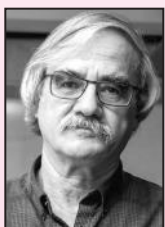




Documenting lives

"Since cameras were invented, they've been used to document the lives of poor people and the injustice of their conditions," writes Michael Swan. "That tradition lives on in Toronto, in the photographs of Vincenzo Pietropaolo." — page 5



Nathanael

The Nathanael adult faith formation experience continues evolving to meet the challenges of the Christian in the contemporary world. — page 6

Chaldean pastor is leaving

A farewell celebration was held Jan. 7 for Rev. Sabah Kamora who has served as pastor of Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic Church in Saskatoon for the past seven years. — page 6



Don't skip the dishes

Edna Froese makes the case for doing the dishes the old-fashioned way, as an opportunity for animated family discussions that might not otherwise happen. — page 7

Orthodoxy, sin and heresy

"Does the Catholic Church really teach that missing mass is a mortal sin and that if you die in that state you will go to hell?" asks Ron Rolheiser, OMI. "No, that's not Catholic orthodoxy, though popular preaching and catechesis often suppose it is, even as neither accepts the full consequences." — page 11

Care of the earth

The School Garden Project at Light of Christ Catholic School Division has been developed to teach students how to become responsible stewards of the earth, writes Marie Graw. — page 13

Water conflict boiling over in Ontario

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By Dean Dettloff

In *Laudato Si'*, commenting on water scarcity, Pope Francis writes, "The environmental repercussions could affect billions of people; it is also conceivable that the control of water by large multinational businesses may become a major source of conflict in this century" (31). In Ontario, the Holy Father's intuition seems about right.

Following a year of public frustration over the competition for water access and use between local communities and the multinational food company Nestlé, Ontario will have to confront a difficult question: Is water a common good or a private commodity? The issue will be further complicated by the continuing crises of potable water access among First Nations people, which has persisted in some communities for decades.

Over the summer of 2016, environmental activists drew attention to the Ontario town of Aberfoyle, where Nestlé was permitted to take 3.6 million litres of water per day — amid a drought — at a rate of a mere \$3.71 for every million litres.

Dean Dettloff is America's Toronto correspondent and a junior member of the Institute for Christian Studies. Twitter: @deandettloff

That's the standard rate in Ontario for commercial water-taking. The same reservoir near Aberfoyle is also tapped by the city of Guelph, Ont., which relies solely on groundwater for its growing population, already exceeding 120,000. During the drought, Guelph residents could be fined \$130 for watering their lawns, while Nestlé was under no obligation to modify its bottling volume.

Nestlé's Aberfoyle well is not new, but the food giant's need to renew a 10-year water-taking permit brought attention to the different standards enjoyed by the company versus drought-restricted citizens. Though Nestlé's permit expired at the end of July, the company has been allowed to continue taking water until Ontario completes a review, a concession made by the Ontario government in light of public outrage. Opposition parties, including the New Democratic Party, the Green party and the Progressive Conservatives, all urged Ontario Liberals to review the permit granting process entirely, with the NDP and Greens suggesting no renewals until the permit process is significantly changed.

Amid the Aberfoyle controversy, another water clash sprung up in Centre Wellington, Ont., where residents learned that Nestlé had outbid the town for the use of a nearby spring. Aiming to protect



CNS/Ben Nelms

SAY NO TO BOTTLED WATER — Msgr. Murray Kroetsch, chancellor of the Diocese of Hamilton, encourages "all of our parishes to discourage the use of bottled water. I know a number of parishes have started to make that shift, using the tap water and not paying for water which in the long run is diminishing the natural resource. . . . Diminishing bottled water use, says Kroetsch, is in keeping with Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, which challenged the idea of water as a commodity.

public access to water sources with the anticipation of an increasing population, the town attempted to purchase a spring water well, but Nestlé was awarded the well after matching the offer made by Centre Wellington, leading to more head-shaking from citizens frustrated by the imbalance of water rights between a powerful multinational like Nestlé and local municipalities.

In protests over the summer, Wellington Water Watchers, a non-profit advocacy group dedi-

cated to the conservation of local water, gave public voice to continued concerns over the well purchase. Other activist groups, like Council of Canadians, have called for a boycott of Nestlé while drawing attention to the ways in which the well use affects First Nations communities.

The well draws water from the Grand River watershed, the traditional territory of the Six Nations of Grand River. More than 11,000

— FIRST NATIONS, page 4

Upcoming synod needs young people's voices: pope

By Junno Arocho Esteves

held in October 2018.

Young people will have an

opportunity to contribute to the working document by submitting

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis asked young people to tell him, their bishops and pastors about their hopes and struggles and even their criticisms.

In preparation for a meeting of the Synod of Bishops focused on youth, the pope wrote a letter to young people, saying the church wants "to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith, even your doubts and your criticism."

"Make your voice heard," the pope told young people. "Let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls."

The pope's letter was released Jan. 13 along with the preparatory document for the synod. The document includes a series of questions to be answered by national conferences of bishops and other church bodies. The responses, along with input from young people themselves, will form the basis of the synod's working document.

Pope Francis chose "Young people, faith and vocational discernment" as the theme for the synod gathering, which will be



CNS/Agencia Gazeta, Jakub Porzycki, via Reuters

SYNOD TO FOCUS ON YOUTH — Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela poses with pilgrims during World Youth Day at the main square in Krakow, Poland. The next World Youth Day will take place in Panama in 2019. It will be preceded in 2018 by a Synod of Bishops which will focus on youth with the theme "Young people, faith and vocational discernment." Young people will attend as auditors and will be able to take part in the general assembly and also in the small working groups.

reflections "on their expectations and their lives" through a dedicated website — www.sinodogiovani.va — that will be launched March 1, said Bishop Fabio Fabene, undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops.

In his letter, Pope Francis referred to God's call to Abraham. The Old Testament patriarch, he said, "received a compelling invitation, a challenge, to leave everything and go to a new land. What is this 'new land' for us today, if not a more just and friendly society which you, young people, deeply desire and wish to build to the very ends of the earth?"

"A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change and your generosity," Pope Francis told young people. "Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit who proposes bold choices; do not delay when your conscience asks you to take risks in following the Master."

The synod preparatory document offered three chapters for reflection by bishops and youth, which it defines as people rough-

— WORLD, page 15

Nigerian archbishop protests culture of brutality

By Peter Ajayi Dada

LAGOS, Nigeria (CNS) — The head of the Nigerian bishops' conference has urged Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to stop the evolving culture of brutality and savagery in Nigeria, which he said was unparalleled in its history.

Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos spoke after suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked indigenous farmers in southern Kaduna state in early January. The Diocese of Kafanchan, located in the area, estimated more than 800 people were killed, and damages to property and foodstuffs topped

\$17.5 million.

"We are becoming so sadistic that we do not see that such brutality creates a culture of impunity, chaos, anarchy and doom; as if the needless killing by Boko Haram is not enough," said Kaigama.

"The manner (in which) lives are being taken right now in southern Kaduna and many other troubled areas of our nation is tantamount to a declaration of war against helpless and innocent Nigerians.

"How can human lives be so casually terminated with pictures of dead bodies, decapitated or disfigured corpses shown in the social media?" he asked. "What is

mind-boggling is the seeming insensitivity to the killings. Does it not trouble us that the international community is watching Nigeria with great apprehension?"

The archbishop said young people were gaining the impression that life was cheap and could be taken away at a whim. He said human life is sacred and cannot be sacrificed as if it were mere animal life for pleasure or celebration.

"For how long will killings, associated with demented or irrational reasoning, continue to be witnessed, especially in southern Kaduna, before a concerted effort

is made to stop such carnage permanently?"

"When will one Nigerian life matter, or must people be killed in thousands or millions before we realize the humongous damage done to our people?"

A statement from the Diocese of Kafanchan said more than 1,400 houses, 16 churches, 19 shops, one primary school and five cars were destroyed in 53 villages. It called for an immediate cessation of hostilities by the warring parties, a commission of inquiry instituted to investigate the crisis.

"All perpetrators and sponsors of these evils must be fished out

and punished accordingly, no matter how highly placed," it said.

It also demanded an immediate release of southern Kaduna youth and leaders it said were unjustly detained by various security agencies for trumped-up charges. It said the government should provide relief materials to victims of the attacks and compensate families that suffered losses.

"Communities overrun by Fulani herdsmen and now under occupation by same must be vacated, and their owners returned to their homes and farmlands immediately," it said.

Human-made idols are figments of the imagination, pope warns

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Watch out for the tempting promises and easy rewards of false gods and idols because they always lead to confusion, disappointment and even death, Pope Francis said.

"We are tempted to seek even fleeting comfort, which seems to fill the emptiness of solitude and ease the exertion of believing" in God, especially in times of trouble, he said Jan. 11 during his weekly general audience.

But the hope and security that come from God "never ever disappoint," he said. "Idols always let you down" since they are figments of the imagination and not "alive and real" like God.

The pope continued his series of talks on Christian hope by reflecting on Psalm 115, which warns of the false hopes and securities offered by human-made idols.

While the psalmist speaks of statues made of "silver and gold," the pope said idols also include anything people hold up as the ultimate answer to their happiness and security like money, power, success and false ideologies — all of which carry "illusions of eternity and omnipotence."

Even things like physical beauty and health become idols when a person is willing "to sacrifice everything" in order to obtain or maintain them, he said.

"They are all things that confuse the heart and mind and instead of promoting life, they lead to death," he said. As an example of this, he said he once heard a woman speak very nonchalantly about procuring an abortion because the pregnancy would have ruined her figure.

"These are idols and they take you down the wrong path. They do not give you happiness," he said.

The pope marvelled at the huge number of fortune tellers he used to see sitting in a city park in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the lines of people waiting their turn to consult them.

The shtick "is always the same, 'There is a woman in your life,' 'Something dark is coming,'" he said ominously. But the people would pay to hear such things, and this was supposed to make them feel better even though they



CNS/Paul Haring

GENERAL AUDIENCE — A young woman takes a selfie with Pope Francis during his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican Jan. 11. The pope continued his talks on Christian hope, reflecting on Psalm 115.

were putting their trust in a bunch of nonsense, he said.

"We buy false hope," which shows how much people cling to it, he said. True hope, the

kind Jesus brought freely by "giving his life for us, that kind we don't trust in so much sometimes."

Faith in God takes strength

and perseverance, and when bad things happen in life, he said, sometimes that faith wavers and people feel they need a different kind of certainty, something easier or more "tangible and concrete."

"Sometimes we seek a god that can bend to our wishes and magically intervene to change reality and make it be the way we want," he said. This is what people love and seek — a god "that looks like us, understandable, predictable," even though "it can do nothing — impotent and deceitful."

The psalmist says that those who worship or trust in things that cannot speak, see, feel, move or hear, will become like them with nothing to say, "incapable of helping, changing things, smiling, giving oneself and incapable of loving."

"Even we, people of the church, run this risk" of becoming worldly, he said. "We need to be in the world, but defend ourselves from the illusions" and idols of the world.

But those who persevere and courageously trust and hope in the Lord, they become more and more like him, sharing in his life and blessings, "transforming us into his children."

"In this God, we have hope. This is the God that is not an idol, that never disappoints," and always remembers his people even during their most difficult trials, he said.

At the end of the audience in the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall, the pope told people to make sure they never pay for a ticket to see the pope because entry to papal events is always free since "this is a home for everyone."

"I found out that there are pretty crafty (people) who charge for tickets," which should have written on them in different languages that they are completely free of charge.

"Whoever makes you pay to get you into an audience commits a crime," he said. Tickets for papal masses also always are free. No tickets are needed for the noon Angelus prayer.

McDonald's near Vatican to give free meals to the poor

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While the controversial opening of a McDonald's near the Vatican may not have all local residents singing, "I'm lovin' it," the popular fast food chain is trying to do its part in the neighborhood by helping the poor and the hungry.

Medicina Solidale (Solidarity Medicine) announced Jan. 12 that it is joining forces with McDonald's and the papal almoner's office, which gives the pope's charitable aid to the homeless around the Vatican, to distribute 1,000 meals to poor men and women who often find shelter in and around St. Peter's Basilica.

Starting Jan. 16, volunteers from the charitable organization will distribute a specially prepared menu for the poor; it includes a double cheeseburger, fresh apple slices and a bottle of water.

Lucia Ercoli, director of *Medicina Solidale*, said that the organization plans to distribute 100 meals a week for 10 consecutive Mondays. The pro-

gram, she added, is "the beginning of a dialogue" with McDonald's to expand in the future.

"It is truly a small drop in an ocean of things being done by so many other associations, by so many people who spend their time helping others," Ercoli said Jan. 12 in an interview with Vatican Radio.

In a statement announcing the deal, Ercoli noted that the fast food chain "quickly responded" to the proposal "to donate meals to those who live on the streets in the area of St. Peter's."

Noting her organization's longtime collaboration with the papal almoner in providing medical care for the homeless, Ercoli said the new agreement will ensure that the poor also are provided with some much-needed nutrition.

"With these meals, we'll make a significant leap in providing so many women and men who live on the street in this neighbourhood the possibility of a meal that will guarantee a suitable intake of proteins and vitamins for them," she said.



