



## Year in review

“Over and over throughout 2016, Pope Francis spoke of walls and bridges. It is an apt metaphor for much of what transpired in the Catholic world in 2016,” writes Michael Swan.



— page 3

## Family camp

A summer vacation experience with a spiritual dimension is helping families reconnect more deeply, away from everyday cares and interruptions, writes Kiply Yaworski. Cana Continues family camp is an initiative of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon.

— page 5

## Favourite books

There is never enough time to read, writes Ron Rolheiser, OMI. The upside, he says, is that reading becomes a cherished time. He shares his favourite books from the past year.

— page 7

## Silence filmmaker

“In two long interviews with Jesuit publications, director Martin Scorsese described



his new film *Silence* as a major stage in his pilgrimage of faith, a pilgrimage that included flunking

out of the minor seminary, investigating other religions and recognizing that the Catholic Church was his home,” writes Cindy Wooden.

— page 8

## New world disorder

This week Gerald Schmitz reviews *The Age of Jihad: Islamic State and the Great War for the Middle East* by Patrick Cockburn. The book combines Cockburn’s incisive reporting of several decades with insightful up-to-date analysis of this “new world disorder.”

— page 9

## Call for courage

Whether the new year will be good or not depends on us choosing to do good each day, Pope Francis says.

— page 12

# Pope emphasizes our yearning for peace

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The song of the angels that heralded the birth of Christ urges men and women to seek peace in a world divided by war, terrorism and greed, Pope Francis said.

“Today this message goes out to the ends of the earth to reach all peoples, especially those scarred by war and harsh conflicts that seem stronger than the yearning for peace,” the pope said Dec. 25.

Migrants, refugees, children suffering due to hunger and war, victims of human trafficking as well as social and economic unrest were also remembered by the pope.

“Peace to the peoples who suffer because of the economic ambitions of the few, because of the sheer greed and the idolatry of money, which leads to slavery,” he said.

An estimated 40,000 people slowly made their way through security checkpoints into St. Peter’s Square to attend the pope’s solemn Christmas blessing “*urbi et orbi*” (to the city and the world).

Heightened security following the Dec. 19 terrorist attack in Berlin, Germany was evident as police cordoned off streets and established multiple checkpoints throughout the area.

While police presence is stan-



CNS/Paul Haring

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

dard for major events in St. Peter’s, the added security was a sign of the times where crowded

areas have become a target for terrorists.

The pope prayed for “peace to

those who have lost a person dear to them as a result of brutal acts of terrorism that has sown fear and death into the hearts of so many countries and cities.”

Countries ravaged by the scourge of war were also in the pope’s thoughts, particularly in “the wartorn land of Syria, where far too much blood has been spilled,” especially in the city Aleppo. The pope called on the world to support the people of Syria with humanitarian assistance and to put an end to the conflict.

“It is time for weapons to be silenced forever and the international community to actively seek a negotiated solution so that civil coexistence can be restored in the country,” he said.

The pope appealed for peace for the people of Ukraine, “who to this day suffer the consequences of the conflict.”

The Vatican announced Dec. 23 that the first instalment of six mil-

— VIOLENCE, page 11

# ‘Circle’ launched to further reconciliation

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A coalition of seven Catholic organizations have launched the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle to further reconciliation efforts with Canada’s

indigenous peoples.

The Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council (CCAC), the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace/Caritas Canada (CCODP); the Knights of Columbus, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Women’s League; and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) met to formally inaugurate the Circle at the CCCB offices in Ottawa Dec. 5. They will meet again early in the New Year.

“I’m looking forward to a Happy New Year in 2017 for indigenous people and the Catholic Church,” said Deacon Rennie Nahanee, chair of the CCAC and one of five indigenous members of the Circle. Nahanee is a member of the Squamish First Nation

in British Columbia and co-ordinator of First Nations’ Ministry for the Vancouver archdiocese.

“Between the church and indigenous peoples, not everybody knows what their roles are and these need to be defined in the New Year,” he said.

“It shows we are taking seriously the response to the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) Calls to Action,” Nahanee said. “We want to have a good relationship with indigenous people like we used to prior to the residential schools.”

“It’s mutual respect we need to have for each other and the church is changing,” he said. “They want to listen to what the indigenous peoples are saying.”

— RESPECT, page 10

# Pope names first woman to head Vatican Museums

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has chosen, for the first time, a woman to head the Vatican Museums.

Barbara Jatta, 54, is an Italian art historian and graphic arts expert, who had been serving as vice-director of the museums since June.

The Vatican announced the appointment Dec. 20.

She began her new role as director of the museums Jan. 1, 2017, replacing 77-year-old Antonio Paolucci, who had been director since 2007.

Each year millions of people visit the Vatican Museums, which include the Sistine Chapel and more than 50 different galleries. It is one of the largest museums in the world with 200,000 objects in its collections — 20,000 of which are on public display — 27,000 square feet of frescoes, and 4.35 miles of exhibit space.

Jatta started working at the Vatican in 1996 when she was hired to head the Vatican Library’s departments of prints. In 2010, she was named curator of the artwork in the prints department at the

library.

She has degrees in literature, archive administration and art history, specializing in the history of drawing, engraving and graphic arts. She also taught history of graphic arts at the *Suor Orsola Benincasa* University in Naples. She is married and the mother of three children.



CCN/D. Gyapong

**CIRCLE MEMBER** — Irving Papineau, vice-chair of the Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council, is also a member of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle. He addressed the last CCCB plenary as part of a panel on indigenous issues.



# Even complaining to God is a form of prayer: pope

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — To complain to God in moments of doubt and fear like Abraham did is not something bad but rather is a form of prayer that requires the courage to hope beyond all hope, Pope Francis said.

While in life there may be times of frustration and darkness, “hope is still there and it moves us forward,” the pope said Dec. 28 during his weekly general audience.

“I won’t say that Abraham loses patience, but he complains to the Lord. This is what we learn from our father Abraham: complaining to the Lord is a form of prayer. Sometimes I hear confessions where people say, ‘I complained to the Lord.’ But no. (Continue) to complain; he is a father and this is a form of prayer. Complain to the Lord, this is good,” he said.

Entering the Paul VI audience hall, the pope greeted thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. Among those present was a group of performers from

Italy’s Golden Circus, who performed several acrobatic feats and entertaining performances at the end of the general audience.

The pope even participated in one of the performances. As he and an illusionist grabbed the ends of a tablecloth, they seemingly made a small nightstand levitate to the amazement and applause of the pilgrims.

During the audience, the pope continued his series of talks on Christian hope and reflected on the life of Abraham who, along with his wife, Sarah, left his homeland with hope in God’s promise of a son.

This hope, he said, gave Abraham the ability to “go beyond human reason, and worldly wisdom and prudence” to believe in the impossible.

“Hope opens new horizons; it makes us able to dream that which isn’t imaginable. Hope makes us enter into the darkness of an uncertain future to walk in the light,” the pope said.

However, this path is not without its difficulties, even for Abraham, who, after months of

travel, began to doubt God’s promise of a son borne by his wife, Sarah.

It is in this moment, the pope said, that Abraham prays to God in the dark of night, a darkness that mirrored his “disappointment, discouragement and the difficulty of continuing to hope in something impossible.”

Faith is not just silent acceptance or a “certainty that secures us from doubt and perplexity,” but it also means “to argue with God and show him our bitterness without ‘pious pretenses.’ ”

“I became angry with God, I told him this, this, and that.’ But he is a father and he understands you; go in peace. You must have this courage. This is hope,” the pope said.

It is in the darkness of night and in the darkness of his own doubts that Abraham once again receives, believes and hopes in God’s promise of descendants as numerous as the stars, Pope Francis said.

“To believe, it is necessary to know how to see with the eyes of faith; we all may (look up and)

only see stars, but for Abraham, they become a sign of God’s faithfulness,” the pope said. “Hope never disappoints.”



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano via EPA

**CIRCUS PERFORMS FOR POPE** — Pope Francis watches a performer with the Golden Circus during his Dec. 28 weekly audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican.

# Benefits association, diocese file suit over HHS transgender regulation

FARGO, N.D. (CNS) — The Catholic Benefits Association, the Diocese of Fargo and Catholic Charities North Dakota filed a lawsuit Dec. 28 in U.S. District Court in North Dakota against a federal regulation scheduled to take effect Jan. 1 that redefines “sex” for anti-discrimination purposes to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

The regulation from the Department of Health and Human Services requires that Catholic hospitals and health care providers perform or provide gender transition services, hormonal treatments and counselling as well as a host of surgeries that would remove or transform the sexual organs of men or women

transitioning to the other gender. The HHS regulation requires group health plans to cover these procedures and services.

“We ask only for the freedom to serve consistent with our conscience and our Catholic faith,” Bishop John T. Folda of Fargo said in a statement, released by the Catholic Benefits Association. “While we do not discriminate against individuals because of their orientation, our Catholic values will not permit us to pay for or facilitate actions that are contrary to our faith.”

The Catholic Benefits Association is made up of Catholic dioceses, hospitals, school systems, religious orders and other entities that offer their employ-

ees insurance and benefit programs that adhere to Catholic teaching.

The regulation, which also mandates abortions be performed, affects health insurers, hospitals and health plans administered by or receiving federal funds from HHS. There is no religious exemption.

The final HHS regulation was published in May. It applies to implementing Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which provides that individuals cannot be subject to discrimination based on their race, colour, national origin, sex, age or disability.

It cites Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. Title VII prohibits

employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of sex, race, colour, national origin, and religion. Title IX states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Title IX does have an exemption for religious organizations, but the HHS regulation does not include that language.

“For decades, Congress and

the courts have understood the term ‘sex’ in federal law to mean biological sex — male and female,” Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chair of the Catholic Benefits Association, said in a statement.

“By redefining ‘sex’ to mean both ‘gender identity’ and ‘termination of pregnancy,’ the Obama administration is not only trying to sidestep Congress and impose radical new health care mandates on hospitals and employers, it is creating a moral problem for Catholic employers that must be addressed,” he added.

# Vatican says 3.9 million pilgrims attended Jubilee year

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — More than 3.9 million pilgrims visited and attended papal events, liturgies or prayer services during the Holy Year of Mercy in 2016, the Vatican said.

The Prefecture of the Papal Household, the Vatican office that co-ordinates the audiences and distributes the free tickets to papal audiences and liturgies, said a total of 3,952,140 people attended a papal event at the Vatican. The Vatican released the statistics Dec. 29.

Although the total was slightly higher from the 3.2 million visitors received by Pope Francis in 2015, for a jubilee year it still fell short of the 5.9 million pilgrims who visited in 2014.

Terrorists attacks in Europe throughout the year are also thought to have discouraged visitors from travelling during what are typically busy tourist seasons in Italy.

During 2016, 762,000 people attended the pope’s 43 weekly general audiences while 446,000

attended the 11 jubilee audiences held one Saturday a month.

More than 169,000 people took part in special group audiences; more than 924,000 people participated in papal liturgies in St. Peter’s Basilica or St. Peter’s Square; and more than 1.6 million people joined the pope for the Angelus or the *Regina Coeli* prayer on Sundays and major feast days in St. Peter’s Square.

