he was well-briefed and effective when meeting with Cabinet secretaries. His phone call was also put through to Air Force One to complain when the Reagan administration attempted to classify ketchup as a vegetable in school lunches.

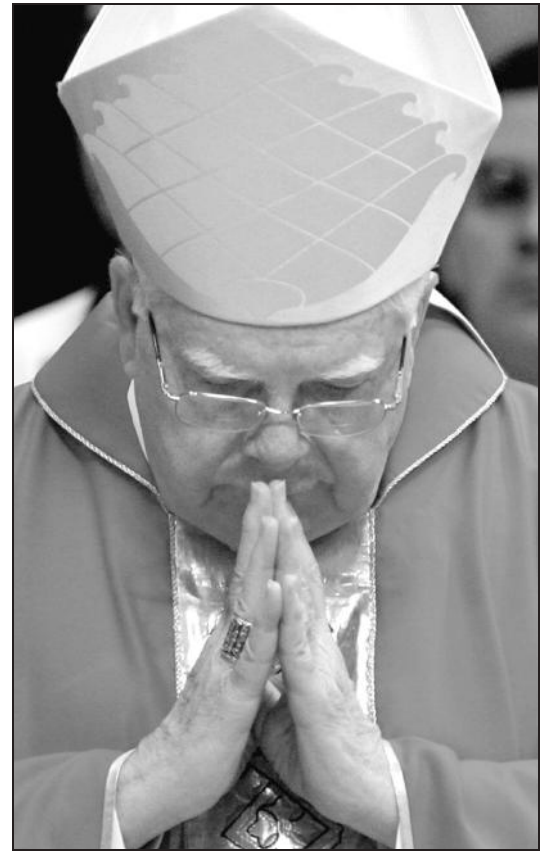
As a loyal supporter of John Paul II, Law also played an active role in the church as a cardinal. The Vatican used him in communicating with the Bush White House, especially prior to the pope's historic visit to Cuba. In return, the Vatican often followed his recommendations for episcopal appointments in the U.S.

With this power and influence

came a growing arrogance that demanded others, including bishops, defer to him. Rather than trying to persuade his fellow bishops, he did end runs around them by going to Rome to get his way. Bishops did not appreciate this and responded by voting him down for conference offices, including president.

But it was his failures in supervising the priests of Boston that brought him down. Whether through stupidity or arrogance, he failed to deal with the priests who abused children, including serial abusers. When the bishops privately discussed the issue, he encouraged stonewalling. He even passed on bad priests to other bishops without telling them of their abuse. His attempts to hide the truth made matters worse.

Cardinal Law's life is a cautionary tale of what can happen to an ambitious cleric who loses sight of his duty to serve the People of God. His inability to respond compassionately to the pain and suffering of abuse survivors and their families was criminal. That many more bish-



CNS/Tony Gentile, Reuters

A CARDINAL OF SCANDAL — Cardinal Bernard F. Law, who had been one of the United States' most powerful and respected bishops until his legacy was blemished by the devastating sexual abuse of minors by priests in his Archdiocese of Boston, died Dec. 20 in Rome at the age of 86. He is pictured in a 2005 photo at the Vatican.

ops did not resign because of their failure to stop abusive priests is a scandal.

Pope Francis is right in identifying clericalism as a perennial sin in the church. The adoption of zero tolerance for abusive priests was long overdue. We also need zero tolerance for bishops who, like Law, fail to do their duty.

Volunteering both sad and ultimately good



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

Where are your acts of charity? Where are your righteous deeds? — Tobit 2.14

Every year St. Mary's University in Calgary puts together a volunteer contingent to support the Our Lady Queen of Peace Ranch, which organizes a massive Christmas charity event for underprivileged children. The Ranch makes everything from face painting to crafts, meals, presents, and winter clothing available to the children and their families free of charge.

As long-time volunteers for this event, my kids and I have always been uplifted and humbled by this initiative, and as a university president I am equally moved by the tremendous response our students make in volunteering. In some years close to one-fifth of the university student population has turned out to help for this one event alone!

Volunteering is an odd thing. In some ways it is deeply selfish. There's no question that we do good for ourselves in the process of doing good for others. In other ways volunteering is deeply sad. In the context of social justice, volunteering is a necessary evil — something that has to be done because our societies are deeply unequal, and deeply flawed. Shelters, food banks, clothing bins: all of these exist because our society fails to deliver equity to all, and thus volunteers are needed to meet a profound failure by our community.

Yet of course, volunteering is ultimately good, even with all of these qualifications, because its

Turcotte is president of St. Mary's University in Calgary.

existence recognizes that there are many who care deeply for others, who recognize the failure of social structures to provide what should be a basic right, and they work to address it to some degree.