CNS/Paul Haring

MCDONALD'S AT THE VATICAN — A worker walks outside the newly opened McDonald's near the Vatican Jan. 12. McDonalds will collaborate with Italian aid organization, "Medicina Solidale," and the papal almoner's office to help feed the poor and homeless around the Vatican.

Challenges ahead on science rights, religious freedom

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — In 2017 Canada faces ongoing challenges to religious freedom and conscience rights that can be solved by accommodation and respect for real pluralism, say observers.

“The big picture is how accepting is Canadian society of moral and religious diversity,” said Evangelical Fellowship of Canada president Bruce Clemenger. “Religious freedom protection is based on what it means for Canada to be a free and democratic society.”

In all the cases across the country, there is an option to accommodate, Clemenger said, whether the challenges concern parents fighting a sex education curriculum; doctors and other health care professionals fighting for conscience rights; or a private Christian college seeking accreditation for its proposed law school.

The case of Trinity Western University could eventually end up before the Supreme Court of Canada. At stake is whether some provincial law societies are violating the college’s religious freedom in refusing to accept proposed law school graduates to the bar. The colleges have argued Trinity Western’s community covenant barring faculty and students from sex outside of traditional marriage is discriminatory against gay and lesbian students.

Clemenger pointed out that all other law societies in Canada except Ontario, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia, agreed to ac-



CCN/D. Gyapong
Bruce Clemenger

credit future law students.

“There’s nothing impairing accreditation,” said Clemenger. “They just chose not to.”

Trinity Western won at various levels in B.C. and Nova Scotia, but lost in Ontario and has appealed. B.C. may yet appeal its loss at the B.C. Court of Appeals to the Supreme Court of Canada.

When it comes to conscience rights for doctors, provinces and licensing bodies also have an option to accommodate, said Clemenger.

Most provinces and their respective colleges have accommodated them, except Ontario, said Larry Worthen, executive director of the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada (CMDS) and a spokesperson for the Coalition for HealthCARE

and Conscience.

CMDS, Physicians for Life Canada and the Canadian Federation of Catholic Physicians’ Societies have joined five Ontario doctors in a legal challenge of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario’s policy forcing doctors to refer when it comes to euthanasia or abortion “even when they have a conscientious objection,” said Worthen.

The College’s policy requires physicians to “actually perform procedures in an emergency situation,” he said. “We’re very concerned about what the province defines as an emergency and the fact we are being forced to act against our conscience is very concerning.”

Worthen said he hopes the case will be heard before a judge in June.

“Most other provinces have a number for patients to call to access an assessment for medical aid in dying,” he said. “Ontario continues to require a referral and for doctors to go against their conscience.”

“The College of Physicians is out there on their own, not only ignoring conscience protection but trying to frustrate reasonable alternatives that would allow patients to gain access to this procedure without the requirement of the doctor to refer,” he said. Ontario has also tabled legislation on euthanasia

and assisted suicide that does not include conscience rights.

“There should be alternate procedures for access to procedures that don’t require health professionals to act against religious beliefs or their conscience,” Worthen said.

Former Ambassador of Religious Freedom Andrew Bennett, now a senior fellow at Cardus, said he expects challenges “left, right and centre” in the wake of the federal euthanasia law.

Bennett also foresees continued challenges around the rights of parents to home-school, as recently seen in Alberta, which withdrew accreditation of the province’s largest home-schooling association, though it recently reinstated it with conditions.

Too much attention is being focused on the juridical side of these questions and not enough on the public policy side, Bennett said.

“What do we want to build in this country?” he asked. “What kind of common life do we want to enjoy?”

He expressed concern over “very illiberal ideas emerging from an increasingly entrenched public reason.”

“This public reason stipulates unless you are on the right side of public issues that have purportedly been decided for the good of all — if you are on the wrong side of those issues, you will lose

out,” he said. “There’s almost implicit suggestion your particular beliefs will not be tolerated.”

“We’re seeing this present on university campuses, in various ways in other institutions and we see it often reflected within the media,” Bennett said.

“There are many responses one can take and I’m not one who advocates a culture warrior response,” he said. Instead those advancing religious freedom and conscience rights “need to raise the bar of our debate, and advance arguments based on the theme of human dignity.”

“We have to be able to convince our fellow citizens each one of us bears this dignity and that is the foundation of the rights we should be enjoying,” he said. So if we want to actually embrace a genuine pluralism in our country, that pluralism must not only accept, but strive to continually welcome different perspectives, welcome different beliefs and allow those different perspectives and beliefs to express themselves fully in the public square,” he said.

“In advancing and defending religious freedom we must always take the high road. We must always seek to include and not exclude,” he said. “And most importantly we must seek to see in every individual human being we encounter someone who bears a God-given dignity.”

Humanitarian crisis continues in Syria

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — As the civil war in Syria is poised to enter its seventh year in March, the humanitarian crisis continues unabated despite a recent ceasefire.



CCN/D. Gyapong
Carl Héту

“A truce, a ceasefire, is not peace,” said Carl Héту, national director of CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association) Canada. “Right now, Syria is such a big mess that the needs of the people will be great for the next several years, even if there were a peace accord tomorrow.”

“At least then we could start to build,” he said. “That’s not the case now. Now it’s still an emergency situation.”

“Not all opposition groups are negotiating with the regime,” he said. “Only a fraction of the rebel groups are negotiating, so we’re far from a serious peace in Syria.”

Though late last year government forces wrested control of eastern Aleppo from rebel hands, “it’s been very difficult to reach people,” he said. “It’s very tense right now on the ground and the infrastructures are gone.”

“We have a lot of people on the ground, the local church in particular who are very brave, doing best they can,” he said. “But they need permissions to go through checkpoints to get from one neighbourhood to another.”

“There are army people everywhere, to make sure there is no resistance, no rebels,” he said. That makes it “very complex to bring food to regular folks who are still in Aleppo.”

“The situation is pretty bad,” said Guy Des Aulniers, co-ordinator of humanitarian aid for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. In western Aleppo, the part that had remained under government control, Development and Peace partners run a medical clinic that is still receiving patients. They also have partners providing humanitarian relief in rebel held areas, he said.

The offensive on eastern Aleppo created many more displaced people

Faith to be part of Canada’s 150th: Cardus

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Think-tank heavyweight Cardus is calling on Canadians to bring religion back into the public square as the nation prepares to celebrate Canada’s 150th birthday.

“Faith is still a dominant feature in the lives of many Canadians and it certainly has been throughout Canadian history so . . . to celebrate 150 years of Confederation that story has to be told,” said Andrew Bennett, a Cardus senior fellow and chair of the Cabinet of Canadians, a group of academic, religious and business leaders put together to lead the faith discussion.

“To not talk about religious faith when we speak about Canadian history is to have a very serious blind spot. Millions of Canadians have lived and breathed and built this country with a key eye to their religious faith.”

To assist those looking to swap stories about their faith, Cardus put together a series of initiatives, each with a specific target audience, grouped under an umbrella project called Faith in Canada 150.

In November, Bennett, Canada’s former Ambassador of Religious Freedom, launched the youth-driven arm of Faith in Canada 150.

The event drew about 60 youth, aged 19 to 35, who heard from four guest speakers: a Catholic, a Jew, a Muslim and a Baha’i.

Dubbed the Millennial Network, Bennett said the event sought to change perceptions about religion’s place in society.

“Many of us have convinced

ourselves that religious expression is a private matter,” said Bennett. “It is important for those of us who are faithful to recognize that we do have a place in the public square. Religious expression is not just a private matter.”

He added that in order to have “a genuinely diverse society we need to give suitable space in the public square for religious expression and for people to engage in with their faith.”

Faith in Canada 150 is being fuelled by private donations with no direct funding from the federal government’s Canada 150 program, said Cardus spokesperson Daniel Proussalidis. The government has reportedly earmarked \$500 million for celebrations and community improvements across the country.

Another of the Cardus projects is Thread of 1,000 Stories, a platform for faithful of all ages to share stories about religion’s role and influence in their life.

“It is important to have faith as a prominent player with the public life of this country,” said Bennett. “People of faith, on a day-to-day basis, are involved in building the common life of this country.”

Jean Vanier, who worked with Cardus in developing the Faith in Canada 150 initiative, sees the project as an extension of Canada’s role to be a model for the rest of the world.

“Canada has a mission . . . to cultivating this brotherly-sisterly love amongst every person,” said Vanier, who founded L’Arche for adults with intellectual disabilities in 1964. “Canada is not just a place of peace, it is a source of

peace and a vision of peace for the world.”

Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto, one of 40 members of the Cabinet of Canadians, praised Cardus for capitalizing on Canada’s 150 birthday as a means to celebrate faith and religious diversity.



CCN/D. Gyapong
Andrew Bennett

“I am delighted that Cardus has initiated the Faith in Canada 150 project,” he said. “As we celebrate this milestone in Canada’s history it is an appropriate time to highlight and celebrate the role of faith as a cornerstone for so many Canadians.”

The initiative offers an opportunity to “reflect on the role of faith in our country,” while celebrating “the simple and extraordinary contributions made every day from coast to coast” by the nation’s faithful.

For more information, visit <http://www.faithincanada150.ca>

Cabinet shuffle contrasts with Trump administration

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Jan. 10 cabinet shuffle provided a stark contrast to President-elect Trump's cabinet picks, and signals a big difference in attitudes toward immigration.

The highlight is Prime Minister Trudeau's choice of Ahmed Hussen, 39, a former Somali refugee, as Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

The lawyer, human rights activist and former head of the Canadian Somali Congress, is a first-time MP elected in 2015 to serve the York South-Weston Riding, Toronto-area riding.

"I'm extremely proud of the fact that Canadians have always been welcoming to others, people who have sought asylum," Hussen told journalists after the shuffle. "I think we have always been generous with our — by opening our doors and opening our hearts. We've been the better for it."

"I've always prided myself as a Canadian," he said. "I'm also proud of my heritage but I think the two can work together. I think Canada is one of the few countries that that can actually happen so I'm especially proud to be given this role."

In contrast, Trump has at various times called for a ban on

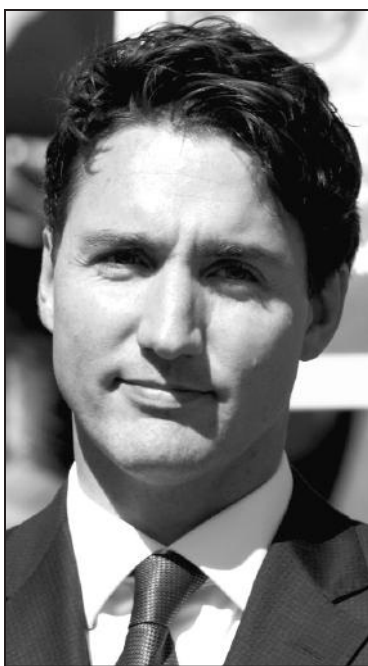
Muslim immigration or at the very least "extreme vetting" of those coming from Muslim countries. He has also promised to build a wall on the border with Mexico to stop the flow of undocumented migrants.

Anne Leahy, a career Canadian diplomat who served as Ambassador to the Holy See and is now an adjunct professor at McGill University, said she thinks Hussen "seems like a very good pick," a choice that not only sends a message to Somali-Canadians but also to "new Canadians who come here in difficult circumstances that you can succeed."

Canada has had a policy of welcoming refugees that goes back to the Vietnamese boat people and included the welcoming of thousands of Syrian refugees last year, she said. "This policy of integration of refugees has always put Canada in a category of being open."

"This is certainly in tune with Pope Francis' messages, ever since he became pope, regarding specifically migrants," she said.

While Canada does not face the same problems European countries face with migrants and refugees pouring in from Syria, North Africa and other parts of the Middle East, the choice of Hussen places Trudeau's policy in line with the openness and gen-



Art Babych

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

erosity of that of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"Angela Merkel is a courageous leader who did the right thing at the time," Leahy said. "Obviously there's a need to manage flows and manage integration in a tighter way just because of the sheer numbers and there are bound to be things that don't work."

The idea of "welcoming people and helping them to integrate so they will contribute to the growth of the economy and of

society — that is also part of the argument in Canada," she said, noting the positive stories emerging of Syrian refugees who have only been here for a few months and have started their own businesses, hired people and who help each other. "The upside is far more important than the negativity that gets reported."

Other observers warn Canada's openness on immigration could have a downside with the Trump administration.

"We already have the reputation as an Angela Merkel-lite country," said former CSIS senior manager and director of Insignis Strategic Research David Harris.

Trudeau raised the number to more than 300,000 immigrants last year, "to say nothing of hundreds of thousands of temporary visa holders per year," he said. "If you add to that the massive Syrian migrant intake, anyone in the United States responsible for continental security might be given pause."

"Moral certainties and high ground might be claimed by private citizens, but there are issues of bringing in people from a state that has its people on a diet of anti-Semitism," he said.

Leahy said she was struck by the contrast of the youth and diversity of the Trudeau cabinet, noting it represents "the generation of the 40-year-olds" as

opposed to Trump's, who are mostly two decades older. "A lot more women and people of different origins than in the Trump proposals," she said.

John Thompson, security analyst with the Strategic Capital Intelligence Group, said the Trump candidacy is in line with Brexit and the growing militancy in many European countries against welcoming migrants.

