



Future church

“Africa is no dark continent — some distant impoverished mystery cut off from the enlightenment of western democracy, technology and prosperity,” writes Michael Swan. “Africa is becoming an engine of the future, especially the future of the universal church.” — page 3

Best dramatic films

Gerald Schmitz chooses his best dramatic films of the past year. Topping the list is the multiple Golden Globe-winning film *La La Land*. Emma Stone is one of the award-winning stars. — page 7



Church sanctuaries

Our often rigid paradigms of orthodoxy, ecclesiology, ecumenism, liturgy, sacramental practice, and canon law, however well-intentioned, have made our churches places where no sanctuary is offered and where the wide embrace practised by Jesus is not mirrored, writes Ron Rolheiser, OMI. — page 8

Last frontier

Is the rural prairie West the last frontier for reconciliation with First Nations? asks Roger Epp. Land, he says, is the heart of the matter. — page 9

Week of prayer

The Jan. 18 - 25 international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity takes place this year as part of a big ecumenical lead-up to the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation next October, writes Tom Ryan, CSP. This will be the first centenary commemoration of the Protestant Reformation to take place during an ecumenical age. — page 10



Pope wants church to be more maternal

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Mother’s Day came early this

year at the Vatican.

A number of feast days over the Advent and Christmas seasons gave Pope Francis a fresh opportunity to pay homage to the world’s mothers and insist further on how and why he wants the entire church to become more maternal.

But who is this archetypal mother figure the pope upholds? Pope Francis pointed to a few of his favourite biblical heroines, praising the seemingly contradictory qualities of each:

Like Mary, she is silently compliant to God’s will; like Rachel, she weeps inconsolably, drawing God’s and the world’s attention to a reality people would rather ignore; and like the persistent widow, she doesn’t let being a nobody stop her from speaking up

against injustice, making a fuss and pestering the one who does have power to make things right.

So how and why does the church need to be this loving, humble, hard-as-nails champion? Let’s count the ways:

— A cold, careless, selfish world thirsts for a tender warm home.

Speaking on the feast of Mary, Mother of God, Jan. 1, Pope Francis said it’s the maternal instinct to hold, hope and help that make up the “strongest antidote” to the selfishness, indifference and intolerance in the world today.

He went on to say that God chose to be “knit” inside and born of a woman, so that he could experience a mother’s tenderness, hear the cries and joys of their people, and make everyone his brother and sister in the faith who belong to a family.

— When times get tough, who are you going to call? Everyone, especially the lost, forgotten and marginalized, need a strong-willed, faithful advocate on their side.

The pope said Jan. 1 that in his pastoral ministry, he learned so much about the meaning of true unconditional commitment from the mothers he met whose kids were in jail, addicted to drugs or

victims of war. Neither cold nor heat nor rain, he said, could stop these women from fighting for something better.

Much like the persistent widow, the mothers he met were the ones who were able to offer love and support to their suffering children “without wavering” through thick and thin.

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

— To change the world, it starts at home.

Speaking on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12, he again highlighted “those fighting mothers” he knew back in Latin America.

Often alone and with no help, they were able to raise their children right, he said. Mary is our “female fighter” facing off a mistrustful, lazy, distracted world — “a woman who fights to strengthen the joy of the Gospel, give flesh to the Gospel” in the world.

— To help people, you must be in touch with a hard reality.

In a letter to the world’s bishops marking the feast of the Holy Innocents Dec. 28, the pope said they must listen for the sobbing of today’s mothers because there are so many new Herods today, killing the young with their tyranny and “unbridled thirst for power.”



CNS/Bob Roller

MARY AS MOTHER — A statue of Mary and the Christ Child is inside Jesus the Good Shepherd Church in Dunkirk, Md. Pope Francis is encouraging the entire church to become more maternal.

Christians lag behind on education levels

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Canada’s Christian population is less educated than Canadian Jews, Muslims, Hindus and even those who have no religious affiliation.

That’s the conclusion drawn from new research by Pew Research Center in the United States as part of its worldwide study of education among religious groups.

The average Canadian Christian has managed 12.7 years of schooling, compared to 13.1 years for Canadian Hindus, 13.3

for the religiously unaffiliated, 13.5 for Muslims and 14.3 for Canadian Jews. Only Buddhists, who come in at an average of 11.4 years of schooling, trail the Christian population in Canada.

Catholics make up 60 per cent of Canadian Christians, who in turn account for 67.2 per cent of Canadians.

The relatively modest level of schooling for Canadian Christians doesn’t come as a surprise to St. Jerome’s and Waterloo University sociologist of religion David Seljak. Age and immigration explain most of the differences, Seljak told The Catholic Register

in an email.

“Immigrants tend to be better

— CHRISTIANS, page 4

— DON’T IGNORE, page 11

Calgary Bishop Henry resigns for health reasons

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The years of suffering from “severe chronic pain” have finally forced Calgary Bishop Fred Henry to give up his ministry.

Pope Francis accepted Henry’s resignation for health reasons and named Peterborough Bishop William McGrattan as his replacement on Jan. 4.

In Henry’s resignation letter to the pope, which he submitted in February of 2016, the 73-year-old bishop explained that he has been dealing with a painful autoimmune disease that causes a form of arthritis affecting his spine.

“I can no longer turn my head sideways but must turn the whole upper body to look left or right,” he wrote Pope Francis. “In addition, I can’t really look up but have a permanent stoop and my feet are much more familiar to me than the sky.”

The illness has also caused painful flare-ups of inflammation in other parts of his body, including his eyes, and reduced his lung capacity.



Joy Gregory

Bishop Fred Henry

Henry wrote that he lived with “severe chronic pain.” He is stepping down two years short of the mandatory retirement age of 75 set by Canon Law.

“My condition cannot be reversed,” he told Francis. “I have jokingly said that ‘pain is my best friend, we are always together,’

— DIOCESE, page 5

Fix overcrowded prisons unfit for human life: pope

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In the wake of a deadly riot in a Brazilian jail, Pope Francis called for all prisons to offer dignified living conditions and be places for true rehabilitation.

He expressed his sorrow and concern over the “massacre” in the Amazon city of Manaus, “where a very violent clash between rival gangs” resulted in at least 56 deaths.

The riot began Jan. 1 and authorities regained control early Jan. 2. Prison gang members took other prisoners and some guards hostage, decapitated or mutilated

some of their victims and shot at police, according to early reports.

During his weekly general audience at the Vatican Jan. 4, the pope asked people to pray for those who were killed, for their families and for all inmates and employees at the Manaus detention facility.

“I renew my appeal that penitential institutions be places of re-education and social reintegration and living conditions for inmates be fit for the human person,” he said.

He invited everyone to pray for all prisoners in the world, and that prisons not be overcrowded, but about rehabilitation.

Magi’s journey reflects our longing for God: pope

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Magi had the courage to set out on a journey in the hope of finding something new, unlike Herod who was full of himself and unwilling to change his ways, Pope Francis said.

The Wise Men who set out from the East in search of Jesus

the choir singing “Angels we have heard on high” in Latin. Before taking his place in front of the altar, the pope stood in front of a statue of baby Jesus, spending several minutes in veneration before kissing it.

The pope said that the Magi adoring the newborn king highlight two specific actions: seeing and worshipping.

Gospel is not an event of the past but of the present.”

It is a holy longing for God “that helps us keep alert in the face of every attempt to reduce and impoverish our life. A holy longing for God is the memory of faith, which rebels before all prophets of doom,” the pope said.

Recalling the biblical figures of Simeon, the prodigal son, and Mary Magdalene, the pope said this longing for God “draws us out of our iron-clad isolation, which makes us think that nothing can change,” and helps us seek Christ.

However, the figure of King Herod presents a different attitude of bewilderment and fear that, when confronted with something new, “closes in on itself and its own achievements, its knowledge, its successes.”

The quest of the Magi led them first to Herod’s palace that, although it befits the birth of

a king, is only a sign of “power, outward appearances and superiority. Idols that promise only sorrow and enslavement,” he said.

“There, in the palace, they did not see the star guiding them to discover a God who wants to be loved. For only under the banner of freedom, not tyranny, is it possible to realize that the gaze of this unknown but desired king does not abase, enslave, or imprison us,” the pope said.

Unlike the Magi, the pope added, Herod is unable to wor-

ship the newborn king because he was unwilling to change his way of thinking and “did not want to stop worshipping himself, believing that everything revolved around him.”

Christians are called to imitate the wise men who, “weary of the Herods of their own day,” set out in search of the promise of something new.

“The Magi were able to worship, because they had the courage to set out. And as they fell to their knees before the small, poor and

vulnerable infant, the unexpected and unknown child of Bethlehem, they discovered the glory of God,” the pope said.

After the mass, Pope Francis greeted tens of thousands of people gathered in St. Peter’s Square to celebrate the feast of the Epiphany.

A colourful parade led by the sounds of trumpets and drums, people dressed in traditional and festive clothing contributed to the cheerful atmosphere despite the chilly weather.



CNS/Paul Haring

PARADE ON FEAST OF EPIPHANY — People in traditional attire endure cold weather during the annual parade marking the feast of the Epiphany in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Jan. 6.

personify all those who long for God and reflect “all those who in their lives have let their hearts be anesthetized,” the pope said Jan. 6, the feast of the Epiphany.

“The Magi experienced longing; they were tired of the usual fare. They were all too familiar with, and weary of, the Herods of their own day. But there, in Bethlehem, was a promise of newness, of gratuity,” he said.

Thousands of people were gathered in St. Peter’s Basilica as the pope entered to the sounds of

Seeing the star of Bethlehem did not prompt them to embark on their journey but rather, “they saw the star because they had already set out,” he said.

“Their hearts were open to the horizon and they could see what the heavens were showing them, for they were guided by an inner restlessness. They were open to something new,” the pope said.

This restlessness, he continued, awakens a longing for God that exists in the hearts of all believers who know “that the

Syrians don’t want to leave their homeland

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Syrians don’t want to leave their homeland, they want a safe place to live in peace, said a Franciscan friar from Aleppo, Syria, who spoke on Jan. 5 with the Archdiocese of Washington’s Holy Land Committee.

Franciscan Brother George Jamal, who is originally from Aleppo, said even though the situation in his homeland is complicated, it is important to learn about it and if people feel inclined to do something, they can learn about the different aid groups in the region to see how to best help.

By some estimates, five million Syrians have left the country since the country’s conflict began in 2011. That includes some members of Jamal’s family.

“My family, too, wants to be back after the war is finished,” he said, during the informal meeting, aimed at learning more about the region. “It is home.”

Recently, the Syrian government retook control of Aleppo after months of heavy fighting

with rebel groups. It had been the largest city in the country before the conflict. Last year, Staffan de Mistura, United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, said the conflict has left 400,000 deaths in its wake and millions of people displaced as they have left to find safety in other countries.

Jamal said some of his friends had died in the conflict and one of his family homes was destroyed. When he visited a few years ago, after being away while studying, he said he felt “like a stranger” in his homeland. Aleppo has more checkpoints, more destruction, but even in conflict, people find a way to hold on to whatever stability might be available, he said in an interview with Catholic News Service.

Christians are still carrying on with celebrations and customs, he said, and sometimes he still is able to see part of normal life through his friends’ posts on social media, the way any other 26-year-old keeps up with friends. But he said he has a feeling that what he knew of his city of Aleppo only exists now in his memory.

“I lost my past,” he said. “I have my past in my memory.”