The statistics released by the Vatican stand in contrast to the numbers published on the Jubilee of Mercy website, which states that over 21 million participated in the Holy Year of Mercy. The number includes pilgrim groups and individuals who crossed through the Holy Door that are not included in the Vatican’s statistics.

The papal event statistics do not include papal events in the city of Rome or international visits made by Pope Francis. They also are based on the number of ticket requests and estimates of crowd size.



CNS/Francis R. Malasig, EPA

**PHILIPPINES TYPHOON** — Residents waded through floodwaters Dec. 27 after a typhoon swept through Nabua, Philippines. Typhoon Nock-Ten packed 185-kph winds that downed power lines, uprooted trees and knocked out communications infrastructure while making travel difficult.



# Walls and bridges an apt metaphor for year 2016

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

Over and over throughout 2016, Pope Francis spoke of walls and bridges. It is an apt metaphor for much of what transpired in the Catholic world in 2016.

“A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian. This is not the Gospel,” the pope told a planeload of journalists on Feb. 18.

“The founding fathers (of the European Union) were heralds of peace and prophets of the future. Today, more than ever, their vision inspires us to build bridges and tear down walls,” Pope Francis told European politicians in Aachen, Germany, as he accepted the International Charlemagne Prize May 6.

“Do you know the first bridge that has to be built? It is a bridge that we can build here and now by reaching out and taking each others’ hands. This is a great bridge of brotherhood,” he told hundreds of thousands of young Catholics at World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland, July 31.

“Wherever there is a wall, there is a closed heart. We need bridges, not walls!” the pope declared to the St. Peter’s Square crowd in his Nov. 9 Angelus address.

The plane-ride comment to journalists about bridges and walls received the most attention. Reporters had asked Pope Francis to comment on Donald Trump’s election campaign promise to build a wall across the 3,201-km United States-Mexico border. The pope first warned the journalists that he does not weigh in on the politics of elections in any country, then gave into temptation to make his simple, common-sense observation about something more fundamental than Trump’s election rhetoric.

Trump also gave in to temptation when he decided to take offence at the pope’s remarks, claiming that one day the Vatican will need Donald Trump to defend the Holy See against an Islamic State invasion and then calling the comments of the spiritual father of more than a billion Catholics “disgraceful.”

It may be that the 80-year-old pope sees something about our world and our times that calls for our attention. That was underscored by his designation of 2016 as a Jubilee Year of Mercy. Walls and bridges may be the key to any faithful understanding of 2016.

In Canada, a bridge of care which should carry us from this life to the next has collapsed under abstract legal and political arguments. Out of the rubble, citizens have been offered a legal right to have a medical professional end their lives.

Assisted suicide and euthanasia became legal in 2015 when the Supreme Court ruled the Criminal Code could not prevent people from seeking and finding a medicalized version of suicide. But it took until June this year for Parliament to pass a law.

As debate unspooled from the court ruling to the new legislation



CNS/Tiziana Fabi, pool via Reuters

**YEAR OF MERCY COMES TO A CLOSE — Pope Francis closes the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica to mark the closing of the jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican Nov. 20. He presented his apostolic letter, *Misericordia et Misera*, (Mercy and Misery) at the conclusion of the closing mass of the jubilee Year of Mercy. In the letter the pope called for several special initiatives begun during the Year of Mercy to continue on a permanent basis.**

to permit an assisted death in restricted circumstances, Toronto’s Cardinal Thomas Collins was left pleading for honest, direct and simple language.

“The now officially accepted terminology, such as ‘Medical Assistance In Dying,’ does not describe medical assistance in dying,” Collins said June 20. “It describes killing. Let us say what we mean and mean what we say.”

The problem now is that the right to suicide in a medical setting is generating demands that it be mandatory for somebody to provide the service. Will this obligation be imposed on individual doctors? On the medical profession as a whole? On institutions, including Catholic hospitals, nursing homes and hospices? There are many unanswered questions and Catholics, including many doctors and nurses, find themselves stranded in the debate.

The work of building bridges is never done. Collins and other bishops reached out across religious divides to lobby for more meaningful ways to care for the dying, whatever the law may say about assisted suicide.

“Our traditions instruct that there is meaning and purpose in supporting people at the end of life,” said a June 14 joint statement from Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders. “Visiting those who are sick, and caring for those who are dying, are core tenets of our respective faiths and reflect our shared values as Canadians. Compassion is a foundational element of Canadian identity, and it is accordingly incumbent on our elected officials at all levels of government to support a robust, well-resourced, national palliative care strategy.”

They argued there is no meaningful choice in end-of-life care if palliative care is only available to one-third of Canadians.

Hopes rest on a Conservative private member’s bill which would require the government to draw up a national plan to provide universal access to palliative care. Private members’ bills are rarely made law, but all three parties spoke in favour of Bill C-277 and it could be given the House of Commons thumbs-up by February.

The Catholic Organization for

Life and Family repeated its plea for palliative care by reminding politicians that caring for the frail and the dying is one of those things that makes us human.

“The simple humanity of (palliative care) touches them and comforts them, as they experience respect for their bodies and for their human dignity at a moment of great fragility and vulnerability,” wrote outgoing COLF executive director Michele Bouvla in a letter to Parliament Dec. 8.

Nationally, Canadians have maintained a bridge to the suffering refugees of Syria. What began as a promise in 2015 to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada has grown to 36,393 as of Dec. 4. Catholic parishes continue to respond generously through the private sponsorship program, despite bureaucratic slowdowns since the government reached its promised number at the end of February.

The slowdown has exasperated many parishes and annoyed

Canada’s bishops.

However, the problems of genocide in the Middle East, which threatens to wipe out ancient Christian, Yazidi and other minority populations, won’t be solved by resettling a few thousand refugees. The Catholic Near East Welfare Association of Canada, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the Jesuit Refugee Service and Aid to the Church in Need Canada continue to raise money and deliver programs to support refugees who hope to rebuild their communities.

Development and Peace helped design and took part in a global Caritas response to the crisis in wartorn Syria — a response that Pope Francis helped launch in July.

“It is unacceptable that so many defenceless persons — among them many small children — must pay the price for conflict, for the closure of the hearts and the want of a will for peace among the powerful,” the pope said.

By December, Aleppo had fallen and the United Nations called it a “meltdown of humanity.”

Building bridges is a delicate business. Pope Francis found himself alone on something akin to a tightrope in February when he tried to extend the hand of ecumenical brotherhood to Moscow Patriarch Kirill. A brief meeting between the Patriarch of Rome and the Patriarch of Moscow at Havana’s José Martí International Airport Feb. 12 resulted in an agreement between two pastors to protect Christians in a world that had just witnessed

the kidnapping and beheading of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya.

Pope Francis’ bridge building instincts went both directions across the historical divisions within Christ’s church. His move toward healing the divisions of 1054 with the Orthodox were matched by a commitment to overcome the Protestant split in the western church which now enters its 500th year.

The pope travelled to the Lund Cathedral in Sweden Oct. 31 to commemorate 500 years since Lutheranism forged a path apart from Rome. There he spoke of both sides in the Reformation divide upholding “the true faith.” He also pledged that Catholics and Lutherans, who both affirm a belief in the real presence during the sacrament of the eucharist, will continue to work toward a common reception of communion.

Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople may have even had the last (meaningful) word in a Catholic fight that threatened to get ugly as 2016 came to a close. Pope Francis had released *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), his apostolic exhortation on family life, in April to a generally favourable reception. However, there was backlash within the conservative Vatican ranks.

Beginning with a “dubia” mailed into the pope in September, followed by a series of press interviews and the public release of their questions for Pope Francis in November, four cardinals demanded Pope Francis “clarify” his teaching on pastoral care for divorced and remarried Catholics in *Amoris Laetitia* — with American Cardinal Raymond Burke even threatening the pontiff with a “formal act of correction.”

The Patriarch of Constantinople sat down to read the 264 pages of Pope Francis’ reflections on two

— YEAR, page 6



Gerald Schmitz

**CANADA KICKS OFF 150th — Ottawa welcomed 2017, the 150th anniversary of Confederation, with a party in blizzard conditions. Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly was proven prophetic when she invited Canadians to “bundle up and come celebrate” the night on Parliament Hill as the official kickoff of a year of revelry, according to the Ottawa Citizen. Thousands braved the snow and tight security on the Hill, which included long waits for a bag search and pat down, and a heavy police presence.**



# Music program aims for social change through song

By Josh Tng  
The B.C. Catholic

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. (CCN) — A music program that has saved thousands of children from a life of crime in Venezuela is now giving equal learning opportunities to Abbotsford youngsters.

At the Bakerview Music Academy, professional music teachers offer free after-school lessons to children. In addition to musical proficiency, the children

pick up skills in self-expression, achievement, leadership and teamwork.

The academy is inspired by the Venezuelan El Sistema program, which José Antonio Abreu launched in 1975, says program director Alex McCune. The Venezuelan program had saved “hundreds of thousands of children from a life of crime,” he said.

While Abbotsford didn’t face the issues Venezuela did, several

locals were sufficiently influenced by the “power of music to bring positive social change” to give birth to Bakerview Music Academy.

“We are in our fourth year of operations with nearly 80 students who come to this program two days a week,” McCune said. “Classes run for just over two hours, training each student in choir, musicianship and in their instrument.”

The goal of the program is to

give children of all backgrounds musical and personal skills. “Teaching and directing at the academy puts me into contact every day with children of the community,” said McCune. “They have different needs and challenges in their lives, but at our music school they are all welcome and valued.”

McCune, a parishioner at Sts. Joachim and Ann Parish, Aldergrove, teaches the choir with a strong focus on classical sacred

music. “While the school is not specifically a Christian outreach program, we sing Bach, Mozart and other greats, and all the children have learned to sing in Latin, German, Italian and other languages.”

McCune’s approach to teaching draws heavily from the “Sparrows system,” an Ontario program designed by Maestro Uwe Lieflander, said McCune, who worked alongside Lieflander.

The Sparrows program trains Catholic children in music theory, singing technique and the rich tradition of liturgical music. “We get great results because we have very high standards, always encouraging the students to strive for excellence and to take pride in their professionalism and focus,” said McCune.

Teachers emphasize social change through music. “Our teachers are with us because they believe in this model,” said Holda Fast Redekopp, chair of the academy. “They love the kids and know that they are not only teaching music skills, but also behavioural skills. We have many volunteers who are loving the kids and encouraging and supporting them beyond what we ask.”

Redekopp noted many parents and teachers have noticed improvement to learning skills and behaviour by children in the program. “Our kids stay with the program all the way through Grade 12,” she said. “The ultimate goal is to form a youth orchestra and choir to serve the community by bringing service and joy.”

The academy is free of charge, but runs on volunteers and donations. More information is available at [www.bakerviewmusic.ca](http://www.bakerviewmusic.ca)

## Salt + Light finds more room with move to new space

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — However much the suits from media companies may complain at CRTC hearings, broadcasting is big business in Canada — to the tune of \$17.3 billion in 2014 revenues.

But for the one priest and 36 lay people who mount Canada’s premier Catholic broadcasting enterprise, it’s something entirely different.