"There are limits to diversity and there are limits to our tolerance for multiculturalism," he said. "We don't mind the cosmopolitan aspects this has given to us but you have to recognize there are dangers."

Thompson said there's a big question hanging over the western world that most of its leaders refuse to debate: "Can we issue a blanket cheque for tolerance of our Islamic community? Every instinct says no we can't."

Thompson welcomes the changes in Canadian society regarding religious toleration, and he understands why any move to filter people based on religious beliefs is alarming.

"Even 15 years after 9-11, we still don't know enough to distinguish between Islamists and Salafists," he said. "It's the political ideology we have to target. It's a matter of survival if we don't target the political ideology."

One-third of First Nations lack clean water

Continued from page 1

Six Nations people currently live without access to clean water in the region. According to an investigation by *The Globe and Mail*, one-third of First Nations people are bereft of clean water, a situation that Human Rights Watch notes should be preventable in an advanced nation like Canada.

Opposition to expanding the bottled water industry has also come from the Diocese of Hamilton, which includes Wellington. The diocese issued a letter to all its parishes criticizing bottled water use. Rev. Edward Mahony of Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Hamilton, Ont., also a member of Council of Canadians, has been known for decades because of his opposition to bottled water, specifically as the industry affects local farmers. Mahony brought the issue of bottled water to the attention of priests at a seminar held by the diocese last October.

Since then, says Msgr. Murray Kroetsch, chancellor of the Diocese of Hamilton, "we encouraged all of our parishes to discourage the use of bottled water. I know a number of parishes have started to make that shift, using the tap water and not paying for water which in the long run is diminishing the natural resource and making it difficult for the farmers relying on the well water."

Diminishing bottled water use, says Kroetsch, is in keeping with Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, which challenged the idea of water as a commodity and argues, "Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and,

as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights" (30). Kroetsch adds that not using bottled water is "a small step that we all can make, but if we make that step it certainly sends a message to the people who are bottling the water." With 126 parishes in the Diocese of Hamilton, that step could leave a discernible footprint.

All the public outcry has garnered attention from federal and provincial Liberal party officials. One of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's campaign promises had been to end boil water notices in First Nations communities within five years. Now that water politics have come to more privileged parts of Ontario, renewed attention is being placed on commitments to First Nations water access.

For its part, in response to the Aberfoyle and Wellington cases, the Ontario government has proposed a two-year moratorium on new or expanded takings from groundwater by bottling companies, as well as stricter rules for renewals of existing permits. It aims during this time to review and research both the state of Ontario's groundwater and public opinion on its use.

In addition to the permit freeze and additional research, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne suggested the need for a larger conversation around the private water industry entirely, questioning the consumption of bottled water

when most Ontarians have access to clean tap water. Kroetsch stated that the diocese would be willing to voice its concerns over water use if it were invited to such a conversation, and that it would continue to try to address the problem at a grassroots level in the meantime.

The water issues in Ontario, specifically with respect to the Nestlé company, are also present in other parts of North America, like Michigan, where the company has been embroiled in lawsuits over the damaging volume of water it takes from local water sources for minimal permit fees. Two other provinces, British Columbia and Quebec, are also being scrutinized for policies on water taking by large bottlers. British Columbia charges private water bottlers a mere \$2.25 per million litres of water (before 2016, the water was free). In Quebec, it costs \$70 per million litres — a significant hike given the rates at other provinces. That higher rate still represents an incredibly lucrative deal for private companies.

The upcoming decisions in Ontario may serve as a model for other governments facing similar conflicts between public and private water interests. Until then, actions on the part of activists and faith communities in Ontario should inspire others to reconsider their lifestyles and make their voices heard for the sake of our common home.

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Social justice is seen through the camera's eye

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The sword of justice sometimes takes the form of a sliver of light that slips into a camera for just 1/60th of a second.

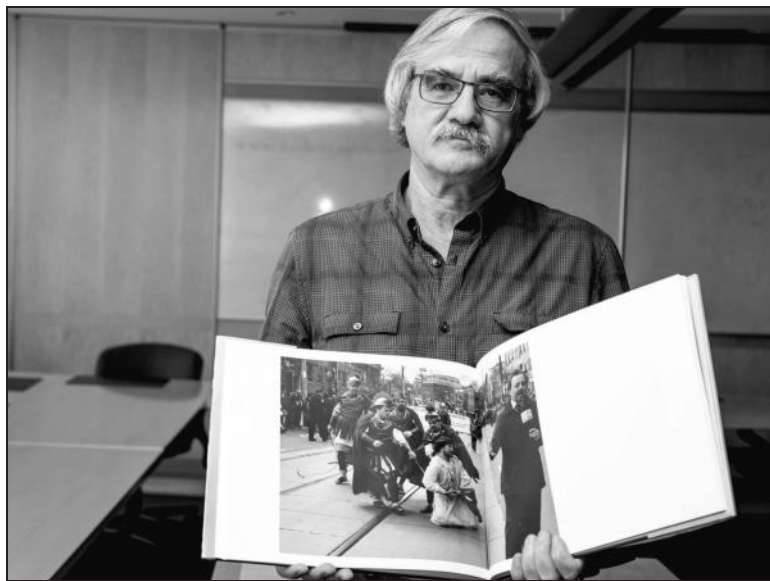
Since cameras were invented, they've been used to document the lives of poor people and the injustice of their conditions. That tradition lives on in Toronto, in the photographs of Vincenzo Pietropaolo.

"He is a very fine photographer who has made a significant contribution to documentary photography in Canada," Ann Thomas, senior curator at the Canadian Photography Institute, told The Catholic Register via email. "Vince's work has and always will enjoy a critical place in the tradition of Canadian documentary photography."

The role of photography in social justice has a long history. In the 1880s, Dutch immigrant Jacob Riis used a camera to expose appalling conditions the poor faced on Manhattan's lower east side for his book *How the Other Half Lives*. Just before the First World War Canadian photographer Arthur Goss documented similar conditions in Toronto's Irish slums. In the 1950s, Canadian photographer Richard Harrington documented famine and the devastation of Inuit culture. In 1992, Andrew Stawicki launched his PhotoSensitive collective of crusading photographers by documenting the homeless and the poor for Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank.

When 18-year-old Pietropaolo began photographing his Italian immigrant neighbourhood of Toronto in the 1960s, he didn't know he was stepping into a long tradition of photojournalism on behalf of the poor. The poor were just his neighbours and friends and he was learning photography.

By the time he was 40, Pietropaolo knew what he was doing when he walked away from a successful career as a city planner in Toronto. As a freelance photographer, he sought work with unions and social justice organiza-



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

Vincenzo Pietropaolo

tions, documenting the immigrant and working class experience.

"Photography was always in my heart and I was photographing all along," he said. "Then I thought I should either stop thinking about photography and concentrate more on my planning career or, you know, one or the other. So I gave up my job."

He put years of work into his 2009 book, *Harvest Pilgrims*, documenting the lives of migrant labourers who work on Ontario farms. His 2006 book, *Not Paved With Gold*, shows us the lives of Italian immigrants in the 1970s. *Celebration of Resistance* brings together three years worth of protest photographs from the early years of Premier Mike Harris' "Common Sense Revolution" in Ontario. *Invisible No More* presents the ordinary lives of people with Down syndrome, autism and other disabilities.

"You know there's the tortoise and the hare story? He's the tortoise," Loyalist College photojournalism program co-ordinator Frank O'Connor said of Pietropaolo. "We live in a world of sexy, image-moment, entertainment, pizzaz — all that sort of stuff. But documentary photography isn't necessarily like that. . . . The strength of his work is that he has documented not the moments but the existence of people."

Almost all of Pietropaolo's projects have stretched over years,

gradually maturing until he can present an entire history.

"In looking back on my work, I realize that much of my work has a religious connotation to it," said Pietropaolo. "My migrant workers, I called them Harvest Pilgrims. They're like pilgrims who come every year for harvest. Pilgrimage, of course, is associated with religion. But in this case, these guys are pilgrims to their workplace."

The other theme that comes up over and over again is migration, displacement and life in exile. His latest book, *Ritual*, presents a 50-year history of the Good Friday procession through Toronto's Little Italy neighbourhood.

"I started photographing this as part of an immigrant identity," Pietropaolo said. "Before you can integrate anyone you have to accept their immigrant identity. . . . The church is oftentimes the most visible part of your immigrant identity."

As a boy born in Italy, who grew up in Toronto, whose parents were working class, Pietropaolo doesn't document immigrant experience from the outside.

"Being an immigrant marked me. My experience in Canada is from the point of view of an immigrant," he said. "That marked my life as a photographer. I started photographing the immigrant experience — not just the Italian immigrant experience but other groups."

A project for the Royal Ontario Museum featured refugee families, another one offered a comprehensive history of the waves of immigration that washed through the Kensington Market neighbourhood of Toronto.

The immigrant experience led him to other subjects.

"I became interested in photographing the working class — working class cultures. That led me to the labour movement," he said. "I was interested in portraying and giving a voice — maybe that's too lofty sounding — but certainly documenting people who I felt were vulnerable, who were suffering social injustices."

Pietropaolo's concentration on social justice kept him close to the church. The Harvest Pilgrims project was financed by the United Food and Commercial Workers, who have argued that migrant agricultural workers should have the right to join a union, but also by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of Providence, who believe the church is called to minister to anyone who is poor, alone and human.

When Pietropaolo went looking for places where migrant workers gather, he found them in churches.

The same is true of his work documenting the lives of permanent immigrants.

"Historically, churches have always been at the forefront of helping immigrants with all sorts of programming. I can speak from experience with the Italian church in Toronto. It was the Italian parish of St.

Agnes in the 1930s, historically acting as the major community centre, helping immigrants find jobs, helping them with bureaucratic problems they might have had, finding rents. Long before soup kitchens became fashionable, churches were already doing that," he said.

Pietropaolo's own history in photography spans several waves of technology. When he started he rolled his own Ilford 400 black and white film and spent his evenings in the darkroom. He has shot colour negatives, colour slides and works today with digital cameras and Photoshop. But the photographer isn't pumping out artifacts of his camera or computer. Pietropaolo's job is to tell a story.

Film develops in a darkroom in a few minutes. A story develops through a lifetime.

"What a great testament," said O'Connor. "To say you can apply your passion in your life and at the end of the day, when you've breathed your last, you've created a body of work that lasts."

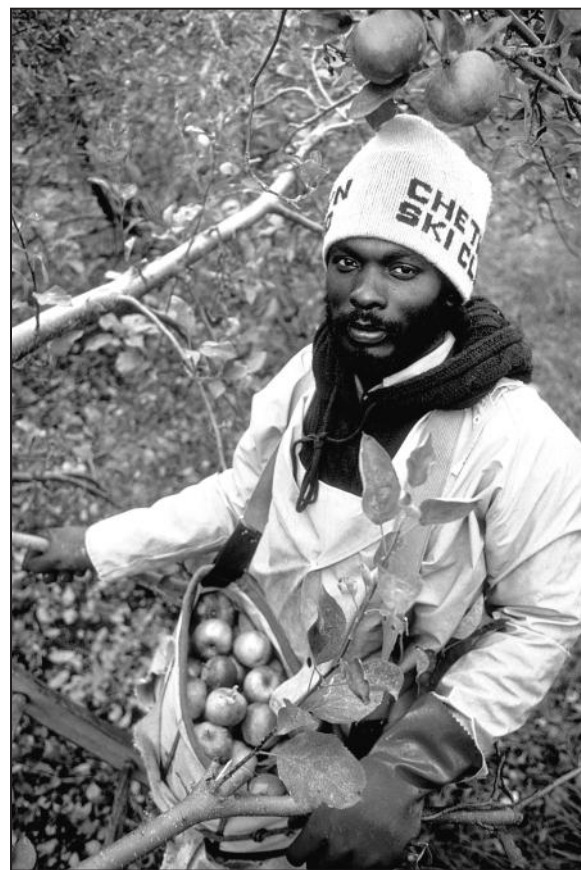


Photo courtesy of Vincenzo Pietropaolo

DOCUMENTING LIVES — An apple picker from Jamaica, working in Thornbury, Ont., 1987.

Bishops address charitable tax status concerns with CRA

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN)—Canada's Catholic bishops have raised concerns with Canada's revenue minister in December on how the government classifies some religious charitable activities as political.

"... there is always a special need to address the current and often profound misunderstandings about religion in present-day Canadian society, and which in turn seem to be reflected in various efforts to impose categories and definitions that many religious charities find inadequate and even unfair," president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Bishop Douglas Crosby of Hamilton wrote in a five-page Dec. 22, 2016, letter to Minister of National Revenue Dian Leboutheillier.

Crosby said the CCCB welcomed the government's consul-

tation last fall aimed at clarifying the rules governing political activity by charities, but noted the time period was still too short for the thousands of religious charities involved.

"We would note that the amount of time provided was insufficient for our own needs," Crosby wrote. "We would suspect this is also the case for a number of other religious charities, at least those with which we are acquainted and with which we collaborate — not only other Catholic organizations and Christian groups, but also involving other religious traditions."