As he studies elsewhere and awaits ordination, Jamal still dreams of one day returning home and helping the youth of Syria and those who have faced the decision to leave.

When members of the committee asked what would be the best path for the country and best way to help, he encouraged them to keep open minds about the situation, which is hard to compare to other conflicts, to pray, to send material help but also to consider the right situation for the people of Syria that can “help people to stay, not to get out.” Even those who leave want to return home, he said, but they’re looking for peace and safety.

Syria is an important place to Christianity. It is known to Christian pilgrims who visited the country before the conflict and made treks to locales such as the Memorial of St. Paul, the place where he converted to Christianity, and the house where Ananias baptized him. Both places are in or near Damascus, Syria.

Pope: join those who weep and share their sufferings

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In the depths of despair, when no words or gestures will help, then cry with those who suffer, because tears are the seeds of hope, Pope Francis said.

When people are hurting, “it is necessary to share in their desperation. In order to dry the tears from the face of those who suffer, we must join our weeping with theirs. This is the only way our words may truly be able to offer a bit of hope,” he said Jan. 4 during his weekly general audience.

“And if I can’t offer words like this, with tears, with sorrow, then silence is better, a caress, a gesture and no words,” he said.

In his first general audience of the new year, the pope continued his series of talks on Christian hope by reflecting on Rachel’s inconsolable sorrow and mourning for her children who “are no more,” as written by the prophet Jeremiah.

Rachel’s refusal to be consoled “expresses the depth of her pain and the bitterness of her weeping,” the pope told those gathered in the Vatican’s Paul VI hall.

“Facing the tragedy of the loss of her children, a mother cannot bear words or gestures of consolation, which are always inadequate, always unable to alleviate the pain of a wound that cannot and doesn’t want to heal,” he said. The amount of pain, he said, is proportional to the amount of love in her heart.

Rachel and her weeping, he said, represent every mother and every person throughout history who cry over an “irreparable loss.”

Rachel’s refusal to be consoled

also “teaches us how much sensitivity is asked of us” and how delicately one must approach a person in pain, the pope said.

Jeremiah shows how God responded to Rachel in a loving and gentle way, with words that are “genuine, not fake.”

The pope said God answers with a promise that her tears are not in vain and her children shall return from exile and there will be new life and hope.

“Tears generated hope. This isn’t easy to understand, but it is true,” he said.

“So often in our life, tears sow hope, they are seeds of hope,” he said, emphasizing how Mary’s tears at the foot of the cross generated new life and hope for those who, through their faith, became her children in the body of Christ, the church.

This innocent “lamb of God” died for all of humanity, which is always important to remember, especially when struggling with the question of why children are allowed to suffer in this world, he said.

The pope said when people ask him why such suffering happens, he said he has no answer. “I just say, ‘Look at the crucifix. God gave us his son, he suffered, and perhaps there you will find an answer.’ ”

No appropriate words or replies will ever come from the head, he said, one can only look at the love God showed by offering his son, who offered his life — this may point the way to some consolation.

God’s word is the definitive word of consolation “because it is born of weeping.”



CNS/Maciej Kulczynski, EPA

EPIPHANY IN POLAND — People feed a camel during the International Three Kings’ Day Parade in Zgorzelec, Poland, Jan. 6.

Africa takes its place in the 21st-century church

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

The church, the world and the future are all more African today than they have ever been.

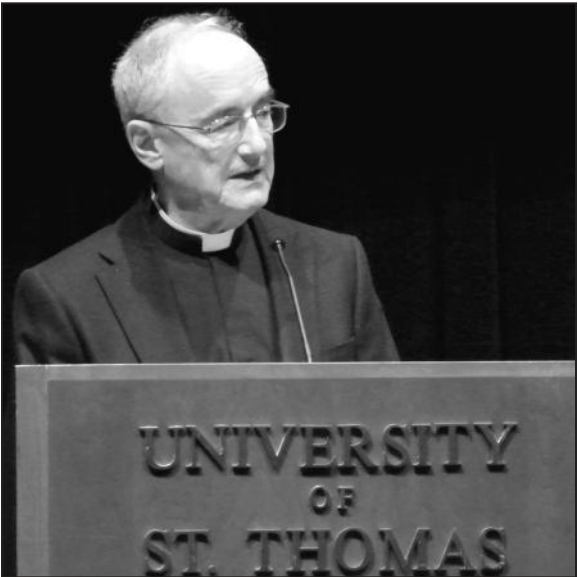
Africa is no dark continent — some distant impoverished mystery cut off from the enlightenment of western democracy, technology and prosperity. Africa is becoming an engine of the future, especially the future of the universal church.

Between 2005 and 2015 Africa's economy grew by 50 per cent, far outpacing the global average of 23 per cent despite costly, disastrous wars in several countries.

But Africa's future is about much more than economic developments. These are a mere side-effect of the demographic and cultural power of a young continent.

In 2013 there were 200 million Africans between 15 and 24, one-fifth of the continent's population. By 2045 there will be 400 million young Africans in those critical years of higher education and first steps into the workforce.

Canada's youth between 15 and 24 are just over 4.5 million, or 12.5 per cent of our population.



CNS/Dianne Towalski

AFRICA'S CONTRIBUTIONS — Canadian Jesuit Father Michael Czerny (recently appointed to a key post in refugee policy for the Vatican's department for Promotion of Integral Human Development) spent a decade in Africa helping to establish the African Jesuit AIDS Network. He believes Africa is making crucial contributions to how the church thinks, feels and acts in the world today.

Nobody is projecting growth in that demographic.

Africa's youth will not accept lives cut off from the wealth of the 21st century. As the young tend to do — because they will be the workers, innovators and consumers — the coming generation of Africans are expected to become global wealth creators in this century. Africans are 15 per cent of the world's population today. By 2100 they will be nearly 40 per cent.

The church is a part of this rising youthful Africa. One in five Christians in the world today are Africans living south of the Sahara. In the last 100 years this region's Catholics have grown 70-fold — from seven million to 470 million African Catholics.

Nor are Africa's Catholics merely cultural.

"This is a very religious continent by any standard," Jesuit Father Agbonkianmeghe Orobator told The Catholic Register during



CNS/Paul Haring

AFRICAN YOUTH — Children wearing shirts imprinted with an image of Pope Francis sing during the pope's visit to a Catholic parish in the Kangemi slum on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya.

a recent visit to Toronto. "I mean believing people — people of faith."

There may, in fact, be a few atheists in foxholes. But anyone who has been to Africa can tell you there are fewer in Africa. Africans speak dozens of languages and live in a great variety of cultures, but they share the bedrock conviction that everything depends on a relationship with God.

It's not an individual or individualistic relationship with God. African religion springs from African community and finds its home in the community.

"*S u m u s ergo sum,*" Ghanaian

1969 who observed, "I am because we are — and since we are, therefore I am," said Czerny. The African instinct for connection fits incredibly well with Pope Francis.

"In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis took it further," said Czerny. "Because we are, because we come from us and are going toward us, there's our common home to take care of — not optionally, but necessarily."

Still, the 49-year-old Orobator, who heads up the Jesuit theological college in Nairobi, Kenya, rejects any suggestion that Africa will follow Latin America as the premier staging ground for new thought and action in the church of this century.

"I don't think it's Africa's turn," Orobator said. "I don't think we take turns. I'm a firm believer in what we call the world church or the global church."

Led by prominent prelates such as Cardinal Robert Sarah of Guinea, a vocal proponent of the church's traditional teachings and practices, the African church is often regarded as a conservative voice. To some extent, that may be

true, but western labels are difficult to apply to Africa. In any event, expecting Africa to provide some new formulation — to reconstitute Catholic teaching and practice as liberation theology did in response to crushing poverty and military dictatorships in Latin America through the Cold War years — is unlikely to happen.

"We make contributions (to the church) not as a concession but rather by the fact of being baptized and full members of this community," Orobator said. "The church in Africa, for me, participates in this same mission not by concession, not by turn, but because as a community we come bearing gifts. We come bearing graces and charisms to enrich this global community. So every time is the African church's time."

In 2009 Pope Benedict XVI called Africa "an immense spiritual lung for a humanity which seems to be in crisis of faith and hope."

Orobator is not shying away from Benedict's belief in Africa as a force capable of rejuvenating the church.

"The church in the global north urgently needs the resuscitating breath of the church in the South in order to survive," Orobator told an audience of African immigrants at the Consolata Missionaries church in Toronto Dec. 19. "Europe and North America, especially, now represent a new mission frontier in the world church."

But Orobator doesn't see this as mere redistribution of priestly human resources — transferring abundant African vocations to aging parishes in Canada. In a world where close to 250 million people every year are on the move, Orobator sees mission in terms of the ebbs and flows of humanity. For him, not just priests but entire diaspora populations are missionary.

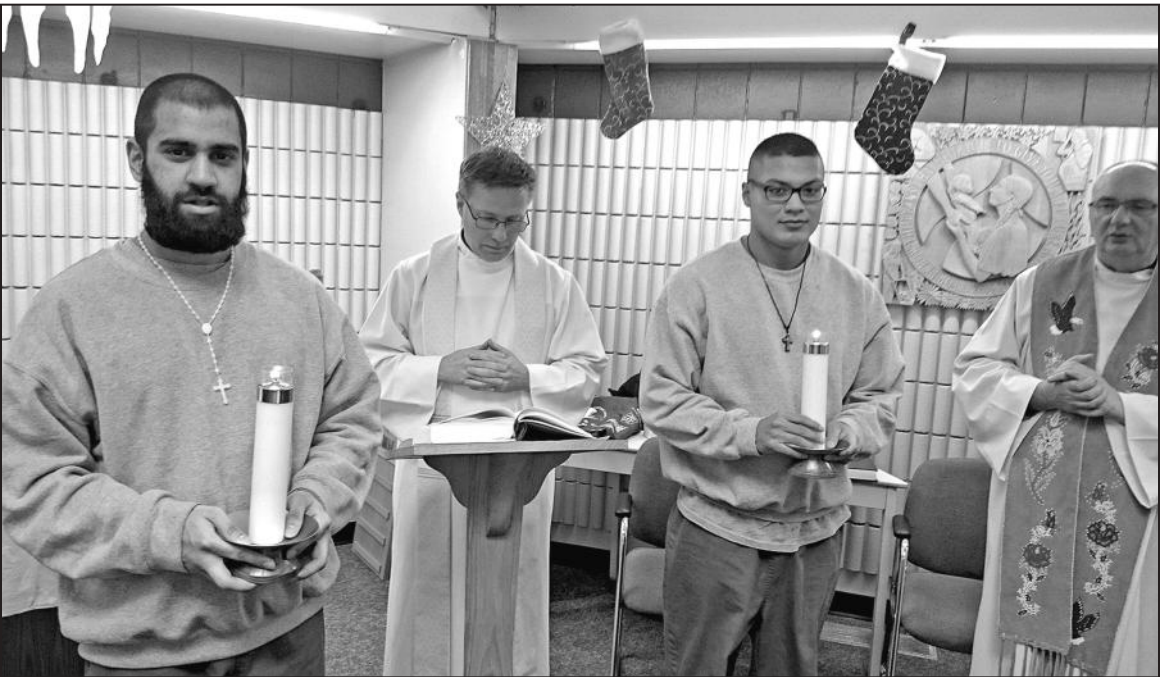
"When we move, we don't leave our cultures behind, much less our religion," Orobator said. "When we move, we move with our outlook on life. We move with our worldview, including our religious beliefs and cultural convictions, for good or ill."