“There’s nobody here with a puffed up sense of what broadcasting is. This is a mission,” said Salt and Light Media Foundation CEO Rev. Thomas Rosica. “There’s not one person here who doesn’t have a mission at heart.”

It has been 14 years since the tiny digital television service launched on a shoestring in the afterglow of Toronto’s 2002 World Youth Day. For 2017, the TV station which strives “to give the flavour of the Gospel and the light of Christ to a world that is



Catholic Register/M. Swan

**NEW HEADQUARTERS — Rev. Thomas Rosica, CEO of the Salt + Light Media Foundation, stands in the new headquarters of the Catholic broadcaster in midtown Toronto. Salt + Light has almost tripled its space with the move.**

steeped in darkness and tastelessness at times” has acquired the tools and the space to do the job.

On Dec. 9 Salt + Light moved

from its century-old building at the corner of Richmond and Jarvis in Toronto into new space at Davisville and Mt. Pleasant in mid-town. The broadcaster has added a real studio — a broadcast theatre big enough to stage event broadcasts — and nearly tripled its floor space from 790 square metres to 2,044 square metres.

The fairly modern but far from new building where Salt + Light now does most of its production has such advantages as a low likelihood of floods (Salt + Light almost lost its master control room to flooding last year), a newer power grid (annoying little blackouts are a problem downtown) and some solid, vibration-proof concrete.

In the old studios with the century hardwood floors and exposed brick, camera tripods had to be secured with sandbags to try to keep vibration to a minimum when trucks passed by on Richmond Street.

The new studio space is only part of a trajectory which has seen the not-for-profit broadcaster leap to the forefront of Catholic broadcasting.

Salt + Light produces programming in English, French, Italian and Chinese. Its work is available on seven different platforms — television, radio, a blog, Internet TV, a Roku channel, social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and a monthly magazine.

The Toronto broadcast centre is supplemented with French-language operations based in Montreal.

The next frontier is New York. Salt + Light and the Archdiocese of New York are in talks about a permanent Salt + Light presence at the new Sheen Center for

## CMIC appoints new communications head

By Anne Hanley

TORONTO — Catholic Missions In Canada has announced the appointment of Jeff Muzzerall to lead the organization’s Communications and Media, effective Dec. 5, 2016.

Originally from New Brunswick’s Miramichi area, Muzzerall is an indigenous person with a long-standing leadership career in education management, relationship-building and business development at such organizations as Alesco Educational Consulting, St. Paul’s University College at the University of Waterloo, the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario, and Brendan Wood International in Toronto.

Muzzerall holds a bachelor of arts in English and mass communications from York University in Toronto, a masters of cross-cultural conflict management from York University’s Faculty of Environmental Studies and a masters of business administration from Waterloo’s Wilfrid Laurier University.

His commitment and advocacy for Aboriginal literacy and education was spurred by a weeklong visit to Big Trout Lake First Nation Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug in 2013, when he was director of Indigenous, Government and Community Relations at St. Paul’s University College of the University of Waterloo.

The remote Oji-Cree reserve of 1,400 residents is located 600 km north of Thunder Bay. To reach the community, Muzzerall completed the final two-and-one-half-hour leg of the trip on a nine-seater plane. Following the visit, he told The Waterloo Region Record that he was struck by “the complexity of it all-the beauty and the pain that exist simultaneously. I see this as just the start. This is a seed that’s going to grow.”

Muzzerall succeeds Patria Rivera, who, after over 20 years as communications director of the national charity, will be retiring later this year. During her term as communications director, Rivera oversaw the steady growth of the organizations’ print publications and the expansion of its online presence to parishes, dioceses and various media outlets across Canada. Under Rivera’s leadership, Catholic Missions In Canada’s magazine won numerous awards from the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada.

*Hanley is publications and communications officer at Catholic Missions In Canada.*



## BOSCO FOUNDATION

**John Bosco  
Child & Family Services Foundation**

The John Bosco Child and Family Services Foundation (Bosco Foundation) is a public foundation dedicated to the provision of buildings and facilities used for the treatment, education and housing of children, adolescents and adults who are in need of support.

Bosco Foundation believes in assisting non-profit and charitable organizations who provide vital services which aid vulnerable people in our society. We do this by providing our facilities to various non-profit and charitable agencies at below market level rental rates.

**Our facilities are used for social services group care, foster care, adult mental health care, the St. Francis Food Bank, two AA groups and a NE Edmonton cadet core among others.**

In addition, we provide volunteer services to assist two small non-profit organizations working with low income seniors and victims of stroke with fundraising and volunteer recruitment assistance.

**The Bosco Foundation is currently working with a large service organization on a joint project with the aim of providing affordable housing for low-income seniors.**

**100% of donations go toward charitable purposes.  
Administrative expenses are covered by other sources.**

*Please forward your donation to:*

**Bosco Foundation  
315-6770 129 Avenue NW,  
Edmonton, AB T5C 1V7  
Tel: (780) 809-8585 ♦ Fax: (780) 809-8586  
[www.boscofoundation.com](http://www.boscofoundation.com)**

\*Charitable Tax Number: 85985 8664 RT0001\*



# Cana Continues family camp has spiritual dimension

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A summer vacation experience with a spiritual dimension is helping families reconnect more deeply, away from everyday cares and interruptions.

Cana Continues family camp is an initiative of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon offered at St. Michael’s Church Camp at Madge Lake, Sask., in Duck Mountain Provincial Park, about 35 minutes from Kamsack. Designed for families with children still living at home, Cana Continues will be offered again Aug. 13 - 19.

The Saskatchewan family camp is modelled on the Cana Colony pilgrimage camps offered by the Madonna House Apostolate founded by Catherine Doherty at Combermere, Ont.

Teresa Hiebert has worked on launching the program in the eparchy after experiencing the Madonna House family camp in Ontario as a pilgrimage with her own young family — first in 2009 and then again in 2012 and 2014. It has been a life-transforming experience.

“It was a beautiful turning point for us as a family. It was like we started coming out of

some quagmire, out of the muck, out of the post post-partum depression mess that we had (been in),” she said.

“I’m an RN. I work in an ICU — shiftwork, weekends, holidays. My husband is a refrigeration mechanic — works weekdays Monday to Friday, and also on call after hours and weekends. For many years, when the kids were little, we only ever had one weekend off together as a family, all five of us (that was, if he didn’t get called in),” she said. “Cana was an enormous change from home, just being able to eat all our meals together . . . I’d never realized how apart we were, till we started being together.”

Walls came down during the time at Cana Colony, she described.

“I think my heart was nearly a heart of stone by the time I got to the first Cana. And there my heart cracked a little. It’s not bad to realize you’re broken. It is painful. I could start to feel again . . . and that is how the light gets in and those stone walls come down,” she said.

“That was a huge spark — the meals together, not having contact with extended family/friends — just being us; a mom, a dad, and kids. No phones ringing, no

paggers going off, no shiftwork — just nature, and sacraments, other nuclear families, and each other.”

The experience of the Cana camp continued to resonate when the Hiebert family returned home.

“Little things started to change — the meals were a big change. We prioritized eating together. We started turning to each other more,” said Hiebert.

“One other big thing we learned is how to guard your family from outside influences, how to protect your Nazareth, how to be in the world, but to still be yourself, in Christ, in the world — not to lose sight of your faith or each other,” she said. “It was pure and simple grace. It was Mary, Joseph and Jesus, with their donkey, going in a different direction after having a dream. Our domestic church needed rebuilding.”

The family’s spiritual growth received further boosts at subsequent Cana experiences, which were different each time. Challenged by a book by Catherine Doherty (now reprinted as Beginning Again), Hiebert returned to confession after years away.

“It was so beautiful. It was pure Holy Spirit, grace, healing,” she said. “I know my family could sense the change in me. I’d

started to lose that edge of bitterness and anger; I started to soften. Some of that stone in my heart changed to beating flesh again.”

For Hiebert, this second Cana experience came in the summer between her experience of Year 1 and Year 2 of the Eparchial Lay Formation program. “I needed that grace, that healing, through confession. I needed to fall in love again with confession and not be scared of the sacrament.”

As her children grew, the challenges and blessings of Cana also changed. In 2014 it was easier to set aside electronic devices, she noted. “We reflected a lot on how much our little family had transformed over the years, nourished, grown. . . . It was very fruitful!”

A 2014 Sobor in the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon identified the call for “families evangelizing families,” and as one response, Cana Continues was launched here in August 2015.

“The first Eparchial Cana was a blessed week of training, learning and orientation at St. Michael’s Camp at Madge Lake. The camp was still a flurry of building and construction — a beautiful new facility in progress. Rev. Basil Malowany and Rev. Ivan Nahachewsky were camp pastors,” described Hiebert.

fishing, kayaking and canoeing. The public beach is a 15-minute walk away. Adults who want to get up early to go for a round of golf in the provincial park can do so, she noted. There is a large campfire area, basketball/tennis outdoor court, and plenty of open space for playing.

The newly constructed camp building includes hotel-style accommodation, with bathrooms, tubs and showers in each room (there is also one wheelchair-accessible room.) The facility features a large hall with a common dining area. Families bring their own food, preparing and eating meals as a family unit. Laundry is available on-site.

There are two scheduled events each day: divine liturgy in English is celebrated each morning, and every afternoon there is a priest-led conference with the parents (an activity co-ordinator is provided for the younger children).

A Ukrainian Catholic priest and a host family are present with the families for the week: Bayda is scheduled to attend the 2017 weeklong camp. There are also opportunities for sharing among families.

“You learn so much being able to talk to other families,” Hiebert noted. “The kids mingle with other kids; the parents meet other parents.” It’s an opportunity to talk about challenges, share ideas and insights, and support each other in prayer.

At its heart, however, Cana Continues is a chance for a family to withdraw and reconnect with each other spiritually in a natural setting, away from daily pressures and interruptions.

Registration for Cana Continues begins in January. There is a \$50 registration fee, with the rest contributed according to each family’s need and ability. For more information see [www.skeparchy.org/familyandlife](http://www.skeparchy.org/familyandlife)



Sharon Leyne

**CAROLS AT SAMARITAN PLACE** — Catholic home-school families with children of all ages sang Christmas carols Dec. 21 at Samaritan Place in Saskatoon. Armed with bells and violin the young children were able to bring some joy and holiday cheer to residents and staff of the long-term care home run by Emmanuel Care.

## Prelate Ursuline dies at age 101

SASKATOON — Sister Dorothy (Gertrude) Bertsch, OSU (Prelate), died Dec. 25 at the age of 101.

She was born in 1915 on her family’s farm near Tramping Lake, where she was baptized at St. Michael’s Church. She celebrated her first communion and received the sacrament of confirmation in the same church.

She was taught by the Ursulines of Prelate at Tramping Lake School, and in 1932 she attended St. Angela’s Academy in Prelate for Grade 11, entering the Ursuline novitiate in 1933. She made her first vows in 1935, followed by her Perpetual Profession in 1938.