More than ever, educational institutions recognize this important fact and find ways to encourage a community of giving and sharing. It is yet another way for us to create what Pope Francis has called a "culture of encounter." For this to work, however, it is critical that we allow ourselves to be disempowered, overwhelmed and even at times humbled by the process of encounter. I once had a friend angrily complain that the homeless people he was reluctantly

assisting didn't seem sufficiently grateful for his help. I asked if he was doing this for gratitude and he seemed puzzled by the question. "No," he finally responded, "but it's the least they can do."

At another workshop, held in a homeless shelter, one of our students asked a resident, "What's the most difficult part of being homeless?" I think we were all expecting a comment about the cold, the hunger or the loneliness. Instead, one gentleman replied: "Being invisible. No one looks you in the eye." It was a humbling reminder that all of us, rich or poor, homeless or otherwise, need the dignity of encounter, of human connectedness.

It has become a cliché for people to remind us that the Holy Family were themselves homeless, and that their humble shelter was only begrudgingly afforded to them. But it is no less true. The Christmas miracle needs to be relived through story but also through action. And we need to use this time to create a space for everyone to belong: even when it's uncomfortable to do so.

Young members can teach

Continued from page 4

Christian Charities.

While administrative and promotional spending may be motivating for a small number of donors, what percentage goes to cover overhead is not going to determine whether or how much most donors give, Pellowe said.

"The question for the donor is how effectively are they accomplishing their mission, not what percentage goes to good works,"

At the Archdiocese of Toronto's ShareLife appeal, those percentages still matter a lot.

"Donors trust ShareLife because of our established record of fiscal prudence," ShareLife communications manager Kris Dmytrenko said in an email to The Catholic Register. "We keep our costs low by allocating only three per cent of funds to administration

and seven per cent to fundraising."

At the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, social media activism, volunteering and regular, monthly donations all fit together in a continuum.

Young people engaged with Development and Peace on social media will take that next step to volunteering. Then, once volunteering, they will make whatever financial commitment they can, said director of engagement Genevieve Gallant. At the 50-year-old Catholic charity, finding a new generation of donors is a process being led by young people themselves.

"It's our young members who are teaching us about what's next," said Gallant. "What's exciting is that we have young people in our movement and amongst our staff who are really teaching us about the potential of social media for outreach."



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Happy New Year

The media often portrays the transition to the new year with a cartoon showing an old person welcoming the new baby. This emphasizes the birth of a new year — and new opportunities and challenges.

Recently I read another way of portraying the beginning of a new year, an image perhaps more fitting for the consumer society we live in.

A customer was shopping for groceries. She was in the six-item express lane at the grocery store quietly getting angry. She was getting angry because ahead of

her, completely ignoring the six-item sign, a woman had slipped into the checkout line pushing a cart piled high with groceries. The cashier beckoned the woman to come forward, looked into the cart and asked her sweetly, “So, which six items would you like to buy?”

The customer was delighted at the cashier’s sweet way of handling the woman, and delighted at the fact that she didn’t let the woman get away with it.

This image of a grocery cart can help us reflect on the kind of “baggage” we carry over from one year to the next. What kind of baggage has our developed world taken unjustly from our developing world?

When retired people move out of their homes into a retirement home, they need to downsize. A new year lets us dream how we can downsize in a personal way — not only materially, but also personally and spiritually.

A new year also lets us dream how the world can downsize from its old ways of violence and corruption and welcome new ways of justice and peace.

Our prayer as we enter a new year can be that our cart may be less filled with what causes hatred and division, to leave room for those items that bring justice and peace. — PWN

Tom Deutscher revealed true meaning of ‘compassion’ to his family

Building a Culture of Life

Mary Deutscher



There are certain words in the English language that we use so often that we forget what they really mean. For example, when was the last time that you used the word “literally” when you were clearly exaggerating? Or said something was “awesome” when it was far from awe-inspiring.

Another word that often gets used outside its true meaning is “compassion.” More and more I hear this word used to mean feeling sorry for someone; however, compassion means a lot more than that. It is actually derived from two Latin roots: *passion* which means “to suffer” (think of the *passion* of Christ), and *com* which means “with.” When we are compassionate, we *suffer with* someone. We walk alongside them and feel what they are feeling in an intimate way.

But he would lie beside me while I cried and would make sure that I knew I wasn’t alone.

Last June, I was given the opportunity to return this compassion when my dad passed away after a year-long journey with brain cancer. Dad’s illness slowly took away his ability to use his body. First he could not move his legs, and then his arms became too clumsy to be useful. Eventually he could not speak, but his eyes still

lit up every time he saw me. Although he was completely dependent on his caregivers, it was clear that every moment he spent with his family was worth living.