Rather than a new formulation of Catholic faith, it is the nearly 800,000 African immigrants themselves, many of them Catholic, who are Africa's gift to the church in Canada. But in Africa itself, as a new generation of engaged Catholics takes its place, the African church expresses faith in the context of the continent's many crises. Not least of these are the millions of African refugees.

"The poorest African countries are the generous hosts of the vast majority of refugees," points out Czerny. "So well-off societies complaining about being 'flooded.' . . . The church does not approach the HIV/AIDS pandemic, or the so-called migrant-refugee crisis, as a problem to be solved. Rather, she hears the voice of the Lord saying to us, 'I have come that they may have life, and have life to the full.'"

Life in Africa is created by everything ordinary people do when faced with these impossible situations. The Jesuit AIDS min-

— JESUITS, page 5



Dianne Anderson

PRISON OUTREACH — Diocesan administrator Rev. Kevin McGee and Rev. Graham Hill, CSsR, of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Saskatoon, presided at Christmas Day mass at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre this year. Volunteers co-ordinated by the Restorative Ministry office in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon also visited each prisoner, presenting small gifts donated through local parishes. Restorative Ministry co-ordinator Dianne Anderson said the gifts and greetings brightened the day for the men, who were especially touched by handmade Christmas cards created for them by children from local Catholic schools.

McGrattan replaces Henry as bishop in Calgary

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Calgary Bishop-elect William Terrence McGrattan shares a special bond with retiring Bishop Fred Henry, whom he will replace when he is installed as Calgary's new shepherd Feb. 27.

Both bishops were originally from the London, Ont., diocese where they were ordained to the priesthood and both served as rector of St. Peter's Seminary before being named to the episcopate.

McGrattan, 60, has been shepherding the Peterborough diocese for the past two years. Prior to that, he served as auxiliary bishop in Toronto from 2009-2014. But,

the connection to Henry, who is retiring at age 73 for health reasons, is more personal.

When he was a young man discerning a call to the priesthood, he met with then-Father Henry during his time as rector of St. Peter's.

"I remember that meeting as pastoral and affirming," McGrattan said in an email interview. "I carry with me in my heart that positive memory and a sense of gratitude for the role he played in the discernment of my vocation. It is a privilege to carry forward his pastoral ministry."

Though McGrattan said he had felt God calling him to the priesthood in high school, he was also considering other pursuits, so he

"put this call to priesthood on the back burner."

"I pursued other avenues such as studying engineering at university and then the world of work. And God's call was persistently through all of those experiences," he said.

McGrattan was ordained to the priesthood in 1987 and then went to Rome for further studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University. He returned to London in 1992 after obtaining a licentiate and served in parish ministry until he was named seminary rector in 1997.

The combination of parish ministry, teaching and leadership as rector prepared him for his nomination to the episcopacy as

Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto in 2010.

"It was an adjustment in some ways and in many other ways, it brought together the experiences of pastoral ministry. The sacramental ministry is similar, of course," he said. "Taking on the role of shepherd as a bishop and becoming more aware of what is required to lead a diocese takes time, pastoral ministry and the support of the presbyterate and the laity."

McGrattan said he had hoped for a longer time in Peterborough, but his experience there "has been a blessing."

"I undertook parish pastoral visits in the diocese and this time with the parish communities has enabled me to see the good works of the faithful and the ways in which the parishes are taking on the call to engage in evangelization," he said. "I am dedicated to education so my work in Peterborough with the Catholic schools implementing the Growing in Faith; Growing in Christ Religion program and supporting the founding of Sacred Heart College was a real highlight."

"Leading the development of consistent sacramental preparation programs, reviewing the Permanent Diaconate Program and beginning the first stages of Pastoral Planning have also laid some good foundations for the growth of the diocese," he said.

The prospect of moving to Calgary has left him with a sense of both excitement and apprehension. "I am looking forward to new realities of a growing diocese



Art Babych
Bishop William Terrence McGrattan

and a larger city. There is a rich faith tradition in the Diocese of Calgary and I am looking forward to supporting and moving forward the pastoral priorities," he said.

McGrattan will bring his own style to Calgary, but one that respects the work of his predecessor.

"My intention is to recognize and build with the strengths which Bishop Henry has furthered in the Diocese of Calgary over the past 18 or so years," he said. "That is a rich legacy and a tremendous blessing for the faithful reflecting the positive message of mercy and hope which the church brings to these times. In prayer and humility, I promise to be prophetic in that regard."

Christians older than rest of population

Continued from page 1

educated than the Canadian average since the point system filters out the under-educated," Seljak said.

Not only are Canadian non-Christians more likely to be immigrants, they also tend to be younger.

"Christians tend to be older than the rest of the population and older age cohorts tend to have a lower educational achievement than younger Canadians, especially in Quebec," said Seljak.

The average Canadian, regardless of religion, gets 12.8 years of schooling — 12.9 years for men and 12.8 years for women.

Canadians hold a degree.

Higher education levels for Canadian Jews has a long history. Japanese and Jewish Canadians have for some time come out on top of education surveys "because they are both long-established ethnic communities with a strong emphasis on education and upward mobility," said Seljak.

The relatively poor educational levels for Buddhists has a lot to do with Canada's immigration history as well.

"Many of them were admitted as refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam and Tibet. Hence, the points-system bias in favour of the highly educated did not filter them out," Seljak said.

Long established Chinese-Canadians who endured the head

tax and years of racist exclusion were often prevented from assimilating and therefore remained in working class jobs and running small businesses, roles that didn't demand much formal education.

The most complex picture is around the category most sociologists call "religious nones" — those who do not identify with any religion.

The nones include many immigrants from communist and post-communist societies in eastern Europe and China. Their higher education levels are best explained by their immigration status, according to Seljak. Other nones are people of relatively high socio-economic status who are both better educated and more individualistic.

Canada's numbers stand in contrast to the Pew Research data for education and religion globally. Worldwide, Christians average 9.3 years of education — the most of any group except the Jews, who globally come in at an average of 13.4 years of education.

Canada's Muslims are exceedingly well educated with more than double the global average of 5.6 years of education for the world's 1.6 billion Muslims. The same is true for Canadian Hindus, whose average of 13.1 years of schooling stands in contrast with the global average of 5.6 years for the world's one billion Hindus.

Seljak noted that although indigenous Canadians are less than five per cent of our population, they also have much lower education levels and heavily identify as Christian.

Two-thirds of Aboriginal Canadians are Christian, including about 40 per cent who are Catholic.

On average, federal government funding for education on reserves is 30 per cent less than funding for provincial public schools. Combined with the legacy of residential schools, poverty and other challenges, education levels among Canadian Aboriginals lag significantly.

Statistics Canada reported in September that less than half of Canadian Aboriginals (48.8 per cent) had some form of post-secondary qualification, compared to almost two-thirds (64.7 per cent) of non-Aboriginal Canadians between the ages of 25 and 64. Where less than 10 per cent of Aboriginals (9.6 per cent) have a university degree, 26.5 per cent of working-age non-Aboriginal



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BOLTON, Sister Kathleen
February 18, 1924 - December 23, 2016
It is with sadness that the Sisters of Notre Dame d'Auvergne announce the passing away of Sister Kathleen Bolton, at the Foyer St. Joseph in Ponteix, Saskatchewan, on Friday, December 23. She is survived by two brothers, Victor and Norman and many, many nieces and nephews as well as her sisters from the Congregation. Sister Kathleen entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame d'Auvergne in 1941, made her first vows in 1944 and her last vows in 1949. She taught school in several places in Saskatchewan for many years. From 1976-78, she went to Surrey, B.C., to live with her mother and sister. Then, she did parish work in Swift Current, Calgary and Saskatoon. That she did with great success as Sister Kathleen was a "people person." In 1995, she started the "Associates of Notre Dame." Three groups were organized, one in Ponteix, one in Saskatoon and one in Calgary. These last few years, Sister Kathleen lived at St. Anne's and Columbian Manor in Saskatoon. From there, she did parish work at St. Philip de Neri Parish. Sister Kathleen will be sadly missed by all, especially, the Sisters of Notre Dame. Prayers were held on December 26 at the Notre Dame d'Auvergne Church. A mass of Christian burial was celebrated on December 27 with Fr. Amedee Ainemon officiating. Donations in her honour may be made to Foyer St. Joseph in Ponteix. Arrangements were entrusted to Lemieux's Funeral Home. For further information please call 306-625-3925 or visit our website at www.lemieux-funeralhome.com and express your sympathy in our book of condolence.

Expanding diocese needs someone with more energy

Continued from page 1

but it is wearing me out and limiting my ministry,” he said.

“I believe that someone younger with more energy, stamina and pastoral vision should take over the role of Ordinary for the Diocese of Calgary,” he wrote. “The needs of this ever-expanding diocese are enormous.

“I have given it my best and I am past my ‘best due date’ — it is

time to retire,” he wrote, proposing his retirement take place at the end of 2016.

The outspoken and controversial bishop led the Calgary diocese for 19 years. Though dubbed conservative and when it came to moral issues surrounding abortion, marriage and, most recently, in his opposition to gender theory and transgender guidelines for public schools, Henry also gained the ire of some con-

servatives for his support of social justice issues.

During the debate leading to the redefinition of marriage in 2005, Henry faced human rights complaints for a pastoral letter defending traditional marriage that also ran as a column in a local newspaper. Those complaints were later dropped after mediation. In 2004 he received phone calls from Revenue Canada that threatened his diocese’s tax status for his defence of Catholic teaching in the public square.

In 2000, Henry clashed with Conrad Black, then-owner of the Calgary Herald, over a five-month strike at the newspaper. Henry urged him to negotiate with the workers. Black responded by calling him a “useful idiot,” among other insults.

That same year, in the National Post, founded and then owned by Black, the late conservative publisher and columnist Ted Byfield wrote a column calling him “Red Freddy” and a “pinko bishop,” insults that gained coverage in the New York Times. Christian leaders in Calgary rallied in support of Henry, calling the attacks “outrageous” and “unchristian.”

Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith said he was pleased for Henry’s sake the pope had accepted the resignation, but he admitted feelings of “sadness and regret.”

“As I heard another bishop put it, it feels like we’ve just lost from the team one of our most important players!” Smith wrote on his blog.

“Bishop Henry has served not only his diocese but also the church in Canada exceptionally well,” Smith said. “Of particular note is the outstanding contribution he has made in the field of Catholic education in both Alberta and across the country. I consider it a blessing and privilege to have worked closely with

Bishop Henry, from whom I have learned a great deal.”

Smith praised Henry’s “courageous preaching of the Gospel.”

“Where others might be tempted to stay silent for fear of criticism or loss of popularity, Bishop Henry has not hesitated to speak the truths of our faith whenever required, however difficult the circumstances might be,” Smith wrote. “Indeed, a shepherd who cares for the people entrusted to him cannot do otherwise, and I know that Bishop Henry cares very deeply indeed.”

“I thank Bishop Henry for his service and will fondly remember him for his faithfulness and loyalty,” said Vancouver Archbishop Michael Miller. “He has been a hard-working, dedicated bishop who was never afraid to take a tough stand on a controversial issue.”

“My prayers and best wishes are with Bishop Henry as he retires after so many years of faithful service,” said Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto. He

has been an exceptional bishop and I will always be grateful for his fraternal support.”