In 1934 - 35 she attended Normal School at Moose Jaw and was then assigned to Dante School, where she taught Grades 1 - 9 three years, paid by “promissory notes.” Her second three-year teaching assignment was at Glen Eden School, six kilometres from Denzil. After upgrading her

teaching certificate, Bertsch’s 45-year teaching career in the elementary grades took her to Revenue, Billimun, Denzil, Goodsoil,



OSU

Sister Dorothy Bertsch, OSU

Barthel, Liebenenthal, Fox Valley, Quinton, Primate, and St. Mary’s, Cosine. While teaching, she was

also involved in parish ministries, including catechetics, sacramental preparation, and sacristy work.

On her retirement in 1980, Bertsch moved to Glengarda residence in Saskatoon where she provided ministry visiting the sick and elderly, served as a tutor, librarian and receptionist, as well as undertaking typing for the Oblates and being engaged in community service. She participated in a renewal sabbatical in 1987 in Arnprior, Ont. She also spent a year cooking at the Generalate and then served for 10 years at St. Angela’s Academy as support staff taking on the responsibility of the laundry. She enjoyed hobbies such as needlework and stamp collecting, and was an avid reader.

After hip surgery in 2004, she moved to St. Angela Merici Residence in Saskatoon. Occasions of joy and gratitude included celebrations of her 75th anniversary as an Ursuline in 2010, and her 100th birthday in 2015.



Photo submitted by Zena Deibert

**DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE** — D&P representative for Kerrobert deanery Zena Deibert, parish priest Rev. Binu Rathappillil, VC, and Sacred Heart Parish Development and Peace representative Marlene Dewald (from left) stand before a bulletin board at Sacred Heart Parish in Denzil, Sask., highlighting the mission of Development and Peace and a 50-year timeline of activities and outreach. Parishioners were invited to become members of Development and Peace, the international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada. A prayer intention for D&P was part of Sunday mass, and there was also a presentation about the Catholic organization.



# Week of Prayer is a quest for true stability



## Questioning Faith

Mary Marrocco

How difficult is human relationship! How glorious, how deeply and universally sought-after it is! Our hunger for relationship can draw out the best and the worst in us. The deepest wrestling is with one another, in relationship — be it person to person, nation to nation, or church to church.

"We entreat you on behalf of Christ," urges St. Paul, "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). It isn't easy, but it's urgent.

We are invited to pray with this passage during this year's Week of Prayer for the Unity of Christians (as Abbé Paul Couturier preferred to call it). Annual prayers for Christian unity are held formally all around the world from Jan. 18 - 25. These prayers have happened every year since 1908, including during war years. Who knows, maybe this is one of the reasons the world has not yet flown apart despite the vast

*Marrocco is a marriage and family therapist, teacher of theology, and writer, and co-ordinates St. Mary of Egypt Refuge. She can be reached at marrocco7@sympatico.ca*

and continual human energy expended in trying to break it.

Reconciliation is a key word of the Gospel, but it's one of those keys that seems doomed to be forever getting lost. Reconciliation to God sounds wonderful, but the way there may be hard to take because it generally involves changing our relationships with each other, and that is tough for us humans.

The Week of Prayer embodies the insight of Abbé Couturier (one of its architects) that the closer we come to Christ, the closer we come to each other.

No wonder we are often inclined to stay far away from Christ, since coming closer to each other is no easy matter.

"Love is not a victory march," singer Leonard Cohen wrote with his usual perspicacity. The ecumenical work of healing Christian divisions has not been a victory march. It's been a path of light and shadow, marked by disappointments and failures in counterpoint with glorious transformation and joyous encounters. It's the plain, simple hard work of women and men who have undertaken the

"ministry of reconciliation" St. Paul speaks of (v.18) — with energy, vision, prayer and good humour. An inspired combination.

To receive what Christ brings is to be changed, and those closest to us must feel that change the most. This is the kind of thing Abbé Couturier understood by spiritual ecumenism, and his conviction that the closer each Christian community comes to Christ, the closer they come to each other. But as we come closer together, our wounds will surface. So our relationships with each other are destabilized, in quest of a truer stability. That's why the work of ecumenism is scary and exciting at the same time.

"Everybody knows it's coming apart," sang Leonard Cohen. St. Paul points out that where it's coming apart is where it's coming to life. There's an opportunity for what's new in us to renew what's old and worn out in us. "Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" he cries (v.14).

Last fall, in Canterbury and Rome, bishops gathered in pairs — Catholic and Anglican — for an eight-day pilgrimage. This event was part of the international gathering of Anglican and Catholic bishops (known as IARCCUM) established in 2001. Anglicans and Catholics have been sundered, sometimes violently, for over four centuries. Since 1966, when Pope Paul VI gave his episcopal ring to then-Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey, many sutures have been sewn into those wounds. This pilgrimage was one of many inter-church gatherings and encounters happening all around us, in ways that were never possible before. They are bringing us ever closer to reconciliation and peace, mostly without our noticing. Sometimes the best things happen a little at a time, unbeknownst to us, then burst into bloom all at once to



Jesse Hair

**CHURCH UNITY** — This is the logo of the Canadian Council of Churches (in French: *Conseil canadien des Églises*), the largest ecumenical body in Canada, representing 25 churches of Anglican, Evangelical, Free Church, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox, Protestant, and Eastern Catholic traditions, as well as the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity embodies the insight of Abbé Couturier (one of its architects) that the closer we come to Christ, the closer we come to each other," writes Mary Marrocco.

delight us all the more.

At this particular bishops' meeting, a quiet, unheralded moment came with a unique and poignant beauty.

The unity the bishops experienced was embodied in their receiving a piece of the true cross — not a cross of gold and jewels, but the cross of vulnerability and even failure — a Lampedusa cross. This is the cross of people who died fleeing violence and crossing the Mediterranean. Local carpenter Francesco Tuccio made the crosses from the wreckage of a boat that crashed off the shores of Lampedusa, killing 311 refugees; the townspeople helped

save the remaining 155 people.

The gift of these crosses gave a new depth to the familiar ecumenical symbol of a cross in a boat. The bishops were challenged to carry together the cross of our time. They were commissioned by Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to be "artisans of healing and reconciliation in the power of the Gospel."

This is work that cannot wait. Where do we get this kind of wisdom?

"The love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all . . . so that those who live might live no longer for themselves" (1 Cor 5:14-15).

## Year reveals need for mercy

Continued from page 3

synods concerning marriage and the family, then wrote for the Dec. 2 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* that the Patriarch of Rome has something more fundamental than legal procedures in mind.

*Amoris Laetitia* "first and foremost recalls the mercy and compassion of God and not just moral norms and canonical rules," Bartholomew wrote.

Around the world in 2016, democracy has yielded frightening results. In March, a divided England voted itself out of the European Union, turning its back on an organization it helped found and encourage in the wake of the Second World War. In May, Filipinos elected a president who encouraged citizens to murder people they suspect of selling or using drugs. In August, a partisan and compromised congress removed Brazil's democratically elected President Dilma Rousseff.

Beginning July 16, the democratically elected government of Turkey pounced on a bungled coup attempt to suspend Turkey's constitution and began jailing and firing hundreds of thousands of supposed enemies — mainly teachers and civil servants. By November, Americans were in no mood for civil debate. They elected as president a bombastic real estate magnate whose late-night tweets have included, "This election is a total sham and a travesty. We are not a democracy!"

At a Protestant campaign event,

Trump justified not asking God for forgiveness by talking about his participation in the eucharist in his Presbyterian church.

"When I drink my little wine — which is about the only wine I drink — and have my little cracker, I guess that is a form of asking for forgiveness, and I do that as often as possible because I feel cleansed," he said. "I think in terms of 'let's go on and let's make it right.'"

Pushed to a crisis, the world could still manage to come together. In March, the Earth's atmosphere reached a tipping point — 400 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the air we breathe. Scientists peg the safe level at 350 ppm. On April 22 a record number of nations, including Canada, signed the Paris Agreement which commits them to action on climate change. As of December, 117 nations have ratified the agreement.

In September, the world was witness to the canonization of Mother Teresa, who personified the power the mercy with her work among the poor.

After the Year of Mercy came to a close in November, perhaps the one thing Catholics discovered is how much we need mercy.

"The mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality with which he reveals his love as of that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child," Pope Francis told us as he opened the extraordinary jubilee.

"God has no memory of sin," he said as he closed the Holy Doors at St. Peter's Nov. 20.

## PRAIRIE MESSENGER PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

### KAPOOR, SELNES, & KLIMM

Barristers & Solicitors

W. Selnes, B.A., LL.B.;  
G. Klimm, B.A., LL.B.;

Phone (306) 752-5777, P.O. Box 2200  
Melfort, Saskatchewan S0E 1A0  
Phone (306) 873-4535, P.O. Box 760  
Tisdale, Saskatchewan S0E 1T0

### WEBER & GASPER

Barristers & Solicitors

Russel Weber (B.A., LL.B.)  
Tabbatha M. Gasper (B.A., LL.B.)  
517 Main Street, Humboldt, Sask.

Phone: 306-682-5038  
Fax: 306-682-5538

E-mail:  
weber.gasper@sasktel.net

**Assante** WEALTH MANAGEMENT  
Assante Financial Management Ltd.  
Peter Martens, FICB 301 - 500 Spadina Crescent East  
Financial Advisor Saskatoon, SK S7K 4H9  
T: (306) 665-3244  
Cara Martens, CFP 1-800-465-2100  
Financial Advisor E: pmartens@assante.com

### VOLUNTEER INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE

requires Teachers, Administrators, Medical Professionals and Trades People, aged 21 - 65. If you are interested in serving overseas for two years, we may have an assignment for you! Please call 780-485-5505, Email: vics1@volunteerinternational.ca or visit our Website at www.volunteerinternational.ca

MCKERCHER LLP BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

### SASKATOON:

(306) 653-2000  
L.J.(Dick) Batten, QC  
Michel G. Thibault  
David M.A. Stack, QC  
Curtis J. Onishenko  
Galen R. Richardson

### REGINA:

306.565.6500  
David E. Thera, QC

Committed to serving the legal needs of Religious Organizations for the past 90 years.

**MCKERCHER LLP**

mckercher.ca

### MOORING GLORY

FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES

John Schachtel

1201 - 8th St. East  
Saskatoon, Sask.  
(306) 978-5200

### Schuler-Lefebvre Funeral Chapel

"Dedicated to those we serve"

Ph: 306-682-4114 Humboldt, Sask.

### MALINOSKI & DANYLUK FUNERAL HOME

HWY 5 EAST HUMBOLDT  
Humboldt's only 100% locally owned and operated.