The final weeks of dad’s life were filled with suffering, but my family and I stayed with him, knowing that he needed us by his side as he completed his journey. We kept track of how often he was turned in his bed; we planned parties at his care home so he would feel involved; and we told lots of jokes to keep him smiling. In his final moments my mother, my aunt and I sang his favourite hymn to him, knowing that we had cherished every moment that had been given to us.

In those moments, I finally understood why my dad had laid beside me so many times when I was a child. When you love some-

one, your decision is made for you: you are already experiencing their suffering whether you want to or not. The only choice you have is whether or not to open yourself to feel this pain and commit yourself to being present.

If there is one other thing I can say about my journey with my dad, it is that our suffering as a family would have been considerably eased if we had had access to hospice care. Dad lived his final three months in a long-term care facility that was staffed by awesome (in the truest sense) people, but they did not have the resources they needed to give him the care he deserved. A hospice would have provided him with simple yet critical care: regular baths, an opportunity for home-cooked meals, and more frequent visits from a specialized physi-

cian as his condition changed.

People with illnesses similar to my dad’s need a type of care that can only be provided by hospice care, something that is currently sparsely available in Saskatchewan. However there are projects underway to try to improve access to this type of care. Contact the Hospice Palliative Care Association of Saskatchewan to learn more about how you can help ensure families are given the support they need to journey compassionately with those they love.

Compassion is so much more than wanting to end another person’s suffering. It’s having the courage to walk down a path that all of us would prefer to never have to walk down. True compassion — true love — is lying with someone in the dark when there is nothing else you can do.

American agriculture faces a silent crisis with labour

This unsigned editorial titled: “What we owe America’s farmworkers” appeared in the Dec. 25 issue of America magazine, a national Catholic weekly magazine published by the Jesuits.

U.S. agriculture is facing a silent crisis. The Trump administration’s crackdown on undocumented immigrants has sown fear among farmworker communities, making workers harder to find than ever. Farm owners across the country are anxious about meeting their labour needs. Millions of dollars’ worth of crops are at the risk of rotting.

The present labour shortage reveals U.S. society’s dependence on farmworkers. The hands that pick what Americans eat are hands the country relies on. And with almost no native-born Americans willing to do the job, Latino immigrants have become indispensable. Even in the midst of the severe fires in California, farmworkers could not stop working lest harvests be lost.

Yet the nation’s collective reliance on farmworkers is not reflected in the way they are treated. In California, which produces two-thirds of the nation’s fruits, rates of food insecurity for farmworkers and their families range from 40 per cent to 70 per cent. Farmworkers’ low wages directly contribute to growers’ profit, but farmworkers regularly cannot afford to buy the food they pick.

Working conditions for farmworkers can be harsh. Even under the best conditions, a day of work is one of hard manual labour, with long hours and often high temperatures. The Trump administration’s Environmental Protection Agency has approved the use of a pesticide known to be harmful to human beings. Farmworkers have already gotten sick on the job as a result.

Society’s failures toward farmworkers extend beyond poor working conditions. The children of migrant farmworkers endure seasonal displacement that can make staying in school difficult. Social mobility is weak for those born into farmworker communities, creating a generational cycle of poverty. State and local governments resist attempts by farmworkers to organize for greater protections. And despite being dependent on farmworker labour, many local communities are openly hostile to migrant workers.

It does not have to be this way. In 2016, California recognized the right of farmworkers to equal overtime pay. In Florida, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers secured commitments from fast-food chains to buy only from agricultural sources that meet improved stan-

dards on pay and work conditions. That model of direct pressure on major companies is spreading. In Vermont, immigrant dairy workers just claimed victory in an agreement with the ice cream maker Ben and Jerry’s.

It is curious that so many Americans care about eating ethically (vegan, vegetarian, organic or free range) but do not think as much about the poverty and exploitation among the largely Latino farmworkers who are making their meals possible. Labelling programs, including the Equitable Food Initiative label, the Food Justice Certified label and the United Farm Workers Union label, support the fair treatment of farmworkers, but there is little indication that products carrying those labels are sought out by consumers.

The United States must do more to treat farmworkers with justice. A

huge step would be to lift the threat of deportation that looms over many farmworkers by passing comprehensive immigration reform that recognizes both the need for labour in the United States and those labourers’ right to dignity and opportunity. Rectifying the injustice of the 1930s — when farmworkers were excluded from new federal labour standards — and finally offering farmworkers the same labour protections as other workers is also necessary. Farm work, like all work, carries an inherent dignity and should be a viable path for immigrant families into the American middle class.