“Having worked closely with Bishop McGrattan, I know that he will bring many fine gifts and talents to the people of Calgary,” the cardinal said. “We will miss his valuable contributions in Ontario but are heartened in knowing he will be passionately engaged in the life of the faithful in Alberta.”

Born in London, Ont., in 1943, Henry was ordained a priest in the London diocese in 1968. In 1986 Saint Pope John Paul II named him auxiliary bishop of the London diocese.

In 1995 he was appointed Bishop of the Thunder Bay diocese. Three years later, in 1998, he was named to Calgary. The Calgary diocese has 67 parishes and missions serving a Catholic population of 435,328. It has 153 diocesan priests, 37 religious priests, 46 permanent deacons, 104 religious sisters and brothers, according to the Canadian Catholic Church Directory 2016.



Frank Flegel

SIMBANG GABI — Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen, along with several Filipino priests, concelebrated a Dec. 23 evening mass at Holy Child Church to end the nine-day Simbang Gabi, a Filipino traditional novena preceding Christmas. Bolen in his opening remarks thanked Rev. Danilo Rafael, Holy Child parish priest, for bringing this “wonderful tradition to our archdiocese and opening the doors for all of us to join in this celebration.” The novena began Dec. 15 and continued for nine days with a mass at 6 p.m. each evening, with a different priest celebrating and different groups in the Filipino community providing the music and readings. Some of the readings and responses were in Tagalog, the Filipino national language. About 200 people attended each service.



Tim Yaworski

BISHOPS’ LEVEE — Diocesan Administrator Rev. Kevin McGee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon greeted guests Jan. 1 at a come-and-go Bishops’ Levee reception held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. The annual opportunity to exchange New Year’s greetings is organized by three Knights of Columbus fourth degree assemblies: D’Arcy McGee Assembly, Justice Emmett Hall Assembly and Bishop Nykyta Budka Assembly.

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Jesuits in Africa believe they have contribution to make

Continued from page 3

istry in Africa helps ordinary Africans to care for their HIV-positive neighbours.

As South Sudan falls into another spiral of violence, an association of Catholics called Solidarity with South Sudan, inspired by religious sisters, brothers and priests, are intervening in one of the most dangerous conflicts in the world.

“These are not bishops,” points out Orobator. “These are lay people, religious women and men, who formed a partnership, a solidarity with South Sudan. And not to change governments, not to resist a military dictatorship, but to make sure that people get the kind of support they need out of compassion and mercy.”

Democracy is an important ingredient, but it has to be a democracy ingrained in the culture, history and common life of each African nation.

“I am at a crossroads right now

and I’m asking myself what really is democracy? Do we have a model which is equally applicable across the world?” Orobator asks. “What we just witnessed in the U.S. (election) — is that a model of democracy because that’s supposed to be a beacon? If that’s the model of democracy I have to beg to say, I disagree.”

The Jesuits in Africa believe they have a contribution to make in creating a truly African, indigenous democratic culture.

“A bunch of Jesuit schools is a very good idea and we have taken that as a very important mission for the Jesuits in Africa,” Orobator said. “We believe very strongly that education has a role. And not just any kind of education, but education that actually focuses on the person — on transforming the person and transforming communities, on empowering people to be transformational leaders.”

The church in Africa may well be the church of the future.

It’s past time to start conversation on mental illness

Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



If someone asked you what comes to mind when you think of mental illness, what would you describe? A guy with red-rimmed eyes who sits on the curb, his head lolling to one side? The woman with the runny nose wearing dirty clothes, begging for change? Unfortunately, that’s what comes to mind for most people.

Here are some that don’t come to mind: a kid smiles through his school day with stomach clenched in rage and despair because he can’t talk about the abuse going on at home; a mother has post-partum depression so severe she sobs on the inside but can’t say anything because others see only her adorable baby; the quiet co-worker sitting next to you is so ridden with anxiety her head is screaming and she wants to disappear.

People are doing good work toward combating our stereotyped notions of what mental illness looks like. Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, the wife of the prime minister, challenges people to “talk more openly in schools, at the dinner table, among friends.” Her mother-in-law Margaret Trudeau travels the country talking about her struggle with bipolar disorder and urging the gov-

ernment to take action on this serious health issue.

Athletes like Olympians Clara Hughes and Silken Laumann, NHL stars like Theo Fleury and Sheldon Kennedy, have spoken openly, as have celebrities like Lena Dunham, Drew Barrymore, J.K. Rowling among many others.

I’m glad they are speaking out about the various forms of mental illness they’ve experienced: depression, anxiety and panic disorders, PTSD, forms of bipolar illness, schizophrenia, eating disorders, substance abuse and addiction. They seek to “normalize” mental illness as much as cancer or diabetes is in the hopes of getting rid of the stigma, so we ordinary people will divulge our struggles and be motivated to get help.

But talk is difficult when the stigma is still there. I’ve heard someone jokingly look for an excuse not to fulfil an obligation: “I’ll tell them I’m bipolar and off my meds.” Laughs around the table. Tell someone you have bipolar and check out this reaction: “I’m sorry for your *problems*.” As if you’ve done something you need to make amends for. Or this one: “I feel crappy. I



Janice Weber

LINGERING STIMGA — Mental illness has many faces. It is the homeless person on the street, yes, but it is also the smiling kid at school, the quiet co-worker sitting next to you, the attentive clerk waiting on a customer. Until we start to talk about it at home, at school and in the workplace, and advocate for more support for those who seek help, nothing will ever get rid of the stigma of mental illness.

must have it too.” Comparing mental illness to a routine bad day minimizes the disease, making the person feel shamed, as though they’re just “complaining” and shouldn’t have mentioned it.

As well-meaning and as important as their work is, celebrities are not “normal” in the sense of our everyday worlds. They are

beautiful, wealthy and extremely talented. While I acknowledge their unquestionable illnesses, they have access to the best help and medication money can buy, without delay.

I waited a year-and-a-half for a referral to a psychiatrist. For many who suffer some form of mental illness, that amount of time could be fatal. It certainly would be in the case of cancer. If you do not believe mental illness is fatal, witness the many suicides, and murder-suicides that happen across the country. The most recent was an Afghan veteran and his family in Nova Scotia. According to sources, he was not getting the help he needed. And northern communities could well declare a state of emergency with their rates of indigenous youth suicide.

Psychiatrists are covered by medicare, but wait times are long. What about psychologists and other therapists — it’s much easier to get an appointment with them, isn’t it? At \$200 an hour and up, the cost is out of reach. At the start of therapy, appointments are often weekly or twice a month at the least in the beginning, and once per month for maintenance as time goes by. The cost can rise to \$6,000 a year. Insurance plans vary, but they tend to cover about \$400 per calendar year. That’s two appointments — not even enough to articulate a problem and begin to sort out solutions.

According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (camh.ca), in any given year one out of five Canadians experiences a mental health or addiction problem. By the time they reach 40 years of age, one in two have or have had a mental health illness. As well, mental illness is a leading cause of disability in Canada. People with mental illness and addictions are more likely to die prematurely than the general pop-

ulation. Mental illness can cut 10 to 20 years from a person’s life expectancy.

I know of people who have waited in emergency for hours because they feel suicidal, only to be sent home because there isn’t room, or the resources aren’t available. There’s always someone with an obvious injury who gets priority, though the wounds of the mentally ill patient are no less severe.

There are no pink campaigns for mental illness, no door-to-door fundraising blitzes or CFL weekends where the players wear . . . what? Blue? Black?

Efforts are growing to create awareness and work toward support for mental illness. Mendthemind.ca seeks to “shatter the stigma.” Defeatdepression.ca has ideas for awareness campaigns. The Mood Disorders Society of Canada is running an “Elephant in the room anti-stigma” campaign. Notmyself today.ca is trying to improve mental health in the workplace. These are just a few of many organizations that can be found by searching online.

The Canadian Alliance on Mental Health and Mental Illness says in the advocacy section on its website: “In its role as advocate, CAMIMH believes now is the time for the federal government, in strategic collaboration with the provinces and territories and as part of a negotiated First Ministers’ health accord, to significantly accelerate investment in mental health programs and services.”

We need to help, and the most important place to start is at home, in the workplace, and at school. Beginning to talk about mental illness means someone won’t have to make the excuse that you “have a cold” when the reality is that depression and anxiety are too overwhelming to cope with a room full of people and you just need to stay home where it’s quiet.

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Best dramatic films of 2016 offer great range

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Going out to the movies is still a popular pastime if last year’s record \$11.3-billion U.S. theatrical box office is any indication. Much was forgettable or worse, but it’s the gems that merit recognition. My choices come with some caveats. At least one from a year ago — *The Revenant* — arrived too late to be included in last year’s list. There are awards contenders I’ve yet to see, notably Martin Scorsese’s *Silence*, about which much more in a forthcoming column, and the Cannes palme d’or winner, Ken Loach’s *I, Daniel Blake*. Others include selections for the Oscars’ foreign-language category such as Maren Ade’s *Toni Erdmann* (Germany), Asghar Farhadi’s *The Salesman* (Iran), and Pedro Almodóvar’s *Julieta* (Spain). That said, from hundreds viewed here are 10 that most impressed. Some should already be available on video.

La La Land (U.S.)
From its soaring opening on a traffic-choked Los Angeles freeway to its last wistful note, writer-director Damien Chazelle’s dreamland story grabs your heart. At its centre is the relationship between Mia, aspiring actress and playwright, and Seb, a purist jazz pianist. Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling have terrific screen chemistry in the lead roles and their enchanted if uncertain romance that develops from inauspicious Christmastime beginnings through the seasons evokes the best of Hollywood musical magic. Every scene is exquisitely choreographed and gorgeously lensed in Cinemascope. A love letter to the movies, give it the best-picture Oscar already.

Moonlight (U.S.)
Writer-director Barry Jenkins’ extraordinary depiction of an African-American boyhood to manhood on the mean streets of Miami was deservedly the year’s best-reviewed movie. The story, adapted from the play “In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue,” is that of Chiron, the diminutive bullied son of a drug-addicted single mother, who wrestles with his identity and sexuality in a rough and tough world. The experience of what Jenkins has called “toxic masculinity” is explored through impeccable performances and with a rare sensitivity that makes this a classic of African-American cinema.

Manchester by the Sea (U.S.)
From writer-director Kenneth Lonergan comes this deeply affecting story of familial love and loss that centres on the character of Lee Chandler who has withdrawn into self-imposed isolation following tragic circumstances. That world of private hurt is thrust open when Lee’s older brother dies suddenly and he is entrusted with the guardianship of his high-spirited teenage nephew. Life’s circumstances force Lee to come to terms with what he has left behind. Casey Affleck deserves a best-actor Oscar for his portrayal of Lee, and Michelle Williams is also great as his estranged wife.



Gerald Schmitz

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA — Casey Affleck, Anna Baryshnikov, and Lucas Hedges are seen at the Sundance world premiere of *Manchester by the Sea* Jan. 24, 2016. Affleck won the Golden Globe Jan. 8, 2017, for best performance by an actor for his role in the film. *Manchester By the Sea* is on most best-of lists for 2016.

Arrival (U.S.)
Quebec director Denis Villeneuve brings a remarkable humanistic quality to this science-fiction epic in which the world is confronted with the arrival of giant alien spaceships in a dozen scattered locations around the planet, including one in Montana and several in Russia and China. As the American military and national security apparatus goes into overdrive, the services of a linguist/translator (Amy Adams) and a theoretical physicist (Jeremy Renner) are recruited to establish communications with the aliens and determine their intentions. Rather than suspicion leading to hostile action, can something beautiful and hopeful emerge from such a strange encounter?