PH : 306-682-1622

### Satisfaction Hearing Systems Ltd.

Hearing Aid Sales, Service & Repair

Ph: 306.979.4543 #16-1945 McKercher Dr.  
Cell: 306.881.8602 Saskatoon, SK S7J 4M4

**Emerald Tree** ACCOUNTING SERVICES  
Specializing in parishes and parishes with schools.  
Mira Salter ~ mira@emeraldtree.ca  
Bookkeeping, Charity Returns, GST Filing, FRAME Reports

### RAYNER AGENCIES LTD.

www.rayneragencies.ca Est. 1948

General Insurance Broker  
Motor Licences & Notary Public

1000 Central Avenue, Saskatoon  
Phone: 306-373-0663

Shawn Wasylenko Norbert Wasylenko

### MAURICE SOULODRE Architect Ltd.

Maurice Soulodre, B.A., B.Ed., M.Arch., SAA, MRAIC  
1815C Lorne Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7H 1Y5  
Tel: (306) 955-0333 Fax: (306) 955-0549  
E-mail: soularch@sasktel.net



New life is possible through forgiveness and healing



Liturgy and Life

Sylvain Lavoie, OMI

A hymn written by Carey Landry entitled *Lay Your Hands* captures succinctly the two-fold mission of Jesus as redeemer and sanctifier with the line “Let them bring your forgiveness and healing.”

The readings today invite us to live a powerful spirituality of precisely forgiveness and healing.

First, Isaiah in the Old Testament reading speaks of a servant who will be honoured and strengthened by God to be a light to the nations. That servant will glorify God, gather the nations, raise up the tribes and bring about salvation.

John the Baptist in the Gospel takes that thought of Isaiah further. He speaks of a Lamb of God who is greater than he, filled with the Spirit, a Son of God. This Spirit-filled Son of God will take away the sins of the world and baptize with the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul in the second reading to the Corinthians fleshes out the implications of the mission of this mysterious servant in Isaiah, who is the Lamb of God and spirit-filled Son of God in John. Paul addresses his words to the Corinthians who believe in Jesus, and who are sanctified by Jesus, called to be saints.

The teaching is clear. Jesus, the servant of Isaiah and the Lamb of God of John the Baptist, came with a two-fold mission — to redeem and sanctify, or, in the words of

Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-The Pas, is chaplain at the Star of the North Retreat House in St. Albert, Alta. He continues to live out his motto, *Regnum Dei Intra Vos* (the kingdom of God is among you), which is his overriding focus and passion.

Carey Landry, to forgive us and heal us. In the end we are called to be saints as were the Corinthians, through forgiveness and healing.

Our task is to respond to this call. First, we are to allow Jesus to redeem us, to forgive us our sins and our wrongdoing. We do that especially through a humble, sincere celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. One of the greatest losses to the church in our day is a sense of repentance, or sorrow for sin. It is as if we are somehow above that — that this belongs to a previous age of the church.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Probably more than ever we need to see through the smoke screen of sophistication, self-sufficiency and even false pride that claims to be above the need to humbly repent, confess our sins, and receive the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

In many ways we might be like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day who questioned John the Baptist, did not believe him, saw themselves as the religious holy ones above the need to repent, and rejected the invitation of John to be baptized in the waters of repentance. They resisted that nudging of the Holy Spirit and ended up complicity in the trial, mockery and crucifixion of Jesus.

There is nothing so pleasing to a parent as a child who humbly admits to doing something wrong, seeks forgiveness, apologizes and goes on to try to repair the damage that was done. It must be the same with our loving Father, who delights more in the one repentant sinner who returns than in the 99 who do not think they need to repent. The lesson here is that we all need to repent, to confess and to be forgiven — there are no righteous persons!

But forgiveness is only the first part of the chorus to that hymn, and to the two-fold mission of Jesus. The servant of Yahweh in Isaiah, and the Lamb of God in John, also came to fill us with the Spirit, to sanctify us, and heal us. Otherwise we run the danger of relapse, of falling into wrongdoing and sin in the same way, over and over again.

The secret of the spiritual life is healing. We are not

just forgiven, but also filled with the Spirit, sanctified and healed of those defects of character, sinfulness that caused us to sin in the first place. Jesus does not want to just redeem us, but also wants to sanctify us. We need to dispose ourselves for that too, to seek it and to pray for it.

The key to healing is humble self-awareness of our painful emotions such as anger, defects of character such as stubbornness and false pride, or even addictions that we can admit to ourselves, share with others, and present to our Lord for him to take them away by filling us with his Spirit and healing us.

Those who probably understand this biblical process of spiritual growth best are members of the 12 Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous. That program is identical to the sacrament of reconciliation when placed side by side, and in fact, can bring back to the church a renewed sense of healing.

Steps 1-3 (powerlessness, belief and surrender) are what we call contrition in the sacrament. Step 4 (moral inventory) we call examination of conscience. Step 5 (admitting to God, one’s self and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs) we call confession. Steps 6 & 7 (praying for the removal of our defects of character) we call healing. This is the most neglected aspect of the sacrament as it is lived out in the church today. Steps 8 & 9 (making amends) we call penance. Steps 10-12 (daily inventory, prayer and sharing) we call reconciliation.

It is fascinating to see how the Spirit of the living God has been at work in the 12 Step Program, leading the most wretched of all people, the addicted, to experience forgiveness, healing and a new life of joyful, free sobriety. How much more so should we, the members of the church, be leading the way into the reign of God, a life of freedom from sin and full of peace and joyful service — we who are baptized, catechized and given a sacramental spirituality of forgiveness and healing as our way of life.

The eucharist we celebrate now is itself an experience of forgiveness and healing, a powerful celebration of the redemption and sanctification brought about by the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

As we enter into this Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, let us resolve that it be anything but ordinary by living fully this gift of a sacramental spirituality of forgiveness and healing.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time January 15, 2017	Isaiah 49:3, 5-6 Psalm 40 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 John 1:29-34
---	---

Rolheiser chooses his favourite books from the past year

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



So much of life, particularly today, constitutes an unconscious conspiracy against reading. Lack of time, the pressure of our jobs, and electronic technology, among other things, are more and more putting books out of reach and out of mind. There is never enough time to read. The upside of this is that when I do find time to pick up a book this becomes a precious, cherished time. And so I try to pick books that I read carefully: I read reviews, listen to colleagues, and keep track of my favourite authors. I also try to make sure that my reading diet, each year, includes some spiritual books (including at least one historical classic), some biographies, some novels, and some essays.

Among the books that I read this year, these are the ones that touched me. I cannot promise they will touch you, but each of them left me with something.

**Among books in spirituality:**  
*Gil Bailie, God’s Gamble, The Gravitational Power of Crucified*

Small packages

Small Packages welcomes prepaid ads re parish events. Rates: \$17.65 for the first 60 words, \$4.75 for an additional 25 words. Second and subsequent insertions half-price. Please include cheque with ad and mail to: **Small Packages, Prairie Messenger, Box 190, Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0**

*Love*. Bailie again takes up Rene Girard’s anthropology to shed some new light on how the cross of Christ is the most monumental moral and religious event in history. The text is very dense and (truthfully) a tough read, but its insights are exceptional.

*Heather King, Shirt of Flame, A Year with Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*. This book will make for a very good private retreat for anyone struggling with an addiction or obsession, or just with mediocrity in his or her spiritual life.

*Christophe Lebreton, Born From the Gaze of God, The Tibhirine Journal of Martyr Monk, 1993 - 1996*. This is the diary of one of the Trappist monks who was martyred in Algeria in 1996. It is the intimate journal of a young man, which chronicles how he moves from paralyzing fear to the strength for martyrdom.

*Kathleen Dowling Singh, two books: The Grace in Dying and The Grace in Aging*. According to Singh, the process of aging and dying is exquisitely calibrated to bring us into the realm of spirit. In these two remarkable books she traces this out with the depth that, outside of the great classical mystics, I have not seen.

*Christine M. Bochen, Editor, The Way of Mercy*. This is a series of remarkable essays on mercy, including some by Pope Francis and Walter Kasper.

*The Cloud of Unknowing*. I finally had the chance to study this classic in some depth and it is, no doubt, the signature book on contemplation and centring prayer.

**Among biographies and essays:**  
*Marilynne Robinson, The Givenness of Things, Essays*. These essays are dense, deep, robustly sane, and are Marilynne Robinson, the gifted novelist, at her religious best.

*Michael N. McGregor, Pure Act, The Uncommon Life of Robert Lax*. This is the biography of the man who was Thomas Merton’s closest soul-friend, lived out his life as a secular monk, and who carried his solitude at a high and noble level. It will help re-awaken your idealism.

*Fernando Cardenal, Faith and Joy, Memoirs of a Revolutionary Priest*. This is a great read about an exceptional man, a priest and a Jesuit, who played a leading role in Daniel Ortega’s government in Nicaragua and was commanded by John Paul to step down. It is a private journal that tells the other side of what much of history has one-sidedly recorded about the struggles for justice in Latin America.

*Daniel Berrigan, Essential Writings, edited by John Dear*. Daniel Berrigan died in late April of this past year. His writings set the compass for what it means to be a Christian prophet, and this is an excellent selection of his writings.

**Three books that deal with facing aging and dying:**  
*Michael Paul Gallagher, Into Extra Time, Living Through the*

*Final Stages of Cancer and Jottings along the Way*. A man of faith and letters, Gallagher shares the journal he kept during the last nine months of his life, when he already knew he was dying.

*Katie Roiphe, The Violet Hour, Great Writers at the End*. How did a number of great writers, including Sigmund Freud, John Updike and Susan Sontag face terminal illness? This book tells us how.

*Paul Kalanithi, When Breath Becomes Air*. This is a remarkable journal of a young doctor facing a terminal diagnosis that documents his courage, faith, and insight.

**Three novels I recommend:**  
*Paula Hawkins, The Girl on the Train*. This didn’t make for a great movie, but the book is a page-turner.

*Ian McEwan, Nutshell, and Edna O’Brien, The Little Red Chairs*. The pedigree of these two authors alone is enough of a recommendation, but neither will disappoint you here.

**A wildcard:**  
*Kenneth Rolheiser, Dreamland and Soulscapes, A Prairie Love Story*. Full disclosure: Kenneth is my brother and I lived through many of the stories he shares, so there is admittedly a huge bias here. But the book delivers on its title and will give you a more realistic sense of what it was like to grow up in a “little house on the Prairies.”

Happy reading!