While "advancement of religion" is one of the criteria for charitable activity, along with "the relief of poverty," "the advancement of education," and "certain other purposes that benefit the community in a way the courts have said is charitable," the Canada Revenue Agen-

cy's (CRA) categories and definitions leave religious organizations at times finding themselves "misunderstood, restricted and even unrecognizable," the CCCB president wrote.

"Be it through a parish, a religious congregation, a synagogue, a mosque, or a temple, the activities of various religious traditions encompass worship and prayer; spiritual, moral and social teaching; and community engagement and service, including both personal involvement and interaction with others, together with efforts to improve and transform society," he wrote, stressing the all-encompassing nature of religion.

"The Catholic Bishops of Canada would respectfully disagree with instances in the past when the CRA ruled that activities involving social engagement, ethical education, peace building

and social solidarity or the promotion of the common good and respect for human life do not 'advance religion' and so do not meet the CRA definition of 'religious activities.'"

Crosby said he and his brother bishops agree registered charities should not be engaged in partisan political activities, but "not all charities agree whether or to what extent there should be limitations or restrictions to their participation in a democratic society."

Crosby also urged CRA to find language for its policies that ordinary people without legal training can understand.

Many of the bishops' concerns are also reflected in a Dec. 9 letter to the Director General of CRA's Charities Directorate, Tony Manconi, from the Canadian Council of Christian Charities.

"Advancement of religion is

also recognized as not being limited to the dissemination of religious beliefs but includes related activities, such as addressing social, moral, and ethical issues," wrote the Council's legal affairs director Philip A.S. Milley.

Milley said fostering public awareness campaigns is not the same thing as charitable work religious charities do when addressing social, moral and ethical issues. "This permitted activity warrants independent commentary by the CRA which will remove unnecessary ambiguity and not dissuade charities from speaking to relevant issues, as they are permitted by law."

The Council also urged the CRA to use clear language, and clear presentations of the rules, noting most charities that engage in political activity are aware of them and abide by them.

Nathanael now more relevant, less theoretical

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The Nathanael adult faith formation experience begins in September in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, the eighth time since 1987 the program has been offered “to deepen one’s Christian Catholic identity and the call to missionary discipleship.”

The three-year course takes place on nine weekends per year from May to September at St. Mary’s Academy in Winnipeg, with one live-in retreat experience each year at St. Benedict’s Retreat and Conference Centre just north of Winnipeg.

The theme for year one is Personal Encounter; year two, Called to the Church; and year three, Sent into the World. The experience involves liturgy, spirituality, human growth, morals and values, sacred Scripture, prayer and discernment, ritual and celebration and ministry of presence.

Organizers have arranged two Come and See events so that everyone from the “just curious” to the “highly interested” can ask questions, find out about the program and meet the team and some of those who have experienced Nathanael.

The Come and See events are March 11 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at St. John XXIII Church, and March 19, 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Mary’s Cathedral.

The team consists of Helena Fitzgerald, Sister Cathy Laviolette, Rev. Geoffrey Angeles and Rev. Darrin Gurr.

“This Nathanael, the eighth

generation, is not like the first one,” said Fitzgerald. “Nathanael has continued evolving to meet the challenges of the Christian in the contemporary world.” Fitzgerald holds a master’s in pastoral studies from Loyola College in Chicago and is participating in her fourth generation of the Nathanael program.

“Religious education has changed,” Fitzgerald said. “People used to be steeped in Catholicism, but not anymore.”

Over the years, Nathanael has gained more and more of a presence in the archdiocese, said Laviolette. “The process has become more relevant and less theoretical. It once had a reputation of being intellectual with a lot of studying. Our candidates are the best advertisement.” Laviolette holds a master’s in spirituality from the University of San Francisco and has been part of four generations of the Nathanael course.

Gurr, who has been part of two generations of Nathanael, said it strives to “equip people for Christian witness in the modern world. How do I reconcile all of this in my life?” Gurr said the upcoming course in particular is a response “to the call of Pope Francis to prepare ourselves for the work of the new evangelization.” Both Gurr and Angeles hold master’s degrees in liturgical studies from the University of Notre Dame and both have been involved in two previous generations of the Nathanael program.

The team estimates that up to 650 persons have experienced Nathanael — and, adds Laviolette, “the drop-out rate has been minimal.” A number of Nathanael graduates will be speaking in churches about their Nathanael experiences in February.

There is no set expectations of what the program will achieve for the participants, “or what they’ll do with it,” said Laviolette. In general, she said, Nathanaelites “become evangelizers.”

The application deadline is April 14, with 100 spaces available. Interested persons will be required to fill out a request for an interview. The form is available on the Nathanael Winnipeg website, www.nathanaelwpg.ca or may be picked up at one of the Come and See events. Interviews will take place in April and May. There is a cost per person of \$425 while other costs are shared by the Archdiocese of Winnipeg and the participant’s parish.

The name Nathanael refers to the Gospel of John 1:48, when Nathanael asks Jesus, “How do you know me?” Jesus answers, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Yet minutes earlier Nathanael spoke of Jesus of Nazareth saying “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”

“Nathanael is a seeker,” said Gurr. “He is under a fig tree, a biblical image of where one goes to seek wisdom. He is contemplating his direction.”



James Buchok

NATHANAEL TEAM — From left: Rev. Darrin Gurr, Sister Cathy Laviolette, Helena Fitzgerald and Rev. Geoffrey Angeles.

Chaldean parish bids farewell to pastor

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A farewell celebration was held Jan. 7 for Rev. Sabah Kamora who has served as pastor of Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic Church in Saskatoon for the past seven years.

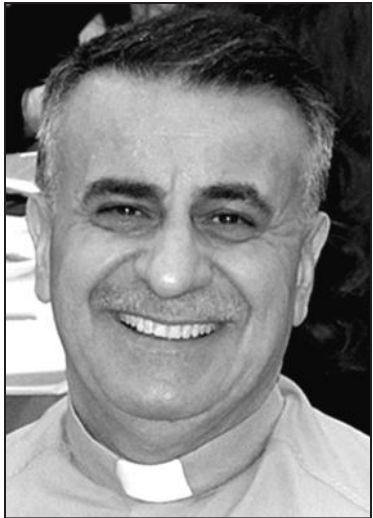
Bishop Emanuel Shaleta, the eparchial bishop of the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of Mar Addai (which includes all of Canada’s Chaldean Catholics) has appointed Kamora to a parish in Surrey, B.C., effective Jan. 15.

Kamora’s contributions to the Saskatoon Chaldean Catholic parish were celebrated during the farewell, which was held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family. A slide show played during the celebration illustrated some of the many ministries, projects and events that have taken place in the parish under Kamora’s leadership.

During that time (2009-2016), the church building purchased on Landsdowne Avenue has been paid off. Renovations and improvements to the building have also been undertaken, including artwork in the worship space and a statue of the Sacred Heart in front of the church.

Ministries offered through the parish include choirs, St. Narsay School and an annual church camp. Many newcomers have been welcomed to the parish and hundreds of children have participated in catechism classes and received the sacraments during his time as pastor. A Knights of Columbus council has been established in the parish and community outreach initiated — such as participation in Folkfest and in the annual ecumenical justice and peace way of the cross through downtown Saskatoon on Good Friday.

“We never imagined we would come so far in such a short time,” said Rick Istifo, Grand Knight of the Sacred Heart Knights of Columbus Council.



Kiply Yaworski

Rev. Sabah Kamora

As shepherd of his people, Kamora came to the community “dedicated to one thing and one thing only — (to) build Christ’s church,” said Istifo, describing the priest’s dedication to his work and to his parishioners, with a special concern for the youth, and homilies that would “shake up” the congregation. “We will never forget these days.”

The farewell program also included choir members who presented a song and a gift, and a presentation by parish pastoral council chair Ayad Garges. Gifts to Kamora from the Knights of Columbus included a Sacred Heart council shirt and a ring.

Rev. Hani Joro has been appointed as the new pastor for Sacred Heart Chaldean Parish in Saskatoon, and is expected to arrive in mid-February.

‘There is reason to live in hope’: Bolen

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — In a chaotic world filled with violence, suffering and death, as people of faith we dare to believe that life is fundamentally good — a blessing — and there is reason to live in hope, “and in this holy season,” Archbishop Donald Bolen continued in his New Year’s homily, “that hope is centred on the birth of a child who came to us in poverty and humility with a message of love and forgiveness.”

“We live in a time of political instability and confusion,” said Bolen. “To flourish on this earth, we need to reach a maturity — reflected in economic and political priorities and decision-making — that would correspond to our technology and the ways in which our world is changing, becoming more interconnected.”

He quoted Pope Francis’ message: “All of us want peace. Many people build it day by day through small gestures and acts; many of them are suffering, yet patiently persevere in their efforts to be peacemakers. In 2017, may we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming non-violent people and to building non-violent communities that care for our common home. ‘Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace.’”



Frank Flegel

ARCHBISHOP’S LEVEE — Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen greets parishioners from across the archdiocese during the annual levee Jan. 1.

New years Day is also a time to look at the past year in order to prepare for the new, and Bolen asked everyone to take some quiet time in their day to reflect on the many blessings of the past year for us and our communities, noting particularly the violence existing in other parts of the world.

The traditional Archbishop’s New Years Levee followed in the Holy Rosary Cathedral auditorium. The mass and levee attracted lay people, consecrated men and women from all over the archdiocese who came to meet and greet

the archbishop and welcome his return to his home diocese where he grew up and began his journey in the priesthood.

The levee has its roots in the 1600s when Louis XIV greeted his male subjects in his bed chambers shortly after rising. The practice spread throughout Europe but became a formal court practice in England. It spread to Canada where Governors General and Lieutenant Governors made the levee a New Years Day tradition. It has since become a military tradition and has been adopted by other community leaders.

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Don't skip the dishes: making connections is important

By Edna Froese

Despite my title, I have no intention of weighing in on Saskatchewan political issues. Instead, in the aftermath of holiday feasting and gathering of guests, I am preoccupied with recollections of previous gatherings and feasts. So varied they are, so often memorable for events that no one planned, or for plans that did not unfold as expected. Either case has yielded family stories now told and retold with some relish and only a little exaggeration.

Concerning one occasion when two sisters-in-law were eager to show off their still untried skills learned in Chinese cooking classes, I should probably not say too much. I just wish someone had thought to take a picture of the decidedly non-commercial small kitchen. Even after many family gatherings of increasing size as weddings and births brought in new members, I cannot recall a more daunting or more precariously stacked accumulation of dirty dishes, pots, and pans. Fortunately, the whining of small children who had waited too long for a supper that they then refused to eat were drowned out by peals of adult laughter during the marathon dish-washing that then followed (nary a dishwasher in sight back then).

Almost as memorable was a summer backyard barbecue at our

house. Some of the aforementioned small children were now gangly pre-teens or even teenagers, with voracious appetites and a talent for disappearing when the food was gone. My plan for handling mealtime chores was hatched as much out of my dislike for a crowded kitchen as it was a bid for equality of labour. Beside the plates on the long food table, I put a job jar — no exemptions allowed except for the youngest children. I appointed my mother-in-law to help me with left-over food; all other tasks, from minding the little ones in the sandbox to schlepping out basins of hot soapy water and taking clean dishes back inside, were determined by the luck of the draw. The jobs weren't all real "work"; one slip of paper allowed the bearer to have a nap under a shady tree, another gave permission to explore my library in undisturbed peace. And Lady Luck was kind: that Grandpa got the nap assignment seemed only right and fair. While a few attempted to swap jobs, it was all in good fun.

What I remember now is that a shy nephew paired with an aunt for washing and rinsing dishes got into an animated discussion about the coming school year, and that the usual teasing typical of my husband's family was this time spread out more equally among all generations. Important connections were made — all without filling immense bags of garbage.

The experience certainly strengthened our resolve to keep paper plates and plastic cutlery out of our household, even during short-notice gatherings like funerals, when time seems too precious to spend doing dishes, with or with-



Edna Froese

DON'T SKIP THE DISHES — "Conversations just happen" during routine chores such as doing the dishes.

out a dishwasher. Conversations just happen over routine chores that don't get going as easily when people are seated in a tidy livingroom, and the temptation to withdraw into a book or get attached to a screen is much lessened.


A former colleague, who gave generously of her time to students, supervising the student-run college newspaper and planning cultural events such as literary evenings or music talent nights, always insisted that the best way to help students form long-lasting bonds of friendship was to make sure that they had work to do together, even if it was just folding napkins or cleaning up after a social event.

There is something unbuttoned about tackling a chaotic kitchen, piled with the detritus of a fine dinner. Sure it's work, but in the rhythm of making things clean again, people talk, and since they're looking at the dish cloth in hand or scanning the cupboard for free space, they're not thinking about whether to make eye contact or not, or what topic to introduce next. Their hands are busy, their bodies are moving naturally. Of course, I'm assuming a certain basic civility here. In a family where constant criticism and pickiness is the norm, this method of making connections does not work well. Doing dishes does not resolve dysfunctionality.

However, as anyone who has ever been part of the colossal cleanup following a natural disaster can testify, people who work together to do the "right thing" build community. And as poet William Stafford, in "A Ritual to Read to One Another," pointed out, "If you don't know the kind of person I am / and I don't know the kind of person you are / a pattern that others made may prevail in the world / and following the wrong god home we may miss

our star." Getting to know that other person — guest, family member, stranger — happens more easily when hands are busy with ordinary work. That, incidentally, is often when troublesome topics can be discussed.