The common thread in all the challenges farmworkers face is a lack of urgency. Perhaps every time Americans say grace before a meal, they could spare a moment to remember those who make that meal possible.

Letters to the editor

We welcome your response to articles published in the Prairie Messenger. Two-way communication assures everyone of a better exposure to the truth.

We cannot publish any letters to the editor unless you give us your full name, your address and your telephone number. *(It is especially important to remember this if you are sending your comments by email).*

Due to limited space we ask you to keep your letters short — 300 to 350 words maximum. The Prairie Messenger reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space requirements and newspaper style.

Mideast patriarchs express hope amid uncertainty

By Doreen Abi Raad

BEIRUT (CNS) — Catholic patriarchs of the Middle East — with hope, despite uncertainty in the region — called for peace, security, prayer and solidarity at Christmastime.

From Baghdad, Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako expressed hope for a “new phase” for his country, that the recent triumph over the Islamic State and the termination of terrorist control of Mosul and other Iraqi cities is a step toward security and stability.

But the liberation of those areas, he said, requires the Iraqi government to work to facilitate “the return of Christians to their homes and properties, preserving their rights as indigenous citizens, recognizing their culture, civilization and heritage as an essential part of Iraq’s history and preventing demographic changes in their

historical geographic areas.”

Sako reiterated that before the American-led invasion of 2003, there were more than 1.5 million Christians in Iraq. More than half of that Christian population has migrated due to discrimination, threats, abductions and the expulsion from their homes in Ninevah Plain by the Islamic State in 2014, he said.

“This is our homeland and we insist (we) remain here,” he said.

He called for unity among Iraqi Christians as well as for them to work “hand in hand with their fellow Muslims.” The future, Sako said, “cannot be built without tolerance and coexistence.”

“So, let us move to the path of hope together,” Sako said.

“In regard to Muslims, an honest dialogue is a must, to understand the truth of each side and accept it,” he said.

Alluding to U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to recog-

nize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the Chaldean patriarch urged Christians “to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, who have been suffering from injustice and displacement for 70 years.” He also called on them “to pray for Jerusalem to remain a holy city for Christians, Muslims and Jews.”

In his Christmas message, Lebanese Cardinal Bechara Rai, Maronite patriarch, also touched upon Trump’s declaration regarding Jerusalem.

“We categorically reject it because it is an unjust and hostile decision toward Christianity and Islam, and of the Palestinian people in particular,” Rai said. He said the decision demolished peace negotiations and could “ignite a new uprising and even war, God forbid.”

Citing World Bank studies, Rai noted that one-third of the Lebanese people remain below the



CNS/Mohamad Torokman, Reuters

PROTEST IN JERUSALEM — A Palestinian hurls a stone toward Israeli troops during a clash near the West Bank city of Nablus Dec. 29. Demonstrations are against President Donald Trump’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This could “ignite a new uprising and even war, God forbid,” said Lebanese Cardinal Bechara Rai, Maronite patriarch.

poverty level. Furthermore, the presence of one million displaced Syrians and hundreds of Iraqis as well as half a million Palestinian refugees is “compounding the needs of the Lebanese.”

Rai called upon the Prince of Peace to protect Lebanon and “this growing (Middle East) region where Christianity originated, and to spread the culture of love, brotherhood and peace.”

Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan noted that Lebanon, “the only country where all citizens enjoy the best possible liberty and equality,” had faced numerous trials in 2017. In his Christmas message from the patriarchate in Beirut, he thanked God that the Lebanese army dispelled terrorist groups that were threatening Lebanon’s “very existence.”

Without Christ, Christmas becomes fake

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Only when Christ is the focus of the Christmas season do all the colourful lights, carols, special meals and traditions help create a festive and joyous atmosphere, Pope Francis said.

“If we take him away, the lights go out and everything become fake, illusory,” he said at his weekly general audience Dec. 27.

“Without Jesus, there is no Christmas. It’s some other celebration, but it isn’t Christmas,” he said to applause.

Dedicating his audience talk to the true meaning of Christmas as a celebration of Christ’s birth, the pope greeted pilgrims gathered in the Vatican’s Paul VI audience hall, which was decorated with a Christmas tree and a life-size Nativity scene.

The crèche, the liturgies and the seasonal songs all help the faithful relive today the birth of Christ the saviour, he said.

However, especially in Europe, he said, Christmas is being stripped of its true nature “in the name of a false respect for those

who are not Christian.” But, often the true motive behind eliminating any reference to the birth of Christ is a desire to “marginalize faith.”