# Farewell 2016: welcome to new world disorder

## Readings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



In two weeks the worst national major-party candidate in U.S. history will become its most unfit president at a time when the 9/11 wars of what Lawrence Wright’s new book calls “the terror years” (following up his Pulitzer prize-winning *The Looming Tower*) cast a long shadow over the tattered remains of post-Cold War hopes for a better world order. In a recent *London Review of Books* commentary on three recent volumes about the so-called “Islamic State,” Owen-Bennett-Jones observes: “After 15 years of con-

*Age of Jihad* combines his incisive reporting of several decades with insightful up-to-date analysis. Cockburn’s introduction cites the prophetic lines from my favourite poem by W.B. Yeats, *The Second Coming*, that begins: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold/Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.” The centre is not holding in many places; nowhere more so than in the “vast region of instability” from the borders of Iran to North Africa. While stability has been rare since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire a cen-

trines) and the dashed aspirations of the “Arab spring.” (Tunisia is the sole partial exception but Egypt has reverted to an “even more repressive police state.”) Epic miscalculations have produced wars that “turn into bloody stalemates with no outright winners or losers, aside from the millions of civilians who are the victims.” The first 9/11 wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq, led to early easy “victories” and a “mission accomplished” myopia that, lacking reliable local partners, proved deceptive. The Taliban retreated to Pakistan and in a few years was able to stage a return. (It now controls more territory than at any time since 2001.) The dysfunctional western-supported Karzai government made deals with warlords and was mired in corruption. As Cockburn observed in 2008, “the dominant political feature was dislike or hatred of the government at all levels of society.” Matters were even worse in Iraq where the disastrous decisions of the occupiers to dissolve the army and blacklist all Baathist party members provided recruits for a growing insurgency. Underestimated at the time was the devastating impact on the population of the 13 years of sanctions following the First Gulf War that “had already shattered the country’s society and economy.” Cockburn notes the premonition of the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator Dennis Halliday who resigned in protest in 1998: “What should be of concern is the possibility of more fundamentalist Islamic thinking developing . . . as a spinoff of the sanctions regime. We are pushing people to take extreme positions.” More-

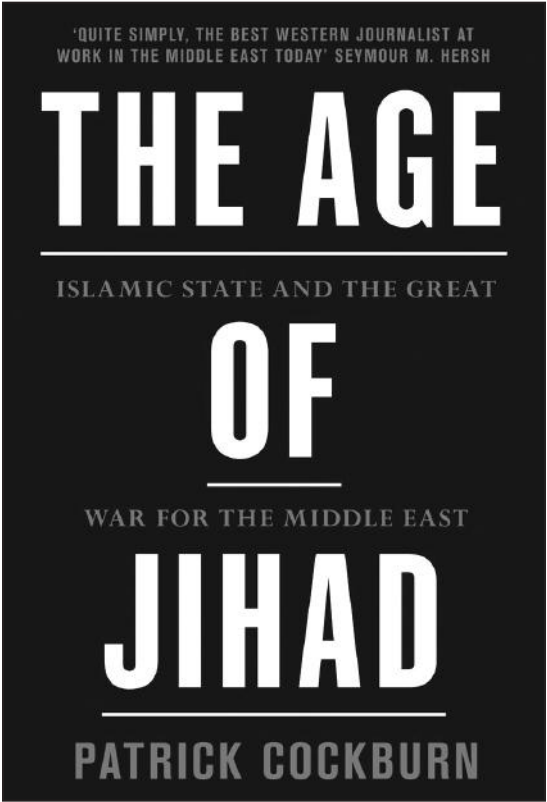
over, Iraq’s Sunnis had for centuries exercised political power over the Shia and Kurdish majority. Overthrowing that, followed by incompetent Shia-dominated governance, was a recipe for chaos. The Arab uprisings of 2011 appeared to sweep away several old regimes but have also belied western expectations. Militant Islam was always an element in them. Where peaceful protests were frustrated, a militarization of dissent provoked civil conflict. Or, as in Bahrain, the West stood by as such protests were severely repressed from the outset, further inflaming Sunni-Shia tensions. In almost all cases the outcome has been more oppression and violence, not democracy. What Cockburn calls the “Somalianization” of Libya could have been foreseen. Yemen has been ripped apart with the regional Sunni-Shia rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran being played out in a savage proxy war largely ignored by the western powers. Syria’s agony in the throes of revolution and counter-revolution is the greatest affront. For a time the West was banking on the Assad dictatorship to collapse like Gaddafi’s. Instead it fought back ruthlessly while Islamist extremists penetrated the north of the country from Iraq. “Moderate” forces have given way to a military opposition “wholly dominated by ISIS and al-Qaida clones.” The West therefore faces an enormous dilemma while Russia and Iran are determined to keep Assad in power. However much the outside powers, including Turkey and the Gulf monarchies, contest Islamic State control of parts of Syria, they have contradictory aims. In Cockburn’s view, “the horror story for the Syrian people will go on until the regional players decide that nobody is going to win and bring it to a stop.” It will surely take more than Trump’s promise to “bomb the s\_\_\_ out of ISIS” to do that.

When the U.S. eliminated Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, with a targeted strike in 2006, the congratulations proved grossly premature. When Obama withdrew U.S. troops,

**Patrick Cockburn, *The Age of Jihad: Islamic State and the Great War for the Middle East***  
(London and New York, Verso, 2016, 449 pages)

flict, there are now many places on earth where westerners dare not tread and western politicians are reduced to defining victory as an absence of attacks at home.” Those are “remarkable achievements” for an Islamist extremism that feeds off the weaknesses of western liberal democracy. (Trump’s election was as much celebrated by IS as by autocrats and neofascists.) There is no better guide to what has been happening “over there” than Patrick Cockburn, the intrepid longtime correspondent for *The Independent* and regular *London Review* contributor. *The*

Century ago, 9/11 “was the starting pistol for a series of calamitous events which destroyed the old status quo” as manifested in the savage civil wars “in which Sunni fundamentalist jihadis play a leading role.” The ill-conceived 2003 invasion of Iraq was a particularly destabilizing geopolitical “earthquake” that exacerbated Sunni/Shia sectarian hostilities. Added to the consequences of failed western military interventions and withdrawals have been other negative factors, notably the role of the Gulf absolute monarchies (that includes Saudi Arabia’s spread of extremist “Wahhabist” Sunni doc-



Verso Books  
**NEW WORLD DISORDER — *The Age of Jihad* by Patrick Cockburn charts the turmoil of today’s Middle East and the devastating role the West has played in the region from 2001 to the present.**

eager to turn the page on an unpopular war, western interest waned. As Cockburn writes: “It became yesterday’s crisis. Television and newspapers closed down news bureaux in Baghdad and covered the story only scantily, right up to the moment ISIS captured Mosul in June 2014 and the country fell apart.” Baghdad itself was at risk of falling as politicians in the capital fled to Jordan. The “caliphate” proclaimed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a survivor of the notorious Abu Ghraib prison, is under siege. While some Sunnis may have welcomed it initially, its subject populations have endured a reign of terror and ruthless prohibitions. Even if ISIS can be defeated with the help of foreign powers, the damage will be immense and long lasting. Sectarian divisions between Sunni Arabs, Shias, Kurds, and others make for an explosive cocktail. It’s hard to see how Iraq and Syria can be put back together again. Given that Iraq borders six countries and Syria five, their convulsions also contribute to regional destabilization. Cockburn counts eight wars being fought in the Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa which have led to the “murder and migration of whole groups of people,” with no end in sight. While these multiple catastrophes may seem to be far away, Canada is not immune to the consequences — in refugee flows, radicalized youth lured by jihadi propaganda, the ramping up of security surveillance in response to terrorist threats. If the western liberal-democratic centre does not hold, the “age of jihad” may be just the beginning. Happy New Year?

Redemptorist Priest Father Graham Hill, C.S.sR.  
Ordained June 10, 2016, Grande Prairie, Alberta

# I Believe...

“Redemptorists continue to live out Saint Alphonsus’ concern for those who do not receive the good news as such — that is why I joined them..”  
Fr. Graham Hill, C.S.sR.

Come and See, with the Redemptorists.  
Contact  
Fr. David Purcell, C.S.sR.

Hear our Redemptorist audio

vocations@redemptorists.ca  
www.redemptoristvocations.ca  
416-770-3217

PLUG IN TO CHRIST

## Are you Moving?

**Please let us know a month in advance.**  
Write to:  
Circulation Dept.  
Prairie Messenger  
Box 190  
Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0  
pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca  
Undeliverable papers cost twice as much to return.



# Catholic schools show compassion as love in action

## Catholic Connections

Deanna Pellatt



*"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."*

— Colossians 3.12

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools in Melville, Theodore, and Yorkton continue their journey of encouraging stewardship as a way of life. The faith focus for this school year is the virtue of compassion. Thomas Gumbleton claims that compassion is one of Jesus' most important virtues and that compassion is truly one of the most significant ways of following Jesus.

The school division, together with graphic designer Blair Maki, has once again created a poster (seen here) as a visual reminder to staff and students throughout the year. The poster was designed with the idea of the ripple effect. In the centre we have images of Jesus showing compassion. His words and



actions of compassion ripple out to others who want to be like him. Therefore, in the images around the outside of the centre, we see other people showing compassion. These images include Pope Francis, Jean Vanier, Mother Mary, Saint Francis, Bishop Bryan Bayda, and adults and young people like ourselves who have taken to heart the words of Jesus to "go and do likewise," to be moved with compassion and to do something about the hurts and needs of others.

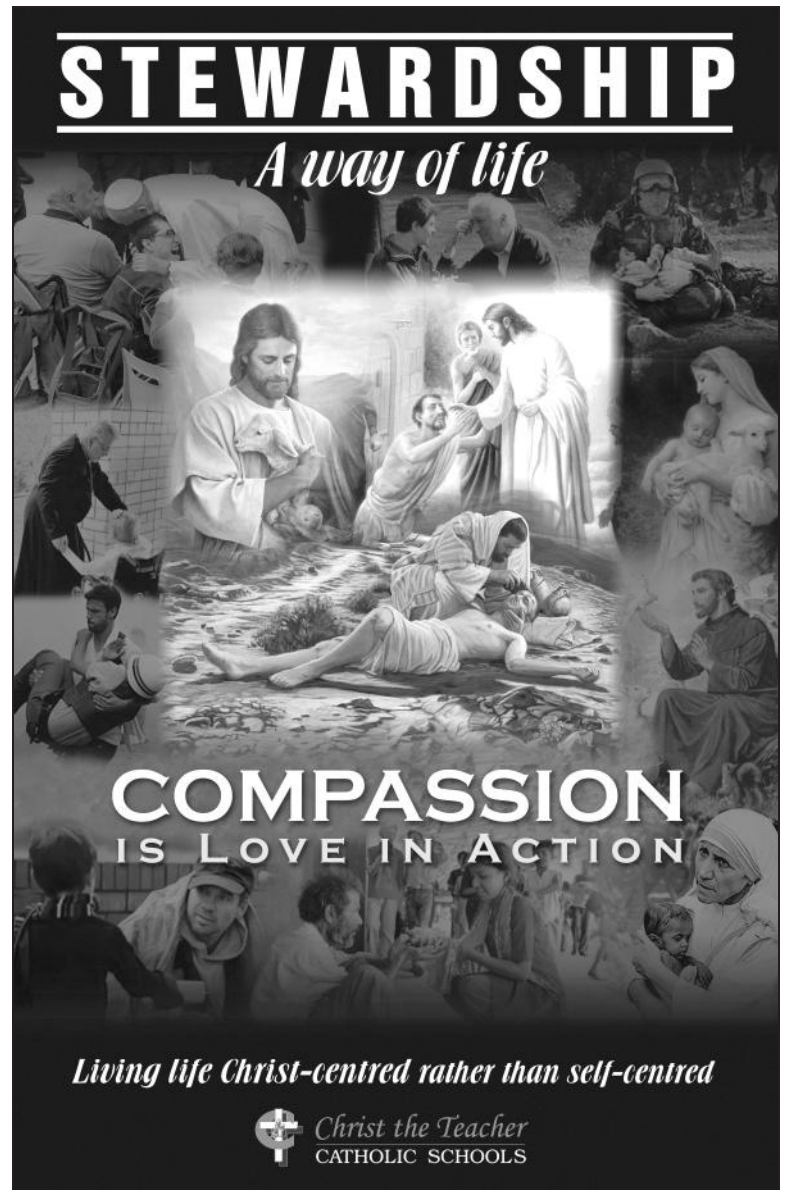
Just as all the people in the images around the outside of the poster responded to the ripple effect created by Jesus, our lives are meant to have a rippling effect as well. We are now the people among the rings of the ripple beyond the poster. We are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus by sharing our faith, and our gifts and talents so that others can experience the compassion of God through our loving actions.