Which brings me back to Skip the Dishes — the company that makes it easy for people to order in food (presumably with disposable plates and cutlery, hopefully biodegradable) and not deal with dishes, not while preparing the food, not after eating it. Quite apart from environmental implications here, I'm bothered by the assumption embodied in the company name: dishes are clearly something to be avoided. At times, I agree, that may be a good idea, even recommended. All I'm saying is that the more we skip the dishes — and the loving labour of making the food, sharing it, serving it on real plates and bowls (which can be special in themselves, laden with memories of important relationships) — the more we sidestep spaces in which we can get to know each other enough to refuse to let others make different "pattern(s) . . . prevail in the world."



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Battle continues in some parts of country

Continued from page 3

ple who wonder what the future holds for them, Des Aulniers said.

"The battle continues in some parts of the country," he said. Turkish forces with the help of the United States are trying to take back Raqqa, where ISIS has its headquarters. "In some areas there is still not access to humanitarian aid."

On the bright side, Des Aulniers noted the Orthodox were able to celebrate Christmas mass in eastern Aleppo for the first time since rebels took over.

"We have to work to maintain this plurality in Syria," he said. "It was one of the beauties of this country, Christians and Muslims

able to live and work together."

"We already know a lot of Christians have left," he said. "People have to come back and to rebuild."

Development and Peace is also working with refugees in Lebanon and Jordan. Nearly eight million people have been displaced within Syria, while 4.5 million refugees live outside.

Half of the country's 22 million people have been uprooted because of the conflict, said Hétu.

Des Aulniers said Development and Peace is committed to projects in Syria for the next three to five years, with the main focus being humanitarian aid until peace allows for more development assistance.

Every day, dogs prove they are better than we are

Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



Six-month-old Finnegan is a handful of soft fur. He’s an affectionate, gung-ho little guy who eats my shorts on the laundry room floor and looks up with earnest eyes as if thinking he’s got lucky again until I catch him. And Ruby, nearing four years, has eyes already wise to the ways of the screwed-up human world. Every

Ratzlaff is a former minister, counsellor, and university lecturer. He has authored three books of literary non-fiction published by Thistledown Press, and edited an anthology of seniors’ writings published by READ Saskatoon. He has been short-listed for three Saskatchewan Books Awards, won two Saskatchewan Writers Guild literary non-fiction awards, and served on local, provincial, and national writing organization boards.

day these two West Highland Terriers prove what their veterinarian says matter-of-factly: “Dogs are better than we are.”

Every day two scoops of the same food are received like manna from heaven, tails mad with gratitude, never a grumble like the children of Israel nor hint of a turned-up nose. Every day inside the condo a ball stays put at the end of the hall in case some human wants to play; and outdoors, these dear creatures prove they love snow the way cats love catnip, plowing and rolling in it, the winter air like jet fuel at their nostrils.

Then “Tweedledum and Tweedledee agree to have a battle.” They go at it tooth and nail and no one’s hurt, only once in awhile a conk on a noggin and a little yelp, then it’s back to the playfight — Ruby shows Finney who’s who and he shows her

what’s what (or the other way around), sometimes so vigorously that I push my arm into the tussle to keep the play from becoming a fray. If Larraine and I get into a verbal spar, Finney jumps and licks at us until we break down in laughter, while Ruby observes and no doubt remembers having done just the same, and willing now to let Finney deal with us as he may.

Think of the gaps *they* fill in from our human blabbering.

No duplicity in the canine language, and very little ambiguity. They talk much with their tails (tail-tales, you might say). And with their arresting eyes! Sometimes Ruby’s eyes especially say, *Loht die wehte* — a Mennonite term of dismissal I heard as a kid, “Let yourself know,” go and become wise. And Finney’s eyes from his tilted head seem often to be inquiring whether we’re too busy to play. A trip to the countryside with these puppies easily cures my daily urban dreads. Back where I grew up, they sniff around the cemetery, leave deposits between graves, and happily head for the car to wait — plainly as finished with my ancestors as I remain attached to them.

By evening we’re back in the city, in our condo. Larraine’s out



Larraine Ratzlaff

DIVINITIES — Older and wiser Ruby (left) and little Finn provide joy for their human companions.

teaching an ESL class, the jazz channel plays Chet Baker’s “What’ll I Do” as I play with my own lines. Ruby lies slumbering on the floor at my feet, Finney up near my head on the back of the couch — one pup below, one above.

If I am in any sense a god to these dogs, I grant them free indulgence. How I tower over them and their beseeching eyes, yet to me they’re bearers of gifts as wonderful as any the wise men brought to Christ. What if they

towered over *me* on their hind legs — would they say “Good boy”? or “Good god, boy, will you never learn”? Who is it that forgives *seventy-times-seven*? It’s Ruby and Finney! (how I wish it were me too). They triumph non-combatively over me, I am disarmed, they make me repent of my human ways. I had expected pets, and was given divinities instead.

They *are* better than I. So I have named them 1-A and A-1, the best and the best.

No misogyny in song about broken relationships and taking responsibility

By Caitlin Ward

I can’t get “Dang!” out of my head. This song has been in there for weeks. I’m not even sure how I heard it, but it’s been

Dang
Mac Miller featuring
Anderson .Paak

stuck in my head. I start singing the hook once or twice an hour some days, and I’ve nearly memorized the entire rap despite the fact that, before today, I’d never looked up the words. Which, if you’ve read them already, you may think are kind of iffy.

It’s not the words that have drawn me into this song, though. It’s the sound of it. Anderson .Paak sounds like a husky Curtis Mayfield when he sings the hook, and the music underneath is somewhere between a throw-back and brand new: a 70s-style funk instrumental that loops like a newer track, old school horns and brand new synths. The music video is brightly coloured and imaginative, replaying a scenario twice over the course of the song, only the second time everyone in the background is a professional dancer. There’s much to love about the whole thing.

When you listen to a song that often, though, you do end up

Ward is a Saskatoon-based freelance writer who spends her days (and most nights) working at a small Catholic college. Her less eloquent thoughts can be found at <http://www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings>

thinking a lot about the words. They reminded me of a rather grand pronouncement I made shortly before Christmas: I was no longer going to listen to music that was misogynistic. Listening to music that objectifies and demeans women is tacit acceptance of that behaviour, and I was going to have none of it any longer.

I make pronouncements like this regularly, and my record on managing to follow through on

them is patchy at best. I’ve decided to no longer eat chocolate at least half a dozen times in the last two years on account of how little of it is produced ethically, and the fact that I’ve made the decision that many times tells you how well I’m doing.

What it comes down to, I suppose, is that all-or-nothing decisions tend to make you crazy more than they lead to positive changes in your life or the world. One of the reasons I’ve managed

to stay a vegetarian for four years is because I decided early on that avoiding animal products entirely was going to be practically impossible. I have compromised when situations necessitated it. And also, vegan leather is stupid. Rabbit fur is warm, durable, and renewable. For as long as I have not eaten meat, I have also walked around with the flesh of dead bunnies on my feet — I must hold my downfalls in tension with my ideals.

Positions have got to be nuanced and considered to hold weight long term.

That’s why this “not listening to misogynistic music” thing confuses me sometimes. Most blatantly sexist music annoys me far too much for me to want to listen to it. There’s a good chunk of the 1970s that have vanished from all of my most played lists, for example. I’m not sure why I listened to Led Zeppelin in the first place, and there’s only so many times I can hear Ronnie Lane be annoyed that a woman is asleep when he wants to have sex with her before I think, “You know what? I don’t really need to listen to the Faces.”

But there’s this other collection of songs that are more complex than that: Jidenna almost invariably rapping a single sexist line in the middle of a song of his that I love; a narrator in a Kate Nash song talking down another woman when she’s done nothing to deserve it except be another woman; Leonard Cohen saying you’ve touched her perfect body with your mind when as a woman yourself you’ve no doubt her real (not perfect) body has been touched by many things besides your mind and often not in a way that she wanted, so leave your mind out of it and stop thinking she’s the Virgin Mary simply because you don’t understand her.

That last one’s the song “Suzanne,” by the way, if you’re not familiar with Cohen.

At this point, you may be thinking if I have that much ire over a Cohen song as gentle as “Suzanne” I must have a deeply

HOOK

I can't keep on losing you
Over complications
Gone too soon
Wait, we was just hangin'
I can't seem to hold onto, dang
The people that know me best
The key that I won't forget, too soon
I can't keep on losing you (x2)

Yeah, yeah, yeah
How many mistakes do it take 'til you leave
When I'm left with my hand and my face all red
And a face looking at you like (Wait)
I know I ain't a saint, if it ain't too late, well
I can't keep on losing you, I run away so fast
Know my heart like gold but it break like glass
Knowing shit get old when I act so young
Baby you so cold, never had no sun
You don't wanna grow up, yeah that shit no fun
So when I get home I'mma give you some
Make you feel like woo, when I hit that drum
Yeah the dick ain't free, I don't give no f____
Yeah it's complicated, got you frustrated
Get home late and you don't trust me baby
You way too drunk, you don't know what I'm saying
You can drive my car, don't drive me crazy
Complicated, got you frustrated
Every single night I keep you waiting
You say you don't care, is what you saying
We both know that's some bullshit
Okay, we be fighting, we be reuniting

Kiss me, touch me, tease me, me excited
God, the devil, who is who?
Tryna get through to you because

HOOK

Well, you can't go away girl, I'mma need you
Play your games like they my ticket to an Ivy league school
Won't get hall of fame dick from a minor league dude
I seek pussy, other people need food
Only got a little time, I ain't tryna spend it
Arguing about who ain't giving who attention
Starting up the engine, need to reboot
I seek pussy, other people need food
And I use every bone in my body
Keep on holding on to your trust
I know you don't want nothin' to do with me
But just one more time, let's make love
One more time it ain't much
F____ 'em all, let's be us, summer's soft sweetness
Call you late drunk, you hang up
What a mess I made us, sense, I make none
It's complicated, keeping me up late
Can't concentrate, you're always on my brain
If it's love then why the f____'s it come with pain?
I just think that's some bullshit
OK, it's seems inviting, trust me, she's a titan
This week she like him, next week they fightin'
Need protection, your dress is bulletproof
You safe with me girl

HOOK

Looking back at another great year of documentaries

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



More documentaries are being made than ever before. Today I'm headed to the Sundance festival which is a major global showcase for some of the best. Last year I saw well over a hundred docs and keep finding out about others. I've yet to see Raoul Peck's *I Am Not Your Negro* or Ava DuVernay's *13th*, both multiple award winners that speak powerfully to a racially charged atmosphere that seems more relevant than ever.

Non-fiction films are making waves and what they reveal serves a critical purpose in what's been called a dangerously "post-truth" historical moment. Even if few get a significant theatrical release, the good news is that more are receiving television or online broadcast through various networks (including the CBC and its dedicated doc-

- 95 murder trial, shocking acquittal and sorrowful aftermath. The year 2016 saw two excellent productions recounting the events that created a media firestorm, both made for television. The FX channel presented a dramatization, "The People v. O.J. Simpson," as part of its *American Crime Story* series. Even better and more complete was this definitive nearly eight-hour documentary treatment directed by Ezra Edelman. Beyond a masterful exploration of the many details in question, it speaks to the continuing issues of race and class in a divided America.

Fire at Sea (Italy/France)
<http://www.fireatsea.com/>

Gianfranco Rosi's striking observation of the impact of the refugee crisis on the tiny Italian island of Lampedusa, awarded the top "golden bear" prize at the Berlin film festival, provides a window into these urgent and compelling events that is less about dire statistics than the intimate human stories behind the headlines. Rosi spent many months on the Mediterranean island including among the families of longtime residents. We see the reality being experienced through their eyes as well as in the challenges faced by the flood of desperate migrants who survive the perilous crossing by sea.

Tower (U.S. <http://www.towerdocumentary.com/>)

Keith Maitland's extraordinary account of the seminal 1966 mass shooting at the University of Texas in Austin has received much deserved praise since claiming major awards at the South by Southwest festival last March. Seamlessly blending archival footage and interviews with striking animated recreations using the technique of digital rotoscoping, the film makes a powerful statement about the phenomenon of gun violence that, a half-century later, haunts America more than ever.

Voyage of Time: Life's Journey (France/Germany/U.S.)
<http://www.wildbunch.biz/movie/voyage-of-time-lifes-journey/>

Reclusive Texas director Terrence Malick is legendary as a cinematic poet whose luminous screen meditations accompanied by brooding voiceovers will try the patience of some viewers. Here he tackles nothing less than the mother of all subjects: the origins and meaning of the universe, of earth's existence, of the appearance and evolution of life and the human prospect. That may be a mission impossible that invites skeptical reactions. But I was moved by the deep spiritual yearning that underlies an epic flow of



ESPN Films

O.J.: MADE IN AMERICA — In this 1980 photo, seen in the documentary *O.J.: Made in America*, O.J. Simpson returns to Rich Stadium for his induction into the Buffalo Bills Wall of Fame.

awe-inspiring and challenging images. Cate Blanchett narrates the 90-minute feature; Brad Pitt the 40-minute IMAX version.