Embrace of the Serpent (Colombia/Venezuela/Argentina)
A 2016 foreign-language Oscar nominee, director and co-writer Ciro Guerra has fashioned a wondrous haunting account of explorations by Europeans in the Amazon wilderness, drawing on the diaries of Theodor Koch-Grunberg. This tale of strange encounters, both harrowing and mystical, involves shamans and Aboriginal survivors of imperial exploitation, weird jungle cults, and the search for a rare plant promising sacred healing. (Another excellent Colombian feature is Carlos del Castillo’s *Between Sea and Land*, which won both the audience award and a special jury prize for world cinema at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival.)

Rams (Iceland/Denmark/Norway/Poland)
Another winner of multiple international awards from its 2015 Cannes debut, writer-director Grimur Hákonarson tells of two strong-willed Icelandic brothers and sheep farmers, Gummi and Kiddi, who hold a grudge and haven’t spoken for 40 years despite living next to each other. Their prized rams compete fiercely for top honours until the outbreak of a deadly disease in their valley upsets everything and forces a fraternal response to stave off disaster.

The Birth of a Nation (U.S.)
An audacious attempt to reclaim the classic 1915 film title for the freedom struggles of African Americans, this stirring recounting of the violent 1830s slave revolt led by charismatic preacher Nat Turner has been rather unfairly pushed aside after allegations surfaced over the controversial past of its writer-director and lead actor Nate Parker. Having been the talk of Sundance 2016 taking major awards, it still deserves to be seen as a milestone in African-American cinema.

Sing Street (Ireland/U.K./U.S.)
Writer-director John Carney’s semi-autobiographical story of teenagers who form a band in 1980s Dublin is the most sheerly enjoyable movie I saw in all of 2016. It’s anchored by a terrific performance from Ferdia Walsh-Peelo as Conor, the adolescent schoolboy whose musical ambitions are spurred by his infatuation with a beautiful girl. A Sundance hit which had people dancing in the aisles, it deserved better distribution.

The Innocents (France/Poland)
Originally titled *Agnus Dei* when it premiered at Sundance, director Anne Fontaine brings to life a disturbing episode from the end of the Second World War when some of the nuns in a Polish convent were raped by advancing Red Army soldiers. Mathilde is a young intern with the French Red Cross who risks danger to come to their assistance, helped by an agnostic Jewish doctor. Though the situation is complicated by the moral and physical torment of the mother superior, hope is born amid the casualties of war.

Closet Monster (Canada)
As usual, Canadian movies are barely on the radar of theatre screens dominated by Hollywood product. It’s a better bet to catch them on Air Canada flights than at the multiplex. Still, each year there are at least a few worth celebrating. Writer-director Stephen Dunn’s first feature, awarded the best Canadian prize at the 2015 Toronto Film Festival, is the story of a troubled artistically inclined

Newfoundland teenager named Oscar Madly (Connor Jessup). Growing up questioning his sexuality, Oscar creates an imaginary safe space that acts as a shield from the misunderstandings of others including his single father. No ordinary teen drama, this poignant, brilliant portrait rings true.

Honourable mentions:
The Obama era is coming to an end as Trump takes over, but last year saw the release of two nostalgic features — Vikram Gandhi’s *Barry* about his time at New York’s Columbia University, and Richard Tanne’s *Southside with You* about a day in the life of the future president’s budding 1989 summer romance with Michelle when he was still a Harvard law student.

Proof that the western genre can still deliver came in the form of Scottish director David Mackenzie’s *Hell or High Water* from a script by Taylor Sheridan. Two brothers have a darn good motive for robbing branches of the Texas Midland Bank to save the family ranch and Jeff Bridges aces the role of the laconic lawman on their trail.

In animation, Disney scored big with *Zootopia*, *Finding Dory*, and the remake of *The Jungle Book* all crossing the billion-dollar mark in global box office. Its holiday release *Moana* is also a hit with audiences and critics. Another late-year release, *Sing*, is an awards contender along with *Kubo and the Two Strings* and the France/Belgium/Japan coproduction *The Red Turtle*. *Long Way North* (France/Denmark), about a young girl’s epic adventure into the Russian Arctic, was a delight. Special mention as well to two seen at the 40th Ottawa International Animation Festival in September: *Cafard* (Belgium/France/The Netherlands) set during the First World War and Canadian Ann Marie Fleming’s *Window Horses* about a young girl invited to a poetry festival in Iran.

So don’t despair over the number of noisy violent blockbusters. There are still great movie stories being told for mature audiences and plenty of imagination to be found for fine family viewing.

OBITUARY



FLORY, Sister Marianne (Mary Margaret) Peacefully on January 3, 2017, at Eagle Ridge Hospital in Maple Ridge, B.C., Sister Marianne aged 86 years went to her true home in heaven. Marianne, only child of Margaret and Fred Flory, was born in Humboldt, Sask., where she received her first 11 years of schooling. After graduating from Sion Academy in Saskatoon, Marianne obtained both her BA and BEd from the U of S. After three years of teaching high school, Marianne joined the Sisters of the Child Jesus in 1955, making her postulancy in North Vancouver and her novitiate in Sherbrooke, Quebec. After profession in 1958, Marianne spent the next 15 years teaching either in North Vancouver or in North Battleford, Sask. In 1976 she received an MA in spirituality from Duquesne University, after which she became involved in a variety of ministries, both ongoing formation and pastoral ministry. The highlight of her latter years was when she was coordinator of the Saskatoon Diocesan Synod from 1988 - 1993. In all of these ministries she lived the charisma of our foundress Anne Marie Martel: a presence of love to the Father and her brothers and sisters for the awakening and deepening of the faith. She made Anne Marie’s prayer her own: “May my only pleasure be to please you.” Remaining to forever cherish her memory are the Sisters of the Child Jesus, numerous cousins, among them her cousin Elaine’s husband Bob Hardstaff and their sons Michael and Scott, former students and friends. Prayers were held on Jan. 8 and the Funeral Mass Jan. 9. Both services are at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Coquitlam.

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A long dark night has settled in over the Yukon at this time of year. Still, on my morning walk to work now with a waning crescent moon over my shoulder, the faintest glow of the yet long-off dawn can be made out over the high ridge of Grey Mountain to the southeast of downtown Whitehorse. Always even in the coldest and darkest times we hold on to the hope of the new dawn.

In the first reading Isaiah bemoans the loss of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to the Assyrian Empire back some seven and a half centuries before the time of Jesus. Despair gripped this land caught in the aggressive march of the Assyrians out of what is now Iraq toward the Mediterranean Sea. Even in the face of the foreign invaders and the forced exile of thousands of Israelites from the fallen Northern Kingdom of Israel, Isaiah could still write, “people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who have lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shone.” What could the prophet see that allowed such hope and joy to illuminate the last verses of this passage?

Oppression would end. The land west of the Jordan River would become the Galilee we hear of in Matthew’s gospel. The “rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian,” proclaims a liberation that is to come.

Dougherty is co-chair of the Social Justice Committee at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Gideon had used only 300 men to rout the much larger Midianite army. Would just a small united band of disciples gathered in Galilee bring hope and dispel the gloom for the broken and oppressed around the world and down through the ages?

Every one of us has experienced anguish and despair. Many possible causes could contribute to our personal pain. The death of a close friend or relative, an illness, economic distress, broken dreams or a failed marriage could be among the events weighing on our lives. Obviously many other causes could be added to this list of woes. A dark depression can weigh down our spirit as we suffer through difficult times that may seem unending.

A young man I know suffered silently for years. He tolerated an abusive situation for so long that it psychologically crippled him. Finally he broke free but what we now can understand as the effects of post-traumatic stress left him hobbled. Counselling and a support community of friends and family have slowly over long months and years allowed him to see beyond the deep darkness that had enveloped him. Fear has given way to hope, oppression to a sense of possibility.

Third Sunday
in Ordinary Time
January 22, 2017

Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27
1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17-18
Matthew 4:12-23

A light has shone on him as it can shine on all of us in the time of our greatest need. As the psalmist writes, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear.”

How can we assure others in their times of darkness to let their hearts take courage as they “wait for the Lord” and light in their lives will be restored?

Paul in the second reading tells us of the rivalries and discord that threatened to split the emerging Christian community in the years following Jesus’ death. “I belong to Apollos.” “I belong to Cephas.” Who offered the true path?

The eloquence of Apollos, or the personal loyalty Cephas or Peter commands from the Jewish community in Corinth shouldn’t divide them. Paul sees the power of God radiating through the words of the Gospel and bringing good to all.

We are collectively faced with a myriad of global problems today. These range from the consequences of extreme weather triggered by global warming to the epidemic violence flowing from the gross disparity in the distribution of wealth and power on our planet. A cacophony of competing voices all offering solutions pull us in different directions. Where does hope lay?

In the Gospel of Matthew a passage from the first reading of Isaiah is repeated. John has been arrested. Jesus withdrew to Capernaum. Matthew sees Isaiah’s prophetic words fulfilled as Jesus walks by the Sea of Galilee proclaiming, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

It is among the marginal, the gentiles, far from influence and prestige of Jerusalem that Jesus begins his ministry. He calls out, “Come follow me.” Peter, Andrew together with James and John, the Zebedee brothers, all simple fishermen, do just that. His invitation immediately turns their lives upside down.

With them Jesus goes throughout Galilee proclaiming “the good news of the kingdom” by curing “every disease and every sickness among the people.” He doesn’t raise an army to throw out the Roman occupiers. He doesn’t miraculously build a Third Temple with restored tablets of the law or the lost Ark of the Covenant. He walks among the people tending to their most basic needs.

How can we bring this light to the world? Feed the hungry, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, ransom the captive, clothe the naked and shelter the homeless. In today’s world what other acts can we add? Heal the environment, share our wealth and end war? We don’t individually have to do everything, but together as a faith community we do. Simply we must do what Jesus did. If we can act on these callings and more, the light of the Lord will indeed shine in our world.

Rigid paradigms make for poor church sanctuaries



Whenever we have been at our best, as Christians, we have opened our churches as sanctuaries to the poor and the endangered. We have a long, proud history wherein refugees, homeless persons, immigrants facing deportation, and others who are endangered, take shelter inside our churches. If we believe what Jesus tells us about the Last Judgment in the 25th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, this should serve us well when we stand before God at the end.

Unfortunately our churches have not always provided that same kind of sanctuary (safety and shelter) to those who are refugees, immigrants, and homeless in their relationship to God and our churches. There are millions of persons, today perhaps the majority within our nations, who are looking for a safe harbour in terms of sorting out their faith and their relationship to the church. Sadly, too often our rigid

paradigms of orthodoxy, ecclesiology, ecumenism, liturgy, sacramental practice, and canon law, however well-intentioned, have made our churches places where no such sanctuary is offered and where the wide embrace practised by Jesus is not mirrored. Instead, our churches are often harbours only for persons who are already safe, already comforted, already church-observing, already solid ecclesial citizens.