Then, hopefully, the people who experience our compassion will pass it on to others so the rings of the ripple continue and, as they continue, compassion will transform the world!

St. Henry's Senior School in Melville, under the direction of Principal Steven Boucher, found a way to make the focus on compassion a connective element to student learning while at the same time making the teaching of compassion more relevant to the students and their day-to-day living. The first step was to spend time with the students on the instruction of compassion and what that meant. Using a variety of resources there was a 15 minute instructional lesson for each religion class about what compassion is, a detailed examination of the division's poster, and understanding the quote inspired by Mother Teresa, "compassion is love in action."

The second step to this project was for each student to write their own story of compassion. They were to choose either a situation where they were shown compassion or where they showed compassion to someone else. The students were encouraged to not use names in their stories to allow anonymity. This activity has allowed each student to share a little about their own life and how they relate to the understanding of compassion.

While compassion is an easy word to understand on the surface, when we seek a deeper meaning of it, the words inspired by Mother Teresa become even more alive — "Compassion is Love in Action." The stories are



## Respect for culture needed for reconciliation

Continued from page 1

"It's just now we're on an equal basis," he said. "No more residential school telling you what you should do, but what we can do together."

"I'm very optimistic," he said. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has laid out the plans to do that. "We cannot respond to everything they are asking for but we can do what we can do. I believe it's going to be great."

"We had already been talking and exchanging in an informal way," said Josianne Gauthier, director of In Canada programs for Development and Peace. Gauthier had been part of the working group that had been working on defining the mandate, to "give ourselves some objectives as Catholic movements going forward."

The groups had crafted a joint response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's March 2016 deadline for a response to the Calls to Action from the churches that were involved in running Indian residential schools.

"The idea was to have a national response, because we are not a national church like the Anglican Church," said Nahanee. "We wanted to have groups that were more or less representative of a national Catholic response."

"I think it's a good thing, otherwise we are just responding from our own different dioceses across Canada," Nahanee said. "It's better to have a number of people who can speak together. That way we know what is going on in each of our areas. We know how each is responding to the Calls to Action."

Membership in the Circle means "embracing our responsibilities" and examining the "impact of reconciliation on the future of our mission," Gauthier said. The Circle will examine how reconciliation is "lived out and how it connects to our mission for social justice, peace, and the rights of all to this national reconciliation process that the Catholic Church and the Catholic movements are engaged in."

"Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle is a Catholic coalition of indigenous people, bishops, clergy, lay movements and institutes of consecrated life, engaged in renewing and fostering relationships between the Catholic Church and indigenous people in Canada," said the Circle's mission statement.

Among the Calls to Action is the formal adoption and application of the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a "framework for reconciliation."

For Nahanee, the UNDRIP's call to recognize the spirituality of indigenous people and their rights to have their culture and spiritual development without interference from the church is key.

"I think it's about respect for the culture as it is," he said. "We would still like to convert people back to the church, to Christianity, because I believe people still need to be God-centred."

But Nahanee said he also believed in what Pope John Paul II said when he visited Canada that the Gospel "does not take away the culture but can purify and strengthen it."

Since the government policy that tried to "take the Indian out of the child" in the residential schools, and the subsequent loss to generations of indigenous peoples of their language and culture, Nahanee has seen a revival.

"People who managed to hang onto their language and customs have shared it and that culture is growing very strong now," he said.

Gauthier added, "I also really liked how, even though the bishops' conference is present, it's not a hierarchical presence, it's a circle. Everybody has a voice. Everybody is heard and given a chance to express themselves. Our ideas do not always flow at the same speed."

on display throughout the school for the remainder of the year to remind students, staff, and visitors of the many stories of compassion we witness every day.

St. Henry's Junior School in Melville, under the direction of Principal Joanne Sebastian, has also connected the faith focus on compassion to student learning. The students and staff are creating a book based on and titled after our division theme — *The ABCs of Compassion: Love in Action*. The following is taken directly from the forward of the book:

"*The ABCs of Compassion* uses each letter of the alphabet to describe a virtue, characteristic, person or word that strengthens, supports, and guides us to be compassionate. We partnered with an author and publisher in Melville, Saskatchewan, Susan Harris, to make this book a reality. Students were divided into groups led by teachers and brainstormed words related to compassion. Once the words were short-listed and the final ones chosen, the meanings were developed. Then the students drew illustrations to support the words. We believe this active engagement will embed compassion indelibly in the life of our students."

Principal Sebastian was adding some finishing touches and preparing to forward their creation to their editor and publisher prior to the Christmas break. We are looking forward to seeing this bilingual book as a finished product!

All of our schools are always involved in a number of projects where staff and students put stewardship virtues into practice. This year's focus on compassion follows previous years' focus on the virtues of gratitude, generosity,

trust, responsibility, and mercy. Our schools participate in a variety of projects including the Farm Credit Canada Drive Away Hunger Campaign, Me to We, Candle of Hope, and many more.

Most recently our schools were involved in a variety of Advent projects which included weekly prayer celebrations, singing and visiting with senior citizens in our communities, purchasing gifts from Free The Children and Chalice for families and communities in need around the world, and collecting necessary goods and funds to assist various charities and service organizations with their Christmas campaigns for those in need. Engaging in these various projects allows students and staff not only to help those in need, which has been and always will be an important practice in our Catholic schools, but also to foster growth in a virtuous way of life.

Our yearly faith focus, which helps us to become good stewards and disciples of Christ, is a way of increasing awareness that not only is living a virtuous life the moral thing to do, but that we are called to make sure our words and actions reflect our compassionate God who created us in his image and likeness.

God shows compassion through us. We are God's hands, heart, and voice for the people around us. When we show God's compassion to others and to the world, we continue the ripple effect inspiring others to show God's compassion — and on and on it will go transforming the world!

Pray that God will make waves with your faith, even rocking a few boats along the way. Let the ripple effect of your faith and your compassion build up the kingdom of God here and now.



## A positive message for life

The pro-life movement is often coloured by its critics as a negative movement, namely, as anti-abortion. This brings it into confrontation with what has become labelled a more positive “pro-choice” movement in western society. The politics of this needs to change, and it is good to publicize how it is changing.

One group, among others, that is changing the perception of the pro-life movement is Save the Storks. “One way we’re helping people approach the conversation of pro-life is by shifting the emphasis from being solely on saving the baby, and shifting the focus to understand why women feel they need to get abortions,” says Marcie Little, creative director of Save the Storks. “This helps people develop empathy that leads to compassion.”

According to Crux, the group is partnering with pregnancy resource centres across the U.S. to give abortion-vulnerable women options. The group’s vision is to create mobile ultrasound units and offer training and support services to pregnancy centres.

Save the Storks says it has funded roughly 40 bus projects (20 on the road and 20 in production), gained over 165,000 supporters, and saved over 1,000 babies.

The buses are equipped with ultrasound machines, surround sound systems and large TV displays. They are helping save lives outside abortion clinics and on college campuses.

“As part of our mission to equip pregnancy centres, we actively engage with the next generation by encouraging them to re-imagine the pro-life movement,” Little said. Their innovative spirits, thoughtfulness, and care for people afflicted by injustice is

invaluable as our culture shifts toward embracing life.

Commenting on our culture’s perception of the pro-life movement, she said, “Unfortunately, the current view of the pro-life movement is often unfairly negative, and many young people don’t want to associate with it. In a way, we fill a void by helping people think differently about pro-life by inviting them to re-imagine what that term and the related actions actually mean.”

On another front, the transgender movement is heating up in a controversial fashion.

A regulation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requires that all hospitals and health care providers, including religious ones, perform or provide gender transition services, hormonal treatments and counselling as well as a host of surgeries that would remove or transform the sexual organs of men or women transitioning to the other gender. The HHS regulation requires group health plans to cover these procedures and services.

As noted on page 2 of this issue, the Catholic Benefits Association, the Diocese of Fargo and Catholic Charities North Dakota filed a lawsuit Dec. 28 against the regulation that redefines “sex” for anti-discrimination purposes to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

In a related case, on Dec. 31 a federal judge in Texas blocked applying the regulation on a coalition of religious medical organizations who said the ruling was contrary to their religious beliefs.

While some will give a negative label to this resistance to adopting society’s current encouragement, even of children, to change gender identity, evidence shows that such a transition is not

always a positive one.

On a related front, a group of priests, nuns and laypeople in India’s Kerala state have formed a group to respond to the pastoral needs of transgender people. Formed under the banner of Pro-Life Support, it offers outreach programs for the transgender community.

India has an estimated 500,000 transgender people. They are often ostracized from their families and — without adequate state support in terms of employment, health and education — they end up on the street begging for money or are exploited in the sex trade.

“The whole church has a big role to play,” said Rev. Paul Madassey, who is in charge of pro-life support for the Kerala Catholic Bishops’ Council. He noted Pope Francis has talked about the need to give “pastoral care to the LGBT community.”

“There is an active sex racket from North India eyeing transgender people in Kerala,” he explained. “They are trying to exploit the discriminatory situation they face,” Madassey told ucanews.com.

In mid-December, sisters of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel offered their buildings to form an exclusive school for dropouts among transgender people, considered the first of its kind in the country. The nuns offered their venue after at least 50 building owners declined to let out their buildings, indicating the discrimination prevalent in the society, Madassey told ucanews.com.

A pro-life culture encompasses a large tent. It provides a positive response to people caught up in life’s tragedies. However, it’s a message and attitude that doesn’t always come through clearly — or want to be accepted by the larger society. — PWN

## A priest’s view on ministry to those asking for assisted suicide

**The Editor:** With regard to the challenge that is being presented these days to priests and bishops who are called upon to minister to dying persons who have requested their physician to help them bring on the inevitable, I offer them my empathy.

However, after more than 56 years of active parish ministry I would also dare to share my experience.

In this and similar difficult cases I take a few moments to meditate on the words of Our Lord on the cross when He said: “Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Secondly in case the min-

ister is inclined to take direction in such cases from canon law some serious thought might be given to canon #1752: “In cases of transfer of priests (in serious trouble with the bishop), the provisions of canon 1747 are to be applied, always observing canonical equity and keeping in mind the *salvation of souls*, which in the church must always be the *supreme law*.” — **Rev. Art Seaman, Camp Morton, Man.**

## 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.

## Pope prays for nations suffering from violence

Continued from page 1

lion euro (US\$6.3 million) would be distributed on Christmas Day to assist in relief efforts in Ukraine. Earlier this year, the pope called for a collection across churches in Europe to help the people of the wartorn country.

Iraq, Libya and Yemen, “where their peoples suffer war and the brutality of terrorism,” were in the pope’s prayers so that they may “be able to once again find unity and harmony.”