After Spring (U.S.)
<http://www.afterspringfilm.com/>

Co-directors Steph Ching and Ellen Martinez present an eye-opening perspective of life inside Jordan's Zaatari camp, the world's largest concentration of Syrian refugees with a population of over 80,000. We get to put names and faces to the daily struggles of refugee families and to the efforts of international aid officials, local workers, and volunteer benefactors responding to the daunting circumstances created by Syria's long-running civil war. It should be required viewing for those spreading anti-refugee fears.

Before the Flood (U.S.)
<https://www.beforetheflood.com/>

Directed by Fisher Stevens and narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio, this globe-spanning exploration of the effects of anthropogenic climate change and the ecological threats from environmental pollution doesn't hesitate to call out the skeptics and deniers including incoming U.S. president Donald Trump. It may not sway ears that are deaf to such warnings but, as the overwhelming evidence accumulates, the case against taking action grows weaker by the day.

Into the Inferno (U.K./Austria)
<http://www.tiff.net/films/into-the-inferno>

Available on Netflix, master filmmaker Werner Herzog teams up with volcanologist Clive Oppenheimer for a fascinating examination of volcanic activity on our largely molten planet and the mythologies and bizarre beliefs which have arisen from such eruptions. Among the strangest is the role of a revered volcano in the foundational propaganda of North Korea's totalitarian hereditary Communist hermit kingdom. Herzog's trademark probing narration muses about the sublime indifference of these remarkable geophysical processes to the designs and conceits of the humans scurrying over the planetary surface.

Sonita (Germany/Switzerland/Iran)
<http://www.wmm.com/sonita/>

Winner of the Sundance jury and audience awards for world cinema documentary, director Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami draws an engaging profile of a spirited young woman, Sonita Alizadeh, growing up as an Afghan refugee in Iran. An aspiring rap musician, she fends off traditional family pressures for an arranged marriage in order to pursue her dreams. Given the opportunity to pursue studies in America, her refugee story stands as a positive example of female empowerment overcoming societal obstacles.

Weiner (U.S.)

Directed by Josh Kriegman and Elyse Steinberg, this penetrating look at the rise and mostly falls of disgraced former New York City Democratic Congressman Anthony Weiner took the Sundance U.S. documentary jury prize. The rather aptly named Weiner brought himself down by inviting a notorious "sexting" scandal — repeatedly, including during a mayoral bid after resigning his congressional seat. In granting the filmmakers unprecedented behind-the-scenes access, he also can't seem to control his urges, to the exasperation of his wife Huma Abedin who also happens to be a longtime top aide to Hillary Clinton. The damaging political postscript to this documentary exposé is that during the 2016 presidential election campaign, when Abedin finally separated from him, the FBI's investigation into hers and Weiner's emails became linked to Clinton's email woes. How ironic for this minor and much-ridiculed serial sexual impropriety to have become one of The Donald's trump cards!

Koneline: Our Land Beautiful (Canada) <https://www.canadawildproductions.com/film/koneline/>

Awarded best Canadian feature at Toronto's HotDocs festival, director Nettie Wild captures the intense feeling of contrasting ways of life affecting the Tahltan First Nation in their traditional territory of northwestern British Columbia that is also host to major and sometimes controversial resource extraction enterprises. Wild is

wise to let the native people, hunters, miners, loggers and construction workers speak for themselves instead of falling into a predictable polemic. And the stunning landscapes play a captivating role in their own right.

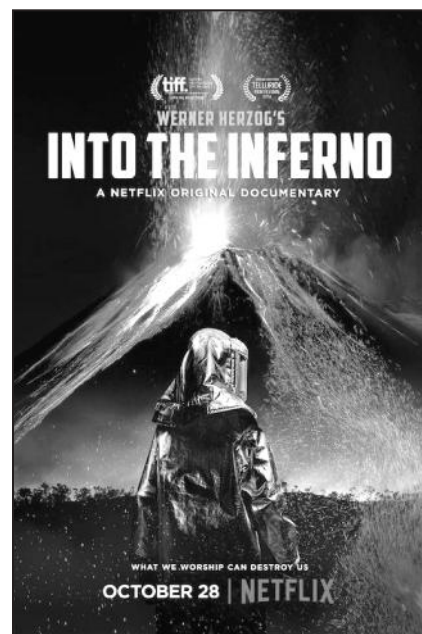
Honourable mentions:

Indigenous peoples are on the frontlines of debates over environmental protection and resource development in many parts of the world. *When Two Worlds Collide* received a Sundance special jury award for its dramatic story of what has been unfolding in the Peruvian Amazon.

The worst refugee and migrant situation since the Second World War will continue to be a major documentary subject. Especially informative is the two-hour examination "Exodus" produced for the PBS program *Frontline* (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/exodus/>) which first aired in December.

Violence in the form of guns, police and prisons was a hot topic for American filmmakers in 2016 — among the titles: *Under the Gun*, *Newtown*, *Midsummer in Newtown*, *Do Not Resist*, *Solitary*, *The Return*. Expect more in 2017.

Gleason is a deeply moving account of a former American football star and his family coping with the ravages of ALS and turning their ordeal into something positive for others. *Life, Animated* is a remarkable family story of the ingenious way that a severely autistic son learns to communicate through the years and in the transition to adulthood.



INTO THE INFERNO — This is the poster for Werner Herzog's documentary *Into the Inferno*, available to watch on Netflix.

umentary channel) and via streaming services like Netflix. You can also check out the films' websites for information on video releases and other screening possibilities.

From 2016 viewings here are 10 that most impressed along with some honourable mentions.

O.J.: Made in America (U.S.)
<http://www.espn.com/30for30/ojsimpsonmadeinamerica/>

Much has been written about the story of former football star O.J. Simpson, his sensational 1994



Gerald Schmitz

SONITA — Sonita Alizadeh attends the premiere of the documentary *Sonita* at Sundance 2016. The film is a profile of Sonita growing up as an Afghan refugee in Iran.

On a bright note, kids and adults will marvel at Otto Bell's *The Eagle Huntress*, which follows the exploits of a 13-year-old Mongolian girl Aisholpan Nurgaiv who, under her father's guidance, becomes the first female to master the traditional skill of hunting with golden eagles in rugged mountainous terrain. This one really soars.

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In song we can find healing, comfort and courage

Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



The melody has been playing in my head for weeks now and it's hard not to break out into song. Even though Christmas has come and gone, one particular song was ubiquitous this year and it has become stuck in my head. Not only was Leonard Cohen's beloved song "Hallelujah" being played repeatedly on the radio in commemoration of Cohen's death in November, but our favourite Christmas album featured a beautiful version of it. Sung a cappella, the haunting chorus entranced us. Indeed, a favourite memory for me is of my 10-year-old grandson soulfully crooning, "Hallelujah, hallelujah . . ." even as he played on his iPad. He doesn't yet understand the deep meaning of the song but, for the rest of us, Cohen's classic captures a profound human experience and our hearts resonate when we hear it.

Such an experience reminds me once again of the power of music. Over the years I have come to recognize and appreciate the way melodies and words reach in and touch places in my heart and soul that I am not otherwise able to access. Music heals the soul, comforts our hearts and sustains us in courage. I often recall, with gratitude, a time when one particular song broke into my heart and unleashed a cascade of healing.

It had been an especially stressful and even dark number of months. A beloved family member was undergoing chemotherapy and suffering greatly. I lived with three teenagers, each full of angst, each challenging my parenting skills. My job, while rewarding, was new and demanding. On the surface I was coping but, in truth, I was white-knuckling my way through the days.

Then one day a friend dropped a CD off at the office. I put it on to play, more as background music than anything, while I continued working. I enjoyed the first three songs but it was the fourth track that caught me. The first lines caused me to stop what I was doing and listen attentively: a woman's voice, strong and powerful, telling a tale of loss and pain, with a haunting refrain that questioned God's very presence and begged for God's mercy.

The song, I learned, is the story of Job and it speaks of Job's struggle with God in the face of unjust suffering: "And Job cried out to

God in anger, from deep within his pain." With sorrow, it asks why people are allowed to suffer and then plaintively asks God, "Where is your mercy now?" The singer implores God: "Speak to my aching heart. You are the only hope I cling to. Where is your loving face? Where is your saving grace? Where is your mercy now?" ("Job/Where is your Mercy?" from *Tales of Wonder*, Marty Haugen, 1989).

Partway through the song, tears welled up. By the time the song ended I was in full weeping, touched by emotions I hadn't even realized were there. I listened to it about four times that morning and wept every time.

I played that one song on repeat for about three months. It became my prayer, a lament and a plea all in one. Even though I couldn't articulate what was happening, I knew it was touching something deep inside me. Tears accompanied the song for almost two months but then they ceased and I sang the song with a newfound freedom.

"Those who sing pray twice," Augustine wrote, and certainly it is true for me. Prayer and music are intertwined in my life. I remember as an adolescent doing kitchen cleanup with my sisters. We attended the same Catholic school and were in choir together. Our dishwashing and drying duties were accompanied by three-part harmonies of the Latin parts of the mass and our favourite hymns. With our voices rising, the mundane chores became sublime moments of prayer.

Hymns have been my prayer in all kinds of circumstances. I have kept vigil in various waiting rooms, comforting myself with hummed versions of "Our Father"



M. Weber

GIFT OF MUSIC — "Music heals the soul, comforts our hearts and sustains us in courage," writes Sandy Prather.

and "Hail Mary." "On Eagle's Wings" became a mantra, offering both consolation and strength during my mother's last illness. Taize chant quieted my fears at her deathbed. Simple songs like "Refiner's Fire" or "Purify my heart" speak to my longing to be holy in ways that my spoken prayer alone cannot.

My spirit is fed with Scripture as various psalms, set to music, accompany my day. "Like a shepherd, he feeds his flock," I sing as I go about my chores, and I hold fast to God's daily care. Advent readings come vibrantly alive when I read Isaiah and hear in my head the choirs from Handel's "Messiah" thundering, "And his name shall be called . . ." or liltily proclaiming, "All we like sheep . . ." When set to music, the words become more powerful, memorable and inspiring.

Prayer comes not only in hymns, though. Like Cohen's "Hallelujah," all kinds of songs can reach in and speak to our spiritual hungers. I love John Fogerty's "Don't You Wish It Was True" from the album *Revival* (2007). It's a rocking number that speaks of the heart's longing for heaven, a place of peace, equality, and justice. John Lennon's "Imagine"

expresses the same yearning.

Songs might be lament, praise, celebration, intercession or thanksgiving. They can be sung from hearts full of pain or ones overflowing with gratitude. Some songs make us cry; others move

us to dance; some simply lead us to close our eyes and rest. Whatever the case, we do well to take more words of Augustine's words to heart, "Sing up and keep on walking!" In the song, we find our healing, comfort, and courage.

Song is worth a listen

Continued from page 8

complicated relationship with this Mac Miller song if I like it but those are the words. But honestly, I don't. A lot of Miller's earliest music is posturing and sexist, certainly, but he was also about 17 at the time. In retrospect it sounds a lot more like he was playing at something than actually having his own opinions on any of it. At the not-really-ripe age of 24, the age he was when this song came out last year, a lot of that posturing is still there.

I don't think a song about trying to hold a relationship together need have quite so much bragging about his sexual prowess . . . if any. But the thing about this song that separates it from the others I've mentioned is that it's not about Miller objectifying this

woman, and it's not about him blaming her out of hand or putting her on a pedestal. It's about knowing there's a mess, knowing it's partly his fault, and having no idea how to fix it. There's nothing misogynistic about that; it sounds like just about every romantic relationship I've ever been in or seen. And yeah, there's a lot of bawdy images going on in this song, but it's also clever. The line, "I'll use every bone in my body / keep holding on to your trust" is one of my favourite lyrics from the past five years. So despite how these lyrics might come off, and even though I've tried to swear off misogynistic music, I don't feel a bit bad about listening to the song.

I may not start singing it down the hall at work, mind you. Because, you know — nuance.



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Prather, BEd, MTh, is a teacher and facilitator in the areas of faith and spirituality. She was executive director at Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert, Alta., for 21 years and resides in Sherwood Park with her husband, Bob. They are blessed with four children and 10 grandchildren.

In 100-year-old essay, a plea for women's voting rights

Just over 100 years ago, in March 1916, women won the right to vote in Saskatchewan (the prairie provinces were the first to allow women that right). Ellen Edna Hickey wrote the following essay in 1916 before voting rights for women had been secured. Born March 12, 1895, Edna was the third youngest child in a large Irish Catholic family of three girls and 10 boys (two of whom died in infancy). Their parish church was St. Paul's Cathedral in Saskatoon. Edna became a school teacher for many years and at age 39, in 1934, married Joseph Gregory Condon in St. Paul's Cathedral. She gave birth to a daughter, Maureen, in 1936. The essay is provided by Maureen Condon Horon who asks readers to keep in mind that the terminology and manner of speaking are typical of the era.

The fundamental plea for women suffrage is exactly the same as for manhood suffrage, "democracy." If democracy is right, the vote should be given to women. If democracy is wrong, the vote should be taken away from men. Democracy means government of the people, by the people, for the people. Are women people?

All anti-suffrage arguments come down to two things. Either they are arguments against democracy and apply with equal force to men and women, or else they are based on the feeling that women are not really persons. Just as if women were the personal property of man, and not a responsible human being.