That was hardly the situation within Jesus’ own ministry. He was a safe sanctuary for everyone, religious and non-religious alike. While he didn’t ignore the committed religious persons around him, the Scribes and Pharisees, his ministry always reached out and included those whose religious practice was weak or non-existent. Moreover, he reached out especially to those whose moral lives were not in formal harmony with the religious practices of the time, those deemed as sinners. Significantly too he did not ask for repentance from those deemed as sinners before he sat down at table with them. He set out no moral or ecclesial conditions as a prerequisite to meet or dine with him. Many repented after meeting and dining with him, but that repentance was never a pre-condition. In his person and in his ministry,

Jesus did not discriminate. He offered a safe sanctuary for everyone.

We need today in our churches to challenge ourselves on this. From pastors, to parish councils, to pastoral teams, to diocesan regulators, to bishops’ conferences, to those responsible for applying canon and church law, to our own personal attitudes, we all need to ask: Are our churches places of sanctuary for those who are refugees, homeless, and poor ecclesially? Do our pastoral practices mirror Jesus? Is our embrace as wide as that of Jesus?

These are not fanciful ideals. This is the gospel which we can easily lose sight of, for seemingly all the right reasons. I remember a diocesan synod in which I participated some 20 years ago. At one stage in the process we were divided into small groups and each group was given the question: *What, before all else, should the church be saying to the world today?*

The groups returned with their answers and everyone, every single group, proposed as its first priority apposite what the church should be saying to the world some moral or ecclesial challenge: *We need to challenge the world in terms of justice! We need to challenge people to pray more! We need to speak again of sin! We need to challenge people about the importance of going to church! We need to stop the evil of abortion!* All of these suggestions are good and important. But none of the groups dared say: *We need to comfort the world!*

Handel’s *Messiah* begins with that wonderful line from Isaiah 40: “*Comfort, comfort my people,*

says your God.” That, I believe, is first task of religion. Challenge follows after that, but may not precede it. A mother first comforts her child by assuring the child of her love and stilling her chaos. Only after that, in the safe shelter produced by that comfort, can she begin to offer the child some hard challenges to grow beyond her instinctual struggles.

People are swayed a lot by the perception they have of things. Within our churches today we can protest that we are being perceived unfairly by our culture, that is, as narrow, judgmental, hypocritical, and hateful. No doubt this is unfair, but we must have the courage to ask ourselves why this perception abounds, in the academy, in the media, and in

the popular culture. Why aren’t we being perceived more as “a field hospital” for the wounded, as is the ideal of Pope Francis?

Why are we not flinging our churches doors open much more widely? What lies at the root of our reticence? Fear of being too generous with God’s grace? Fear of contamination? Of scandal?

One wonders whether more people, especially the young and the estranged, would grace our churches today if we were perceived in the popular mind precisely as being sanctuaries for searchers, for the confused, the wounded, the broken, and the non-religious, rather than as places only for those who are already religiously solid and whose religious search is already completed.

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Rural Prairie West: last frontier for reconciliation?

By Roger Epp

In the opening half of Steven Ratzlaff’s play *Reservations*, first staged in Winnipeg in 2016, an Alberta farmer informs his two children that he plans to give a section of land — most of what he owns — to Siksika First Nation. The farmer has heart troubles; he’s already renting it out.

His daughter, visiting from Toronto, is aghast. She’s counted on her full inheritance. From a call to a realtor, an old friend, she estimates the value of those 640 acres at more than \$3 million. She accuses her father of acting out of misplaced settler guilt. She warns that he will “be the talk of the town, and it won’t be pretty,” since he’ll be insulting both his neighbours and the generations that preceded him on the land.

The farmer can’t quite explain himself. But neither can he shake the unsettled feeling he got as a child finding an arrowhead. The treaties, he declares, were a land grab; his grandparents, for all their hard work, got their start for next to nothing. He knows there’s no way to make conquest right, and certainly no reason to expect that governments will take real responsibility; so he has decided on what he calls a gesture — a gesture of *restitution*, not *reconciliation*. He will still leave something for his children, but they will pay a financial price for what he feels compelled to do.

The premise may be far-fetched, but it does put the sharpest possible point on the problem. The idea that a farmer — even a farmer who knows his Gospels — would relinquish land to the nearest First Nation is intended to be more challenging for the audience and the neighbours, say, than the fact that this farmer, once a widower, is remarried to the Cree woman who came out to the field to deliver parts for his seeder, found him on the ground, and called the ambulance.

For land is the heart of the matter.

“If you understand nothing else about the history of Indians in North America,” writes Thomas King in *The Inconvenient Indian*, “you need to understand that the question that really matters is the question of land.” For indigenous peoples, land is intertwined with language, history, ceremony, sustenance, and, in particular places, a sense of home; their removal was governments’ main goal.

The story of how prairie land became freehold property under the sovereign authority of Canada, inherited from British “discovery,” is recent and well-documented. It includes the public purchase of Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1870 — to the bewilderment and anger of indigenous leaders, who did not know how it could be owned outright, or sold, even as treaties were being negotiated. The surveyors and homesteaders followed quickly.

The details take those of us

Roger Epp is professor of political science at the University of Alberta and author of *We Are All Treaty People*.

who are settler people into unsettling territory.

That must surely help to explain why there has been such muted response in the countryside to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report into the residential school experience and its call for *all Canadians*, not just their institutions, to renounce “concepts used to justify European sovereignty over indigenous lands and peoples.”

What might it mean for farmers and farm communities to renounce the doctrine of discovery? What might the work of reconciliation look like in places where land still matters?

These are difficult questions, to be sure, but not impossible ones, even after the shooting of a young Cree man on a Saskatchewan farmyard last July exposed racial tensions and fears. For it is downright dangerous to assume that no other narrative is possible in the countryside.

Let’s start by dealing with the standard deflections. First, the work of reconciliation is not about the wholesale transfer of land back to indigenous peoples; no one is suggesting that. Second, reconciliation does not require the rejection of one’s own settler ancestors; their stories may, in fact, offer helpful points of connection and understanding. Third, reconciliation is not simply the government’s mess to clean up; if anything, the work of reconciliation is most necessary in face-to-face settings where people must decide whether to live as neighbours.

The real challenge of a different relationship is that it requires that we step outside the settler mythology that has substituted so comfortably for honest history.

The mythology goes like this: There was no one here when we came. This country gave us freedom — land — and we made something of it through our own hard work and sacrifice.

The mythology contains some truth and hides more. It assigns to cultivators the status of natural successors on the land. Productive use, improving the wilderness, is entitlement enough. In North America, since governments supposedly had dealt with the Indians, the only obstacle was nature itself.

The mythology also assumes that indigenous peoples were unsuited to agriculture and unwilling to work hard enough to succeed at it. Such assurances are false and self-serving. They overlook, for example, that despite the federal government’s well-documented indifference in meeting its treaty commitments after the rapid decline of the prairie bison herd, some First Nations actually experienced success at farming and ranching — enough that settlers, unhappy for the competition, demanded what became restrictions in the *Indian Act* on the right to sell grain and livestock off-reserve. The frustration of commercial agriculture became the pretext for poorly compensated surrenders at places like Siksika, which evidently couldn’t *use* and therefore didn’t *need* reserves that big. Better to open the land to immigrants.

While the settler mythology is powerful, it is wrong to typecast

farmers either as its self-interested beneficiaries, especially since the logic of productive use has turned against so many of them, or as its captives. It was a farmer who first told me I needed to read *The Inconvenient Indian*.

We should take heart from a couple of recent countercultural examples.

The first involves a farm friend near Viking, Alberta. He turned the discovery on his field of 200-year-old skeletal remains — likely those of a young woman, her beaded clothing and jewelry still intact — into an opportunity to engage Cree elders and his own community in ceremonies of reburial and relationship. He could have saved himself the trouble. As a Catholic, however, he thinks of himself as a steward; his farm is not his absolute domain.

The second is documented in the film *Reserve 107*. It involves some of the descendants of Mennonite and Lutheran families that settled on fertile soil soon after a reserve allotted to the Young Chippewyan band under Treaty 6 was dissolved in the late

1880s. Four decades ago the land question was raised in farmyard confrontations that produced fear and defensiveness. Through a long process of learning and trust-building, however, local people have now joined with the Young Chippewyan to celebrate on Stoney Hill, a sacred place for all, and support the band’s claim. The rural municipality has added the hill’s Cree place name on local signage.

Such local actions, of course,

fail the test of grand political declarations.

What characterizes each of them, however, is a willingness to accept the responsibilities that the land itself presents, to take the risks of real relationships with indigenous peoples. These examples do not take land as a zero-sum commodity; they make it a place for gathering and ceremony. They are a start.

— FARMERS, page 10



Design Pics

THE QUESTION OF LAND — “If you understand nothing else about the history of Indians in North America,” writes Thomas King in *The Inconvenient Indian*, “you need to understand that the question that really matters is the question of land.” For indigenous peoples, land is intertwined with language, history, ceremony, sustenance, and, in particular places, a sense of home; their removal was governments’ main goal.

Technology a blessing, and sometimes not



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

For all of us make many mistakes. — James 3.2

One of the biggest transformations in today’s culture is in the level of technological change that has made life not only easier, but also faster. I’m thinking in particular of the way information has been digitized so that content can be written, edited and converted into final form almost instantaneously.

As a longtime editor I can remember when a laboriously typed manuscript had to be sent to a typesetter, which was then returned as galley proofs that we hand-corrected to return for re-printing. I’m also old enough to remember the invention of the self-correcting tape on the IBM Selectric typewriter, which was considered a miraculous time saver. When the personal computer came along, with a floppy disk that could hold the equivalent of a long email, it was downright revolutionary. My son put this in perspective when he informed me

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

that my iPhone 5 had more computing power than all of the machines that guided a rocket ship to the moon in the 1960s.

In an imperfect world, mistakes are inevitable, but it is certainly true that with speed comes an increased likelihood of errors. Rushing to complete a truckload of paperwork before the Christmas break, my assistant sent me a classic typo: a motion thanking retiring board members for their “mangy contribution” to the university. Luckily she caught the mistake and substituted “many” for “mangy.” As readers of my column know I wasn’t so fortunate when I sent a note to my faculty with the salutation, “Dead Colleagues.” Another friend told me of her frustration with an option to “recall” an email that had the effect of drawing attention to the error-filled note she had sent. People who would normally delete the email unread found three versions of the text instead — the original, the retracted and the corrected — and gleefully dwelled on all the mistakes.

In the end, of course, and irrespective of the technology, human

error will always find a way to make its voice heard. One of my favourite transpositional mistakes was from the 1980s when Gary Larsen published *The Far Side*. In one newspaper it appeared next to *Dennis the Menace*, each a single panel with the humorous caption typed at the bottom. On at least one occasion typesetters accidentally printed the punchlines under the wrong comic. In a classic blunder, Larsen’s cartoon showed a cranky young snake at the dinner table saying, “Lucky I learned to make peanut butter sandwiches or we woulda starved by now,” while Dennis Mitchell complained, “Oh brother . . . Not hamsters again!”

In the university context, especially in the pedagogical sphere, errors are the basis of learning. I remember one student telling me that they were bilingual in at least three languages before submitting an essay that proved they were literate in none. Another insisted that she was a work alcoholic and therefore not afraid of studying. In both cases they went on to be A students.

We can’t be afraid of our mistakes, and just as importantly, we need to be able to laugh at ourselves, not take things too seriously, and then strive to improve. As John Powell once said: “The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing.” Or to quote Andrew Mason, “Admit your errors before someone else exaggerates them.” After all, as one of the above students emailed when I had corrected her work: “To air is human!”