The pope also remembered Africa, especially Nigeria where fundamentalist terrorism “exploits children in order to perpetrate horror and death” as well as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, calling on their leaders to choose the path of dialogue rather than “the mindset of conflict.”

He also prayed for peace in

the Holy Land and that Israelis and Palestinians turn away from hate and revenge while having “the courage and determination to write a new page of history.”

Praying for an end to current tensions, the pope also called for peace in Venezuela, Colombia, Myanmar and the Korean peninsula.

Christ’s birth, he said, is a sign of joy and a call for the world to contemplate “the child Jesus who gives hope once again to every person on the face of the earth.”

“‘For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.’ He is the ‘prince of peace;’ let us welcome him.”

After his address, the bells of St. Peter’s rang loudly, pealing throughout the square as they did in the evening Dec. 24 following the proclamation of Jesus’ birth during Christmas mass.



CNS/Jagadeesh Nv, EPA

**PROTEST IN INDIA —** Members of the LGBT community hold placards during a protest rally in Bangalore, India, Oct. 21, 2016. The church in India’s Kerala state has formed a group of priests, nuns and laypeople to respond to the pastoral needs of transgender people. Pope Francis has encouraged this.



# Change new year by choosing to do good: pope

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Whether the new year will be good or not depends on us choosing to do good each day, Pope Francis said.

“That is how one builds peace, saying ‘no’ to hatred and violence — with action — and ‘yes’ to fraternity and reconciliation,” he said Jan. 1, which the church marks as the feast of Mary, Mother of God and as World Peace Day.

Speaking to the some 50,000 pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the first noon Angelus of 2017, the pope referred to his peace day message in which he asked people to adopt the “style” of non-violence for building a politics for peace.

Lamenting the brutal act of terrorism that struck during a night of “well-wishes and hope” in Istanbul, the pope offered his prayers for the entire nation of Turkey as well as those hurt and killed. A gunman opened fire dur-

ing a New Year’s Eve celebration at a popular nightclub early Jan. 1, killing at least 39 people and wounding at least 70 more.

“I ask the Lord to support all people of goodwill who courageously roll up their sleeves in order to confront the scourge of terrorism and this bloodstain that is enveloping the world with the shadow of fear and confusion,” he said.

Earlier in the day, the pope spoke of how maternal tenderness, hope and self-sacrifice were the “strongest antidote” to the selfishness, indifference and “lack of openness” in the world today.

Celebrating mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, which was decorated with bright red anthuriums, evergreen boughs, white flowers and pinecones brushed with gold paint, the pope said that a community without mothers would be cold and heartless with “room only for calculation and speculation.”

The pope said he learned so much about unconditional love,

hope and belonging from seeing mothers who never stop embracing, supporting and fighting for what is best for their children incarcerated in prisons, ill in hospitals, enslaved by drugs or suffering from war.

“Where there is a mother, there is unity, there is belonging, belonging as children,” he said.

Just like all mothers of the world, Mary, Mother of God, “protects us from the corrosive disease of being ‘spiritual orphans,’ ” that is when the soul feels “motherless and lacking the tenderness of God, when the sense of belonging to a family, a people, a land, to our God, grows dim.”

Mary shows that humility and tenderness aren’t virtues of the weak, but of the strong, and that we don’t have to mistreat others in order to feel important, he said.

The pope also presided over an evening prayer service with eucharistic adoration and the singing of a special hymn of

thanksgiving to God Dec. 31 in St. Peter’s Basilica.

As the year ends, he said in his homily, he asked people to reflect on how God has been present in

their lives and to thank the Lord for all signs of his generosity, “seen in countless ways through the witness of those people who quietly took a risk.”

# Patriarchs lament exodus of Christians

By Doreen Abi Raad

BEIRUT (CNS) — Lamenting the exodus of Christians from their ancestral homelands, Catholic patriarchs of the Middle East pleaded for peace and security in their annual Christmas messages.

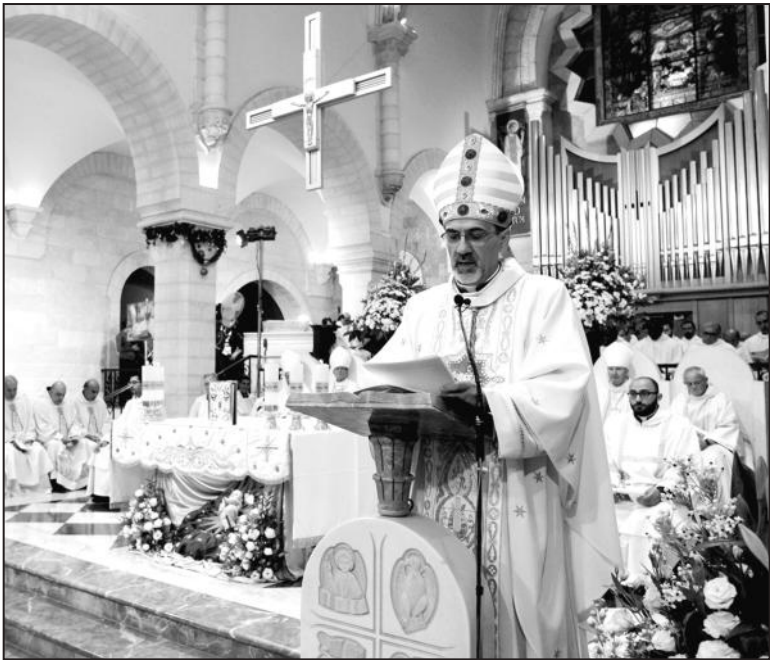
In separate statements, the prelates shared their anguish regarding the persecution and uprooting of Christians from the region.

Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of Maronite Catholics, appealed to the international community to work to end terrorism “that is killing and displacing families and depriving them of their rights and dignities” He made the comments in his message from Bkerke, the patriarchate north of Beirut.

He also called upon the UN Security Council “to work seriously to find political solutions to the wars, aimed at bringing comprehensive and lasting peace and the repatriation of refugees back to their homelands.”

In his message, Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan called attention to “our beloved brothers and sisters of Syria and Iraq . . . deprived of the Christmas joy, having endured the horrible consequences of war, violence, and all kind of persecutions.” They suffered “all this hardship” because of their Christian faith and their willingness “to persevere in faithfulness to Jesus the saviour,” he added.

Younan reiterated that Christians were “uprooted from their lands and driven out unjustly from their homes by barbarian terrorists, in Mosul and the Plain of Nineveh, Iraq,” referring to the exodus of some 100,000 Christians — among them more than



CNS/Musa Al Shaer, EPA

**CHRISTMAS HOMILY — Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, delivers the homily during Christmas Eve mass at the Church of the Nativity in the West Bank town of Bethlehem.**

60,000 Syriac Catholics — when the region was overtaken by Islamic State militants in 2014.

“How would they welcome Christmas, but in tears and anxiety for their future!” the patriarch wrote.

Regarding his visit in late November to the recently liberated Christian villages in the Nineveh Plain, Younan said “there is still a lot to do” to inspire confidence “to our eradicated and exiled community” to return to their ancestral land.

“We have to keep hoping that the local government and international leaders will expel the terrorists and restore peace and security,” he said, emphasizing that this is a basic condition for the return “of our uprooted people.”

“We hope the same for all the inhabitants of wartorn Aleppo,

the second largest city of Syria, after being liberated and reunified,” he added.

Melkite Catholic Patriarch Gregoire III Laham, in his message, stressed that “today in the Middle East, the cradle of Christianity, the Christian presence is threatened . . . by wars that have given rise to this terrifying exodus, especially of Christians.”

“This is a prayer for the peace of Christmas to protect our suffering countries, especially Palestine, Iraq and most especially our beloved Syria,” the Syrian-born patriarch wrote. “I continue to repeat my motto: give us peace and security, because that is the warranty and condition for Christian resistance, presence, role and witness.”

Laham urged the region’s Christians to stay in their homelands, stressing that “our presence here is of great, global and historical significance! We are not asked to sacrifice our families, though we must struggle to remain here despite dangers, difficulties and hardships.”

# Reform is more than just a facelift, pope tells Curia

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The reform of the Roman Curia is not a mere facelift to rejuvenate an aging body but a process of deep, personal conversion, Pope Francis said.

Meeting with cardinals and the heads of Vatican offices for his annual Christmas greeting, the pope warned that “it is not wrinkles the church should fear” but rather the stains that impede its growth and relevance in the world.

“The reform does not have an aesthetical end to make the Curia more beautiful; it cannot be understood as a sort of facelift or applying makeup to beautify the elderly curial body, nor plastic surgery to remove wrinkles,” the pope said Dec. 22.

While his addresses in previous years focused on curial ills and medicinal virtues, this year’s speech laid out a 12-step program of guiding principles geared toward an appropriate and long-lasting recovery.

“It was necessary to speak of illnesses and cures so that every operation — to achieve success — be preceded by an in-depth diagnosis, by accurate analyses and must be accompanied and followed through with precise prescriptions,” the pope said.

Listing 12 criteria, the pope explained that the reform is at its heart a sign of the church’s liveliness and a “process of growth and above all, conversion.”

The guiding principles of the reform of the Roman Curia are:

- Individuality (Personal conversion): A person’s spiritual well-being can either strengthen the body of the Curia or damage it and make it sick.
- Pastoral conversion: The workplace must have a pastoral spirit where “no one feels neglected and mistreated” and everyone can experience the care of the Good Shepherd.
- Missionary spirit (Christ-

centric): Without an authentic evangelical spirit and faithfulness of the church to its own vocation, “any new structure will corrupt in short time.”

- Rationality: No Vatican office is greater than another and the responsibilities of each office must be clearly distinguished.
- Functionality: The merging of offices, demotions and promotions must always be done to streamline and hone in a dicastery’s specific mission.
- Up-to-date (“Aggiornamento”): Vatican offices must read “the signs of times” and adapt to the needs of the universal church.
- Sobriety: The Roman Curia must be willing to simplify and slim down, especially when it comes to “offices that are no longer responsive to contingent needs.”
- Subsidiarity: Reorganize priorities within the offices and, if necessary, shifting responsibilities to another dicastery while working in sync with the Secretariat of State.
- Synodality: Reducing or merging Vatican offices avoids fragmentation and allows for more frequent meetings between the pope and the heads of those offices.
- Catholicity: The Curia should mirror the universality and multicultural nature of the church and hire personnel from around the world while emphasizing the important role of permanent deacons and the laity — especially women — in the life and mission of the church.
- Professionalism: Every office must adopt a policy of personal formation to avoid the “rust” and routine of functionalism, as well as putting a definitive end to the practice of “*promoveatur ut amoveatur*” (“removal by promotion”). “This is a cancer!” the pope exclaimed.
- Graduality (Discernment): Taking time by verifying, correcting and discerning methods and policies that can “allow the necessary flexibility to achieve a true reform.”



CNS/Muhammad Hamed, Reuters

**ISTANBUL TERROR ATTACK — The funeral procession of one of the victims from Istanbul’s New Year nightclub attack is seen in Fuheis, Jordan, Jan. 3. A gunman killed 39 people, including a Canadian woman, in the attack.**

We must not wish for the disappearance of our troubles but for the grace to transform them.

— Simone Weil