Women are probably quite as capable of putting the vote to good use as are the foreigners, who, after a brief period of resi-

dence, are allowed suffrage without any preparation or study. The ignorant, the half-wits and sub-normals, the drunkards and the criminally inclined, who are not only allowed to vote, but have the vote thrust upon them. This argument, while doubtless true, seems a rather puerile one, since there would be small advantage in multiplying the clerical work of the voting booth if some considerable good were not to be gained thereby. We believe that the women who want the vote, who have worked to get the vote, and believe in the justice and necessity of equal suffrage, are capable of handling that responsibility in an intelligent manner.

One of the arguments against suffrage is, that to use it intelligently is going to necessitate a no



CANADIAN SUFFRAGETTES — Canadian suffragettes are seen marching in a photo from the early part of the 20th century. The first women to get the vote in Canada were in the four western provinces in 1916, in 1917 in Ontario, in 1918 in Nova Scotia, in 1919 in New Brunswick, in 1922 in Prince Edward Island, and in 1940 in Quebec.

small amount of investigation and study, to accomplish which, will require an expenditure of time

and energy, which has heretofore and which according to those who oppose the movement, might better continue to be used in catering to the physical necessities and wants of family life and such domestic social pleasure as may benefit her station. Women, in general are pretty well aware that no really intelligent, systematic and forehanded woman, can or need, in these days of labour-saving devices, spend all her time actively working.

The day has gone when women can sit back entrenched behind the door which husbands and sons close upon them when they go out into the world's work, and leave everything pertaining to the government of that world, to their men.

Every woman is bound to be a part of the government under which she lives. If she is not one of the governors, she is one of the

governed. And whether she holds an active or passive position, she, as a "free and independent citizen," has a right to express her wish and have her wish recognized, as to the manner in which she shall do — either govern or be governed. Heretofore she has attempted to do this second hand, through influence, but now she proposes to go about it in the first person.

The woman's interests are no longer absolutely within the walls of her home. Knowing a few things about how laws are formed and what laws are best for the safety of the home, the family and the individual, isn't going to prevent a woman from knowing how to care for her home. It is nonsense to assume that a woman's brain couldn't hold both, just the same as a man may know how to run his business and vote intelligently as well.

Soul work draws us into fullness of humanity

Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." — Jesus

"Everybody, at some time in life, wrestles with an angel that threatens to overpower them." — Joan Chittister

"Can you find strong medicine within yourself to poison the demons on your back?" — Steven Foster (*The Book of the Vision Quest: Personal Transformation in the Wilderness*)

When it comes to truly following Christ and not just subscribing to a belief system, we are all led into a personal wilderness and confronted with three major challenges which, when mastered and integrated, shape our full personhood. Consider that "flesh," "water," and "spirit" correspond to body, psyche/soul, and the divine spark of Spirit within each of us. (In Freud's intrapsychic system, these would be the primitive "id," the self-managing "ego," and the oversight of the "superego.")

Of course there is a fourth level running the whole show

Speyer is a Benedictine Oblate as well as an author, subject matter expert for e-therapy, clinical consultant and director of InnerView Guidance International (IGI). Connect with Cedric on <https://www.facebook.com/cms94> or via cms94@hotmail.com

that is truly transpersonal and "of the kingdom," guided by grace and not a matter of self-mastery. However as we journey with Jesus, we are called to work out our salvation physically, psychologically, and spiritually, by overcoming temptations on those three levels, temptations reflecting counterfeitings of the redeemed self. That's not to mention how they are mirrored in the powers and principalities of the world. For this we are given the archetypes represented by the trials Jesus went through in the desert.

This is far from an academic exercise! Native spirituality offers it in the form of an ordeal therapy called the Vision Quest. I went on one in 1999 to prepare for my vocation in the healing arts. There's nothing like being alone in the forest as the sun goes down, without any props, creature comforts, or other consolations; to face primordial fears and

discover what "dying to self" means.

After a few days, when the panic subsides and the incessant internal dialogue collapses like a house of cards into the surrounding silence, one is forced to pay attention to "time out of mind" or the *kairos* dimension of life. As the core of the constructed self unclenches from its many attachments, personality skins are shed, and a much larger field of vision is revealed. The mythic mission of self-fulfilment or so-called spiritual attainment returns to the dark wilderness womb and we are "born again" of something else, an "I" that encompasses but doesn't belong to "me," and is the source of reconciliation of our often divided and competing animal, human, and spiritual natures.

The devil, personifying forces of the world that need to be subordinated, would have us put security/survival needs first, and let Jesus prove himself by enabling the cravings of the body. But "bread alone" would be our animal nature ruling the rest of us. The next temptation to overcome is the ego's need for power/control and measuring success by what we have and own. Yet Jesus will not sell out our true human nature to inordinate attachments, distorted desires, and unregulated emotions. He puts the soul's need first, to surrender itself to a unifying coherence.

Finally, significance/belonging at the highest level doesn't come from appropriating divine favour. Soul work doesn't separate us out at the elite pinnacle of the temple. It draws us into the fullness of shared humanity, the kingdom.

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Stewardship of the Earth alive and well at LOCCS

Catholic Connections

Marie Graw

Central to Religion curricula in Saskatchewan Catholic high schools is the Community Action Project (CAP) in which all students are required to take part. CAPs are based on the five actions identified by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to achieve the mission of the church: proclaiming, worshipping, building community, giving witness and serving.

During the 2015-2016 school year a special CAP project that embraced several of these actions was undertaken by Light of Christ Catholic School Division teacher Rhea Good. Good, a special education teacher in charge of John Paul II Collegiate's Functionally Integrated Program, developed activities (outdoor and indoor) that allow students to become responsible stewards of the earth: The School Garden Project.

Reflecting concepts from Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, Good's students, along with other students from the school community, became stewards of the Earth. Through this hands-on ministry students created gardens on-site, fed others with the harvested produce and replenished the land they used by learning about and creating a Bokashi composting program and a seed-sharing program.

The school Garden Project was started in the fall of 2015 by Good and fellow teacher Jeffrey Kardynal to provide hands-on learning for their students, and to teach Christian stewardship of our earth. While there was already an off-site community garden where Good's FI students had volunteered, a plan was put in place to create an on-site space for students to engage more fully in the growing and harvesting of the vegetables and to beautify the school environment.

By the spring of 2016 Kardynal's woodshop classes had built four raised beds in a former grassed area of the school that was adjacent to the concrete student parking area. Good's stu-

dents planted tomatoes, peppers, spaghetti squash, lettuce and kale and tended to the watering, weeding and fertilizing of the growing plants. A community partner was found in the local Discovery Co-op as the organization provided a \$500 grant to pay for the seeds, bedding plants and tools for the Garden Project.

By late June the first of the produce, kale and lettuce, was ready to harvest. It was at this time that the FI group hosted their first annual Garden Luncheon in the beautiful surroundings of the lush raised bed gardens. Invited guests were the high school's three administrators and four members of the school's SRC: the outgoing senior leaders and the newly elected SRC leaders. The group of seven was served a lunch from the garden featuring the fresh kale and lettuce in a salad and freshly cut chives in an egg salad mix for sandwiches, items harvested and prepared by the FI students and staff.

Throughout the summer the gardens were tended by special education students who were involved with local agencies. More community partnerships were established to help with the Garden Project, as agency summer staff were trained by Good. Building community through these partnerships ensured the gardens were cared for throughout the summer, so the harvest could continue in the fall.

When September arrived, and students returned to school, the FI program staff took over again. The harvest from the raised beds provided an abundance of potatoes, carrots, onions, parsley and beans. So plentiful was the harvest the FI students and staff took the project to the next level: they turned the produce into a big batch of "garden harvest soup"



Light of Christ Catholic School Division

BOUNTIFUL HARVEST — Students and staff display the produce they harvested through the School Garden Project at John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford.

and served it to staff and students for lunch on Sept. 8 and 9. The bounty of the land was shared with community. Also harvested and used in the community meal were herbs that included flat-leaf parsley, chives, sweet basil, rosemary and thyme. The crop of herbs was so abundant, the extra produce was offered to the Gold Eagle Casino Restaurant, Kihiw, where chef Jesse Bossman used all that could be provided.

Meanwhile, Kardynal and Good received news that another community partnership had been established. Cargill offered to sponsor the building of a greenhouse and donated \$7,000 to jumpstart the project. Other grant monies were received from SIGA and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

A plan was put into place to build a greenhouse, next to the raised beds, on-site at the high school. Kardynal was in charge of the construction and his crew included students, staff and community members. The beautiful new facility, complete with heat and water access, was completed

this past November. The building of this greenhouse provides space for the messy business of starting seedlings, and for growing other plants in permanent beds in a greenhouse environment. The 12' x 20' structure will allow for an entire class to work together.

To reduce waste and to replenish the earth used to grow the produce, Good brought in environmental manager for the City of North Battleford Tammy MacCormick to do a workshop on the Bokashi composting method. The Bokashi method uses a substrate inoculated with effective micro-organisms that promote fermentation instead of putrefaction. The inoculant accelerates the breakdown of the food and creates free, organic fertilizer in a four-week turn-around. The sealed containers are easy to manage in a classroom environment because there is no smell and no fruit flies. McCormick guided the students

through making the Bokashi recipe to "grow" their own batch of inoculant.

To bring the Garden Project full circle and to teach sustainability to students and staff, a "seed saving" project was initiated. Students and staff worked to collect and store seeds from produce grown this year so that they can be used to plant next year's crop. To fundraise for other costs, seeds were also packaged for sale at a pre-Christmas trade show event and some packages were made into Christmas tree ornaments and given to colleagues, family and friends.

The School Garden Project will join in a province-wide seed-sharing initiative that is to be launched in 2017. Members of the "seed library" will be able to order seeds like ordering a book. Any extra seeds saved from the John Paul II School Garden Project will contribute to the "seed bank" for this new program to increase everyone's accessibility to seed varieties.

Going far beyond the traditional CAP project, Good's Functionally Integrated Program students and staff have benefited greatly from the breadth and scope of the School Garden Project. Students not only worked the earth with their hands, planted seeds and watched them grow, they harvested a bounty of produce and shared it with their school and community and they learned sustainability practices. They built community as they shared with others when they had more than they needed. They learned to be good stewards of the earth and of their brothers and sisters.

The ongoing School Garden Project is teaching all of John Paul II's students and staff, that the earth, when cared for and nurtured, can take care of us and enhance our lives. It allows everyone involved to taste and see that the Lord is indeed good (Psalm 34:8).



Light of Christ Catholic School Division

GARDEN LUNCHEON — Functionally Integrated (FI) Program students at John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford serve the soup they made from the produce they grew.

Graw is Religious Education Co-ordinator/Communications for Light of Christ Catholic Schools in North Battleford, Sask.

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Knights of Malta

Right beside the Benedictine abbey of Sant Anselmo in Rome are the headquarters of the Knights of Malta. The spot is a tourist attraction because of a small keyhole in its main door through which you can see the dome of the Vatican. Tourists line up all day waiting to take a peek.

Today, however, the Knights of Malta are more known for a controversy. The group's former grand chancellor, Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager, was sacked in early December and Pope Francis has launched an investigation. The leader is refusing to co-operate.

Adding to the drama is the fact that Cardinal Raymond Burke, a frequent critic of Pope Francis' policies, is the Vatican-appointed patron of the order. He, along with the Knights' Grand Master, Matthew Festing, was involved in the removal of the chancellor. Both have claimed that the dismissal was the wish of the Holy See, which is denied by the Vatican. The pope had counselled dialogue to settle the dispute.

Von Boeselager, a German nobleman, was removed due to "severe problems" during his tenure as grand hospitaller of the order and "his subsequent con-

cealment of these problems from the grand magistracy," the order said. He is accused of distributing condoms and failing to accept church teaching on sexual matters — charges he strongly denies.

The condoms were distributed by aid agencies working with the order's worldwide relief corps, Malteser International.

Boeselager explained that condoms had been distributed by three projects in Myanmar without the order's knowledge. "When this was discovered in the course of routine project auditing, two of these projects were immediately ended," he wrote. "An immediate closure of the third project would have led to the abrupt end of all basic medical services in an extremely poor region of Myanmar, so this dilemma was submitted to an ethics committee. Subsequently the project was closed, following a statement by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith."

In a blog, Christopher Lamb, columnist for The Tablet, writes: "In Rome, rumours are swirling that the dispute is not really about condoms, with talk of money, freemasonry and other associated theories, while Vatican journalists are reporting mysterious anonymous phone calls trying to discredit von Boeselager and the papal investigation into the knights."

Today's controversy may draw attention away from the extensive charitable ministry of the Knights.

The Knights of Malta were founded as the Knights Hospitaller around 1099 in Jerusalem, making it the world's oldest surviving chivalric order. It provided medical care for pilgrims to the Holy Land during the First Crusade and it became a military order to protect Christians against Islamic persecution. Its motto is "Defence of the (Catholic) faith and assistance to the poor."