Positive aspects of the Protestant Reformation

Challenge of Ecumenism

Thomas Ryan, CSP



The Jan. 18 - 25 international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity takes place this year as part of a big ecumenical lead-up to the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation next October.

This will be the first centenary commemoration of the Protestant Reformation to take place during an ecumenical age, and the first one that must deal with the challenge of a new evangelization in a time marked by both the proliferation of new religious movements and, at the same time, the growth of secularization in many places. Therefore, a Protestant-Catholic common commemoration presents us with the opportunity to offer a joint witness of faith.

Dr. Margot Kässmann, a

Ryan, CSP, directs the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in Boston, MA.

spokesperson of the Evangelical Church in Germany for the Reformation Anniversary, reminds us that the Reformation was a widespread movement covering several decades in the 16th century that changed both state and church. The year 1517 is only a symbolic date and Martin Luther the symbolic figure. The Reformation was driven by many people such as Nicholas Copernicus, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, Ignatius Loyola, Thomas More, Philipp Melancthon, to name but a few.

The Reformation era change was like a seismic shift with long-lasting repercussions. The Roman Catholic Church of today is not the same as the church with which Luther and the other Reformers came into such deep conflict in the 16th century. For example, a century after Luther, the Council of Trent (1645 - 1663) said farewell to the practice of selling indulgences and in the

20th century the Second Vatican Council introduced the saying of the mass in the vernacular.

Of course, many of the questions raised in the Reformation about the papacy, the veneration of the saints, and the understanding of ministerial office are still under the lens of discussion today. But Martin Luther wanted to reform his own church and not to split it. So for Protestants to set themselves apart in commemorating the Reformation would not make any sense.

In her writing, Kässmann identifies a variety of positive aspects that could be appropriately celebrated by Protestants and Catholics alike in this anniversary year. One of them is education. The anniversary of the Reformation reminds us all that the churches of the Reformation are concerned with an educated faith.

This is the first centenary anniversary of the Reformation to take place in an age when the historical/critical method of biblical exegesis has been widely recognized. For Luther, the precondition for a mature faith was that everyone could read the Bible for themselves and was educated enough to be able not only to learn the Small Catechism by heart, but also to share it with others and thus be empowered to speak of their faith.

The basis for this was education for all — boys and girls alike — and not just for the few who could afford it or who got an opportunity for education by entering a religious order. Martin Luther was the first to make equality and opportunity in education a public issue and to declare himself a vehement supporter of it. For him, faith meant an educated faith, based on an affirmation of the liberating message of the gospel.

Another aspect of the anniversary inviting celebration is globalization and inter-religious dialogue. The year 2017 will be the first Reformation anniversary celebrated in a global perspective. While Luther himself had a very restricted view of the world, the Reformation was a European event which soon took on international proportions. The anti-Judaism of the late Martin Luther set a dark path for the church named after him.

But the failure of Christians in regard to the Jews in the post Second World War era has triggered a learning process. Today the Evangelical Church in Germany says whoever attacks Jews, attacks us. That also holds true with respect to Muslims. On that front, although Luther may have ranted against the Turks, today both in Europe and North America Christians and Muslims are living peaceably together in the same country. That said, Christians throughout the world are now the most persecuted religious community. Inter-religious dialogue grounded in theology is a vital necessity of our time — and

it's happening!

And related to globalization and the religious pluralism of our time is another aspect worthy of our gratitude: the political dimension of the Reformation concept of freedom. The year 2017 will be the first Reformation anniversary on which in Germany and many nations of the world there is a clear separation of church and state and a clearly declared acceptance of constitutional law and human rights.

First and foremost, it is about the freedom that Christ gives to us and, consequently, about freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and freedom of opinion. One of the major fruits issuing from the Reformation is that faith and reason remain alongside each other and prepared the way for the Enlightenment, however much and for however long the churches resisted it. Today we can say it is good — for Protestants and Catholics and members of all the world's religions where it is a reality — that there is separation of religion and state. A kind of "theocracy" or indeed a "religious dictatorship" does not promote responsible use of the freedom given to us by God.

The question before both Catholics and Protestants today is: What does it mean to be church, and how may we live together as church in ways that better manifest our unity? May this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and pre-anniversary year find us turning toward one another in the renewed hope of reconciliation.



Art Babyeh

A NEW YEAR OF HOPE — Relighting the Centennial Flame on Parliament Hill New Year's Eve are Gov. Gen. David Johnston and his wife, Sharon, left, and Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly and Algonquin Elder Albert Dumont, right. The Centennial Flame was first lit as the climax of the centennial celebrations of Jan. 1, 1967. This year Canada is celebrating 150 years.

When farmers listen, initiatives will emerge

Continued from page 9

Other initiatives will emerge where farmers listen to their indigenous neighbours. Older names for creeks and landforms might be restored. Sacred places might be identified, and access made possible. New coalitions might form, like the one in Saskatchewan involving ranchers, First Nations, and conservationists around a vision for prairie grasslands other than the one behind the previous federal government's sell-off of community pastures. They might work together creatively in support of indigenous initiatives to restore the bison to the prairies.

Farmers in the industrial coun-

tryside who themselves have been in the way of resource developments and energy corridors — and sometimes stood their ground — might stand, in turn, with indigenous neighbours whose land is often first and last resort for the kind of messy projects that are safely out-of-sight, out-of-mind for most people. Like Standing Rock in North Dakota. Or the next one.

The greater challenge is not necessarily that farmers are incapable of stepping outside the settler mythology. Instead, it is that the countryside is now subject to such economic pressures and accelerated change, including larger, more capital-intensive farms and land assembly by out-

side investors. In many farm communities the status of the next generation is in question. Indicatively, the children of the farmer in the stage play live elsewhere.

The possibilities of a different kind of rural relationship with indigenous peoples diminish in a countryside turned into a food-resource plantation, not a place of settled communities.

Put another way, the work of reconciliation is not so separate from that of building respectful rural futures in which responsible practices of food, livelihood, and mutuality can be sustained — inclusive of indigenous communities. For, in the most practical terms, land is still the heart of the matter.

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Cardinal Tobin’s advice

At his mass of installation in Newark, N.J., on Jan. 6, the feast of Epiphany, Cardinal Joseph Tobin shared a concern that occupies the minds of many bishops as well as parents.

He began his homily: “At a dinner party, recently, I was asked what is the greatest challenge the church faces today. I thought a moment and replied: the chasm between faith and life.”

He said the “hot-button” issues that dominate the conversation among many church people don’t worry him as much as “a growing trend that seems to isolate us, convincing us to neatly compartmentalize our life, subtly seducing us to go to mass on Sunday, and for the rest of the week, do whatever we think we need to do to get by.”

He added: “If we permit the chasm between faith and life to continue to expand, we risk losing Christ, reducing him simply to an interesting idea or a comforting, nostalgic memory. And, if we lose Christ, then the world has lost the salt, light and leaven that could have transformed it. If we lose Christ, how will anyone find eternal life that is not simply an empty wish that can be dismissed as ‘pie-in-the-sky,’ but the

abundant, joyful life that God intends for us even now?”

His words reflect the constant message of Pope Francis, who reminds us that Christianity is not focused on an idea, a philosophy or a philanthropy. It is centred on a person — a person whose birth in Bethlehem the Christian community has just celebrated.

And how does the church continue the ministry of Jesus? Here is Tobin’s vision: “The church is the place where believers speak and listen to each other, and it is the community of faith that speaks with and listens to the world. The church senses a responsibility for the world, not simply as yet another institutional presence or a benevolent NGO, but as a movement of salt, light and leaven for the world’s transformation. For this reason, our kindness must be known to all.”

Tobin is being hailed as a bright light among the American hierarchy. He served in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for four years prior to being appointed to Newark. And he was raised to the cardinalate this fall, before he took up his new post.

We look forward to him sharing more of his pastoral wisdom and vision. — PWN

Church steps up to plate

The Prairie Messenger has carried a number of articles about the disastrous war on drugs carried out by newly elected Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. Death squads, and even the police, are shooting suspected drug users, seemingly without any questions asked. To date, more than 6,000 people have been killed without a trial.

The Archdiocese of Manila is now stepping up to the plate. It will build a drug rehabilitation centre for drug dependents modelled on Brazil’s *Fazenda da Esperanca*, or Farm of Hope. This therapeutic community that started in 1983 is based on the principles of “spirituality, community life, and work.”

Rev. Anton Pascual, head of the social services ministry of the archdiocese, said the church will offer those who have succumbed to drugs “a new life, a home that will welcome them, regardless of their past.”

In 2014 I had the opportunity to visit the Farm of Hope in Brazil, where the Ursuline Sisters of Bruno worked. I saw the success it had in rehabilitating teens who had been hooked on drugs and lived a lawless life on the street.

This will indeed be a light that shines in the lawless darkness of the Philippines. — PWN

Deutscher faces issue of euthanasia on a very personal level

Building a Culture of Life

Mary Deutscher



As readers of this column are acutely aware, I am an outspoken opponent of euthanasia and assisted suicide. So it seems an odd twist of fate that last April my father, the man I love and admire most in this world, received the same diagnosis

that has led many euthanasia advocates to take their own lives: an incurable brain tumour.

Not long after Dad’s diagnosis, I was out for coffee with a friend who asked me point blank whether my family’s experience had

changed my stance on euthanasia. This may seem a bold question, but I had already asked this question of myself so I was not offended. In fact, I am probably the only person on the planet who would welcome the opportunity to talk about how my family’s experience has affected my continued opposition to euthanasia.

One of the main reasons I have been opposed to euthanasia is that I believe vulnerable people will feel pressured into choosing suicide if it becomes a socially acceptable option. I can now speak from experience when I say that the health care system is an intimidating and sometimes terrifying place.

Fortunately, during his hospitalizations my father has been surrounded by a loving family, and when it became evident that hospital life was crushing his spirits, my mother resolved to bring him home for as long as she could. I can only imagine the hopelessness Dad would have experienced if he had been forced to face this cancer alone, and I shudder when I think about how such people will be managed a few years from now when euthanasia becomes routine practice.

But I don’t want to dwell on this for too long because it can be too tempting to forget that most of the health care professionals we have met have been committed to helping my dad live his life to the fullest. Instead, I’d like to take a moment to reflect on what a gift it has been to our family that euthanasia has not been among the options we have considered for my dad.

Dad’s path over the past few months has had several twists and turns, and I am sure there are moments when he felt like throwing in the towel. I can’t help but wonder, though, if he were going to choose euthanasia, when would he have done it? Right after his diagnosis? But then we would have missed our family reunion in the summer. When he was stuck in the hospital for two months? But then he would have missed all of my mom’s glorious cooking. Perhaps when he was stable at home with my mother caring for him? But then he would have missed so many opportunities to listen to his grandchildren play. Perhaps he would do it now during his admission to a palliative care unit? But then he would have missed hearing me sing off key to him.

My experience with my dad has taught me that there is never a good moment to say goodbye to someone you love, and I am so grateful that it is not up to us to figure out when that moment is. All I can do is spend my days letting him know how much I love him,

which, quite frankly, is something I should have been doing all along.

I hope he can complete this journey with the fewest bumps possible, but I am not entering into this next stage of life naively. There will be painful moments ahead, but I will keep watch with my dad because that is what love does. Our Christian faith has shielded us from making any decisions about when to say goodbye, but more than that, it has taught us how to embrace life with its sufferings and its joys, trusting that we will be reunited in the resurrection.