Just as God gave the world his son — born at night to a poor girl in a stable in Bethlehem — he still sends Christ into a world that is enveloped by darkness and slumbers, the pope said.

“And still today we witness the fact that often humanity prefers darkness because people know that light reveals all those actions and thoughts that would shame and prick one’s conscience,” he said. “So, people prefer to stay in the dark and not disturb their erring ways.”

Instead, people are called to be like the shepherds, seeking out that true guiding light, who appears first to those who are marginalized and poor, he said.

“Jesus establishes a friendship with the lowly and despised,” the pope said; he offers hope and encouragement for building a better world, where “there are no longer any people who are turned away, mistreated and destitute.”

“God opened for us the way to a new life, built not on selfish-

ness, but upon love,” he said.

In that context, he said, exchanging gifts on Christmas is a sign of accepting God’s example and teaching: to freely give oneself, one’s love and tenderness to others.

“The true gift for us is Jesus and, like him, we want to be a gift for others,” especially for those who have never experienced any love, care and tenderness in their lives, he said. The Christmas season “encourages us” to do this for others, he added.

At the end of the audience, members of Italy’s Golden Circus performed for the pope. After two giant costumed polar bears did a little dance, female acrobats dressed in green, dragon-print leotards balanced high atop one another before a male troupe in fake leopard skins leapt into more gravity-defying poses. A muscular “strong man” bent a piece of metal and gave it to the pope, who thanked him for the present.

He thanked the performers for the show, saying the circus — just like all real art — “always brings us closer to God. You, with your work, with your skill, bring people to God. Thank you for what you do.”

Pope: Complex world needs clear essentials of the Gospel

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In an increasingly complex world of unprecedented scientific and technological challenges, theologians must communicate what is essential about life and help Christians proclaim God’s merciful, saving grace, Pope Francis told a group of Italian theologians.

The theologians’ task requires being “faithful and anchored” to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and continuing the council’s focus on the church “letting itself be enriched by the perennial newness of Christ’s Gospel,” he said.

Speaking Dec. 29 at the Vatican to members of the Italian Theological Association, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary,

the pope said theologians and other church workers must always refer back to Vatican II where the church recognized its responsibility to “proclaim the Gospel in a new way.”

Such a task is done not by changing the message, but by communicating the perennial message with “faithful creativity” to a world experiencing rapid transformations, he said.

These changes and challenges require that the church, and theologians in particular, believe that the Gospel “can continue to touch the women and men of today” and work to clearly show people what lies at the heart of the Gospel.

This theological effort of showing what is essential is “indispensable” in a highly complex world of unprecedented scientific and technological advancement, and in a culture where “distorted views of the very heart of the Gospel” can sneak in and spread, he said.

“There needs to be a theology that helps all Christians proclaim and show, most of all, the salvific face of God, the merciful God, especially given the presence of some unprecedented challenges that involve humanity today, such as: the environmental crisis; the development of neuroscience or technology that can alter human beings; ever greater social inequalities or the migration of whole peoples; and relativism in theory and practice.”

He said theology must develop from the work of women and men working together and supporting each other as a community, not as rivals; working to serve the universal church and all particular churches; and to “reimagine the church so that it may conform to the Gospel that it must proclaim.”

Postcard shows horror of war

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As 2017 was drawing to a close, the horrors of war and people’s yearnings for peace were on Pope Francis’ mind and in his prayers.

In an unusual move late Dec. 30, the pope had the Vatican press office and Vatican media distribute a copy of a famous photograph from the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki.

The photo shows a young boy, about 10 years old, carrying his dead little brother on his back. The boy is taking his brother to be cremated.

On the back of the card, Pope Francis wrote, “The fruit of war”

and signed his name.

Below his signature, the pope explained that the photo was taken by U.S. Marine Corps photographer Joseph Roger O’Donnell. After the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, O’Donnell was assigned to document the scenes.

“The sadness of the child is expressed only by his lips, bitten and oozing blood,” the pope wrote.

The Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, printed a copy of the photograph and pope’s explanation on the back page of its edition for Jan. 1, the Catholic Church’s World Peace Day.



CNS/Mohamed Abd El Ghany, Reuters

NEW YEAR’S IN CAIRO — An Egyptian army soldier stands guard outside St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Cairo as worshippers attend New Year’s Eve mass. A gunman’s attack on a Coptic Orthodox church and a Christian-owned shop near Cairo Dec. 29 killed at least nine people. The attack began just as mass ended at the Mar Mina church in the southern Cairo suburb of Helwan. Some people took shelter in an adjacent stationery store.

Grace is the ability to redefine the boundaries of possibility.

— Manning Marable