Loosing my father will be the most difficult thing I have ever faced, but I take great comfort in knowing that I am not tossing him away. I am just handing him off to someone who will love him far better than I ever could.

Don’t ignore cries of hurt

Continued from page 1

Listen to where the cries are coming from, he said; they are not to be ignored or silenced. It’s going to take courage to first acknowledge this difficult reality and work to ensure “the bare minimum needed so that their dignity as God’s children will not only be respected but, above all, defended.”

— Sometimes the best answer is no answer.

Pope Francis again advocated the importance of using the heart over the head, and the church’s need to be more sensitive to another’s pain in order to bring God’s hope and compassion.

During his general audience Jan. 4, he talked about Rachel’s tears being seeds of hope and the futility of trite or insensitive speeches. Rachel’s refusal to be consoled shows how delicately one must approach a person in pain, the pope said.

When people are hurting, “it is necessary to share in their desperation. In order to dry the tears from the face of those who suffer,

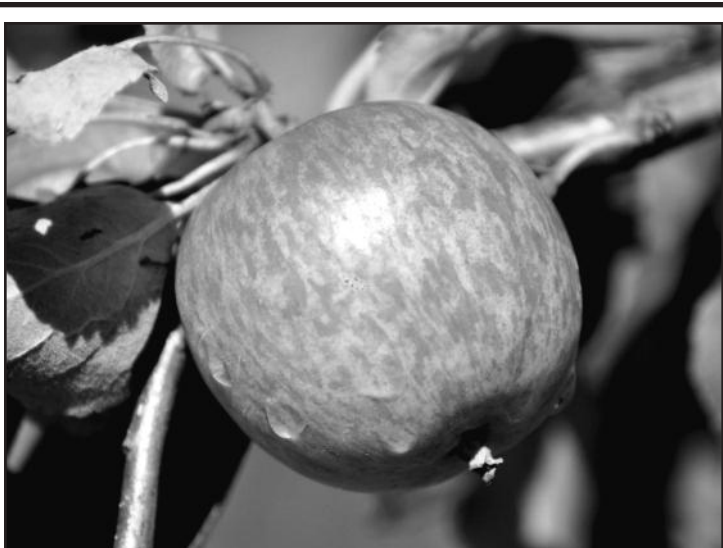
we must join our weeping with theirs. This is the only way our words may truly be able to offer a bit of hope,” he said.

Often it’s only tears that can open one’s eyes to the realities of life that need attention, he said.

When Pope Francis dedicated his audience talk to mothers Jan. 7, 2015, the feast of the Nativity for the Orthodox Church, he lamented how people had plenty of poems and “beautiful things” to say about moms, but at the end of the day “the mother is rarely listened to or helped in daily life.”

Not only are they “rarely considered central to society in her role,” he said, “the mother is not always held in the right regard, she is barely heard” in the church, too.

With his many reflections on motherhood, the pope is trying to bring that maternal warmth back to the church. But he has also called for the courage “to knock at the door” like the persistent widow because “the Lord himself says, ‘Everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.’ ”



Paul Paproski

Newton

The man
felt the apple
drop on his head with such
gravity, he couldn’t help yell,
“Aha!”

By Seb Koh

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Prairie

Messenger

CATHOLIC JOURNAL

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
Circulation Department
100 College Drive, Box 190, Muenster, Sask., S0K 2Y0
Fax: (306) 682-5285 pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca
Published by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter’s Abbey.
Printed by St. Peter’s Press, Muenster, Sask.

Editor: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB 306-682-1772
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Circulation: Gail Kleefeld 306-682-1772 <pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca>
Regina diocesan editor: Frank Flegel 306-586-7316, 306-352-1651
Saskatoon diocesan editor: Kiply Lukan Yaworski 306-242-1500, 306-651-3935
Prince Albert: Chancery Office 306-922-4747
Winnipeg diocesan editor: James Buchok 204-452-2227
Saint-Boniface Chancery Office 204-237-9851

Subscriptions: \$37.00 per year (45 issues); tax included; U.S. \$170.00 per year. Foreign \$269.00 per year.
Single copy: \$1.00 GST#10780 2928 RT0001
Copy and advertising should arrive 12 days before publication date.
Change of address: Please allow 3-4 weeks for processing and send both old and new addresses.
Website: <http://www.prairiemessenger.ca>

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

CN ISSN 0032-664X Publication Mail Agreement No. 40030139

Pope tells diplomats: Break habits of past

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — At the start of a new year, Pope Francis laid out a laundry list of suggested resolutions for religious and political leaders for making a joint commitment toward building peace.

No conflict exists that is “a habit impossible to break,” the pope said, but he underlined that kicking such a habit requires greater efforts to rectify social injustice, protect religious freedom, jump-start peace talks, end the arms trade and co-operate in responding to climate change and the immigration and refugee crises.

In a 45-minute speech Jan. 9 to diplomats accredited to the Vatican, the pope underlined what he saw as the real “enemies of peace” and the best responses that could be made by today’s religious and political leaders.

“One enemy of peace,” he said, is seeing the human person as a means to an end, which “opens the way to the spread of injustice, social inequality and corruption.”

The waste, “greedy exploitation” and inequitable distribution of the world’s resources provoke conflict, he said, and human trafficking, especially the abuse and exploitation of children, cannot be overlooked.

Another enemy of peace, the pope said, are ideologies that exploit “social unrest in order to

foment contempt and hate” and target others as enemies to be eliminated.

“Under the guise of promising great benefits, (such ideologies) instead leave a trail of poverty, division, social tensions, suffering and, not infrequently, death,” he said.

What peace requires, he said, is “a vision of human beings capable of promoting an integral development respectful of their transcendent dignity” as well as the courage and commitment to seek to build peace together every day.

Religions are “called to promote peace,” he said, appealing to “all religious authorities to join in reaffirming unequivocally that one can never kill in God’s name.”

“The fundamentalist-inspired terrorism” that has been killing so many innocent people the past year is “a homicidal madness which misuses God’s name in order to disseminate death in a play for domination and power.”

Fundamentalist terrorism is the fruit of deep “spiritual poverty” that does not connect a pious fear of God with the mandate to love one’s neighbour. Often it also is linked to deep social poverty, which demands action including on the part of government leaders.

Political leaders must guarantee “in the public forum the right to religious freedom” and recognize the positive contribution religious values make in society, he said. They must promote social



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE ADDRESSES DIPLOMATS — Pope Francis speaks during an audience with the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See for the traditional exchange of new year’s greetings at the Vatican Jan. 9. The pope said that religions are “called to promote peace” and appealed to “all religious authorities to join in reaffirming unequivocally that one can never kill in God’s name.”

policies aimed at fighting poverty and promoting the family as well as invest heavily in education and culture so as to eliminate the sort of “terrain” that spreads fundamentalism.

Christians, whose divisions “have endured too long,” also must heal past wounds and journey forward together with common goals since many of those conflicts have threatened social harmony and peace, the pope said.

Peace, he said, entails greater justice and mercy in the world, especially toward foreigners, migrants and refugees.

“A common commitment is needed, one focused on offering them a dignified welcome,” he said. It means recognizing people have a right to emigrate and take

up a new residence without feeling their security and cultural identity are being threatened. Immigrants, however, also must respect local laws and cultures, he added.

Doctrinal chief dismisses idea of ‘fraternal correction’

By Cindy Wooden

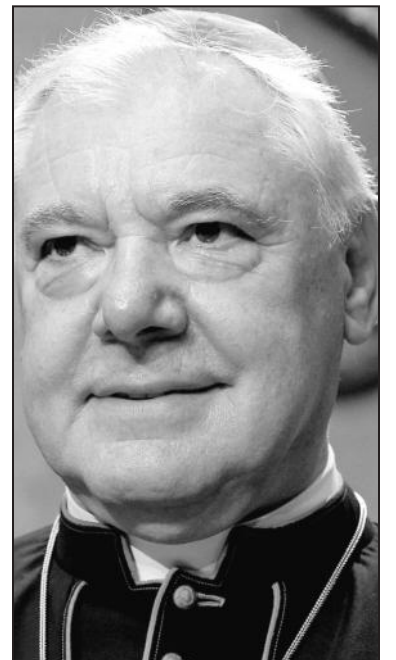
VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church is “very far” from a situation in which the pope is in need of “fraternal correction” because he has not put the faith and church teaching in danger, said Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Interviewed Jan. 9 on the Italian all-news channel, TGCom24, Müller said Pope Francis’ document on the family, *Amoris Laetitia*, was “very clear” in its teaching.

In the document, the cardinal said, Pope Francis asks priests “to discern the situation of these persons living in an irregular union — that is, not in accordance with the doctrine of the church on marriage — and asks for help for these people to find a path for a new integration into the church according to the condition of the sacraments (and) the Christian message on matrimony.”

In the papal document, he said, “I do not see any opposition: On one side we have the clear doctrine on matrimony, and on the other the obligation of the church to care for these people in difficulty.”

The cardinal was interviewed about a formal request to Pope Francis for clarification about *Amoris Laetitia* and particularly its call for the pastoral accompaniment of people who are divorced and civilly remarried or who are living together without marriage. The request, called a “*dubia*,” was written in September by U.S. Cardinal Raymond L. Burke,



CNS/Paul Haring

Cardinal Gerhard Müller

patron of the Knights of Malta, and three other cardinals. They published the letter in November after Pope Francis did not respond.

In an interview later, Burke said the pope must respond to the “*dubia*” because they directly impact the faith and the teaching of the church. If there is no response, he said, a formal “correction of the pope” would be in order.

In the TGCom24 interview, Müller said, “everyone, especially cardinals of the Roman church, have the right to write a letter to the pope. However, I was astonished that this became public, almost forcing the pope to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’” to the cardinals’ questions about what exactly the pope meant in *Amoris Laetitia*.

“This, I don’t like,” Müller said.

Manila diocese builds drug rehab centre

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Manila will build a rehabilitation centre for drug dependents amid Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs, in which more than 6,000 people have been killed.

Ucanews.com reported the move is aimed at helping users avoid falling victim to death squads accused of killing many dependents and dealers.

“We want to show people that there is really hope,” said Rev. Anton Pascual, head of the social services ministry of the archdiocese.

The priest said the church will offer those who have succumbed to drugs “a new life, a home that will welcome them, regardless of their past.”

Pascual said the archdiocese is looking for a 50-acre property outside Manila to set up a “drug rehabilitation farm.”

Fazenda da Esperanca, or Farm of Hope, a therapeutic community that started in Brazil in 1983, will manage the facility.

Franciscan Father Hans Stapel, Fazenda’s founder, said his organization shows a “different way of living and addressing the problems about various addictions of different individuals.”

He said the drug rehabilitation farm would be run based on the principles of “spirituality, community life, and work.”

Pascual said the facility to be built by the archdiocese will accommodate 100 “drug reformists”



CNS/Rolox Dela Pena, EPA

DRUG REHABILITATION CENTRE IN MANILA — A female relative cries as the body of a Filipino killed in an anti-drug operation is carried away in 2016 in Manila. The Archdiocese of Manila plans to build a rehabilitation centre for drug dependents amid Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs, in which more than 6,000 people have been killed.

to ensure quality and intensity of the program.

He said the farm is one of many programs the church in the Philippines is introducing to help the government’s fight against

illegal drugs.

A similar facility was established in Masbate province in 2003 and has already facilitated the recovery of some 300 drug dependents, reported ucanews.com

If we are too busy to be kind, we are too busy.

— Allan Lokos