Today, the order has approximately 13,500 members and employs about 25,000 doctors, nurses, auxiliaries and paramedics. It is assisted by 80,000 volunteers in more than 120 countries. It works with children, the homeless, handicapped, refugees, elders, terminally ill and lepers around the world without distinction of ethnicity or religion. Through Malteser International, the order aids victims of natural disasters, epidemics and war. In several countries, local associations of the order provide medical emergency services and training.

As the Canadian CCODP and the American Catholic Relief Service have found out, providing global relief with local partners has its challenges. Critics can find it easy to point fingers. We hope the pope's commission brings out the full story. — PWN

Doctor asks: why spend money on old people, who have little benefit

By Kenneth Rockwood, Halifax

Should medicine be ageist?

A young trainee doctor recently proposed to me that it should. Health care is overstretched, she argued. "We can't do everything for everyone, so why spend money on old people, who have little chance of benefit?"

For her, ageism is not all that bad — in fact, it's a practical response to limited resources.

I'm unpersuaded. Ageism is not benign. We fail older people when we treat them, as typically we do, in ways that are at odds with how ageing works. Ageism masks our need to do better.

The challenge is the complexity of ageing. With age, almost all diseases become more common.

Health care has become pretty good at assembling teams that specialize in specific problems, creating focused, subspecialized care.

And patients do best when

their single illness, no matter how complicated and no matter what their age, is their main problem. Subspecialized care may work very well for them.

But as we age, we're more likely to have more than one illness and to take more than one medication. And as we age, the illnesses that we have are more likely to restrict how we live — not just outright disability, but in our moving more slowly or taking care in where we walk, or what we wear or where we go.

Not everyone of the same age has the same number of health problems. Those with the most health problems are frail. And when they're frail, they do worse. Often, those with frailty do worse because health care remains focused on single illness. Our success with a single-illness approach has biased us to think that this is the approach we should always take.

When frail people show up with all their health and social problems, we see them as illegitimate or unsuited for what we do.

So would the young doctor be right if instead of restricting care in old people, she simply opted

for restricting care for frail people? Should frailism be the new ageism?

For health care, such a notion would be self-defeating. If frail patients are unsuited to the care that doctors provide, we must provide more suitable care.

Frail older adults consume a lot of care. Far better that those of us in the health system treat them as our very best customers. That would improve care for everyone.

No one admitted to hospital benefits from poor sleep, but (mostly) we get away with it in our fitter patients. Not so in the frail, in whom it leads to worse outcomes: longer stays, more confusion, more medications, more falls and a higher death rate.

No one benefits from being immobilized too long. No one

benefits from not having medications reviewed, or from poor nutrition, or inadequate pain control, or getting admitted when care at home would be better or in not clearly discussing goals of care. Just because the health system mostly gets away with it in fitter patients is no reason to forego change.

Changing routines to improve care will benefit everyone. But it won't happen if we see frailty as an acceptable form of ageism. We need to invest in better care and in better understanding how to design, test and implement it.

As important as subspecialties are, by definition each subspecialty group benefits a small fraction of people. The skills required to provide expert general care, particularly for frail older adults,

have been less celebrated. Compared to disease research, ageing and frailty are barely on the funding radar screen.

In any guise, ageism can be insidious. We don't have to go far to find it. I find it in myself when I'm in a long line. It's not the science of how movement becomes slow that saves me then — it's realizing that slowness is not a moral failing, much less one directed at my busyness.

What we do in our health system now fails older people who might benefit if we provided better care. In that way, it fails us all.

Attitudes must change. Medicine should not be ageist. It shouldn't even be frailest. We must work to provide better care for frail older adults, especially when they are ill.

Rockwood is a geriatrician in Halifax, N.S., and a researcher with Canadian Frailty Network (CFN). www.troymedia.com

Hanoi once known as Paris of the Orient

By Donald L. Telfer, Humboldt, Sask.

As the young girl handed over a crumpled dong bill, the Hanoi street vendor smiled and delivered a colourful bouquet of three

red roses.

"They're for my mother's birthday," the girl said in broken English. Grabbing the tiny parcel, the beaming girl and her friends disappeared into the crowded Hoan Kiem District. In a country with an average annual income of about \$150, the gift was a monumental purchase.

This fascinating capital of a unified Vietnam, once known as the Paris of the Orient, Hanoi is typified by shaded boulevards, verdant public parks and a dozen scenic lakes.

A mishmash of busy one-way streets crowded into the Old Quarter, its street names describe its wares on offer: Hardware St. (stores that sell household goods), Broiled Fish St. (seafood), and Ancestor St. (caskets, funeral flags and picture frames). Hundreds of tiny shops display every product imaginable. These are the troopers of private enterprise with their fresh fruit, colourful birds and

maybe a huge Burmese python waiting for the dinner table.

Nearby is the Lake of the Returned Sword and the landmark St. Joseph's Cathedral. Consecrated on Christmas Eve in 1886, the cathedral was built over several years after the French conquered Hanoi, demolishing an ancient pagoda temple to accommodate the new church. With its twin square bell towers, the cathedral is similar in design to the famed Notre Dame in Paris, though much smaller. Known as "The Big Church," the interior is decorated in popular Vietnamese red and yellow; the altar and stained glass windows are especially notable. A statue of Mother Maria in front of the cathedral welcomes worshippers. Masses are only on Sunday, and the evening worshippers often overflow out the front door onto the plaza, numbering into the thousands especially on Christmas Eve.

Hanoi's hypnotic street life is an irresistible magnet. When people manage to tear themselves away, many head for the monumental Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. Situated in a huge park-like square in the centre of Hanoi, uniformed soldiers are out in force to

Former travel writer-photographer, and editor and publisher of the Humboldt Journal, Telfer has contributed to over a hundred newspapers and magazines in Canada, the U.S. and abroad.

— EXTRAVAGANCE, page 15



CNS/Marko Djurica, Reuters

MIGRANTS BRAVE THE COLD IN SERBIA — Migrants wrapped in blankets wait in line to receive a plate of food during a Jan. 11 snowfall outside a warehouse in Belgrade, Serbia.

American billionaires oppose government regulations

The Editor: Joseph Stiglitz, a Columbus University professor and a Nobel prize winner once stated that “wealth begets power, which begets more wealth.”

This is probably true, in particular in the U.S., which could now be labelled as a plutocracy, rather than a democracy. This could be the case for the American economy, where there are now a number of exceedingly wealthy persons and corporations.

Among the top of the wealthiest are two American brothers, Charles and David Koch. It is suggested that they probably are the sixth or seventh of the wealthiest people on Earth, and the second largest private company in America. In 2009 the government estimated the wealth for Charles and David was about \$14 billion for each brother. Their business interests involve pipelines, lumber, paper, coal and chemicals. They are huge traders in commodity futures, and other businesses.

The Koch brothers worked hard with other conservative interests to stop the Obama government from implementing policies that the American public had voted for. Koch industries saw these policies as being catastrophic to their own interests of acquiring more wealth and did not favour any government regulations of the so-called

“free market.” They, Koch Industries, were simply opposed to government rules that were trying to stop powerful industries from doing businesses that pollute the atmosphere and the dumping of poisonous material, like mercury, in its lakes and rivers.

The above is actually taking place in the U.S. But it is very important for all Canadians, especially voters, to recognize that allowing a greater amount of Canada’s wealth to accumulate to fewer and fewer people and corporations could lead to Canada losing its democratic base and its sovereignty. — **Leo Kurtenbach, Saskatoon**



Design Pics

Aging

Senior discount received
Not requested.
Humph.
Mere child at till.

In my mind I still run, skip rope,
jump, climb trees.
I used to....
I used to....
I used to....

Walking backward
Kicking memories.

By Linda Ducharme

Hanoi is a city of extravagance, poverty

Continued from page 14

keep the crowds moving, maintain peace and ensure hands are kept visible outside pockets. Embalmed in the tradition of Lenin, the final resting place for “Uncle Ho” is a glass sarcophagus set deep in the cold, dimly lit bowels of the marble edifice.

“The body is sent back to Moscow twice a year to keep it in shape,” I overheard a guide whisper to a visitor. Such extravagance would have surely upset

Ho Chi Minh as much as his request being denied for cremation after his death in 1969.

Hanoi is a city of extravagance contrasted with stark poverty. Near the mausoleum is one of the most striking buildings in Vietnam, the former Presidential Palace opened in 1906 for the governor general of French Indochina. The bright ochre building, with its green shutters and European design, was too lavish for the governor who refused to live there. The picturesque land-

mark is now used for official receptions.

At the southern end of the country is Ho Chi Minh City or Saigon as southerners commonly call it, a bustling polluted metropolis which makes Hanoi appear rural by comparison. Hanoi was untouched by the Vietnam War unlike Saigon which has many gleaming hotels and office buildings that replaced ruined buildings.

There are many reminders of Vietnam’s tumultuous history. One is the famed Cu Chi Tunnels that now are part of greater Saigon, a city that has grown from one million at the end of the war in 1975 to more than 10 million. Located about two hours northwest of downtown, the ingenious multi-level tunnels were the great defences of the North Vietnamese to fight the French and later the Americans.

One of Vietnam’s architectural marvels is the Basilica of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Saigon. A standout in the largely Buddhist country — only about seven per cent of Vietnam’s 90 million people are Catholic — the red brick cathedral was built over 17 years and consecrated in 1880. An Italian granite statue of Our Lady of Peace in front of the cathedral is said to have shed tears in 2005. Though the Vatican has refuted the claim, it has not stopped thousands of people from visiting Saigon’s most famous site.

I hired a cyclo (a three-wheeled bicycle taxi) to return to the Rex Hotel, the hotel made famous during the Vietnam War (its rooftop bar was a hangout for the military and war correspondents). Without agreeing to price at the outset, I was given a round-about trip through downtown Saigon. The entertaining tour cost 50,000 dong (about \$3), giving the ride and that bouquet of red roses another spin on money, people and values.

World is rapidly changing

Continued from page 1

ly between the ages of 16 and 29: young people in today’s world; faith, discernment and vocation; and pastoral activity.

Through the synod, the document said, “the church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today.”

The church, it said, needs to evaluate its pastoral approach to young people living in a rapidly changing world where globalization, technological dominance, as well as economic and social hardships pose significant challenges to discovering their vocational path.

“From the vantage point of faith, the situation is seen as a sign of our times, requiring greater listening, respect and dialogue,” the document said.

A special focus of the synod, it said, will be “on vocational discernment, that is, the process by which a person makes fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit, starting with the choice of one’s state in life.”

Specifically for Christians, it said, the question is: “How does a person live the good news of the Gospel and respond to the call which the Lord addresses to all those he encounters, whether

through marriage, the ordained ministry or the consecrated life?”

One of the major challenges for young people in defining their personal identity and finding their path in life is the countless options available — particularly when it comes to their careers — that may impede them from making a definitive life choice.

Many young people today, it said, “refuse to continue on a personal journey of life if it means giving up taking different paths in the future: ‘Today I choose this, tomorrow we’ll see.’ ”

Lack of employment and social and economic hardships, it added, also contribute to “their inability to continue in one career. Generally speaking, these obstacles are even more difficult for young women to overcome,” it added.

Gender inequality and discrimination against ethnic or religious minorities, which can force people to emigrate, are other detrimental factors that the church is called to address to help young people become “agents of change.”

Thank you

The Editor: I wish to thank Peter C. Venable for his beautiful poem Messiah that appeared in this newspaper just before Christmas. It will be tucked away in my collection of favourite poems that I have collected over the years. — **Alma Barkman, Winnipeg**



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Bishops of Malta address ministry to divorced

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Under certain circumstances and after long prayer and a profound examination of conscience, some divorced and civilly remarried Catholics may return to the sacra-



CNS/Paul Haring

Archbishop Charles Scicluna

ments, said the bishops of Malta.

With “an informed and enlightened conscience,” a separated or divorced person living in a new relationship who is able “to acknowledge and believe that he or she is at peace with God,” the bishops said, “cannot be precluded from participating in the sacraments of reconciliation and the eucharist.”

The Maltese “Criteria for the Application of Chapter VIII of *Amoris Laetitia*,” Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation on the family, was published Jan. 13 after being sent to all of the country’s priests by Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta and Bishop Mario Grech of Gozo.

Significantly, the text prepared was published by *L’Osservatore Romano*.

The bishops urged their priests to recognize how “couples and families who find themselves in complex situations, especially those involving separated or divorced persons who have entered a new union” may have “‘lost’ their first marriage,” but not their hope in Jesus.

“Some of these earnestly desire to live in harmony with God and with the church, so much so, that they are asking us what they can do in order to be

able to celebrate the sacraments of reconciliation and the eucharist,” the bishops wrote.

The first step, they said, always must be to affirm church teaching that marriage is indissoluble. Then, the bishops said, the couple’s specific situation should be examined to determine if their first union was a valid marriage. If not, they should be encouraged to seek an annulment.

Without an annulment, the bishops said, couples living in a

new relationship should be encouraged to abstain from sexual relations since the church does not consider their new union a marriage. Sometimes, however, the couple will find practising the virtue of “conjugal continence” impossible.

Scicluna and Grech urged priests to devote time to such couples, guiding them in a reflection on their first union, their contributions to its failure, the impact on their children and a host of

other questions.

“This discernment acquires significant importance since, as the pope teaches, in some cases this help” from the church in growing in holiness “can include the help of the sacraments,” the Malta document said.

“While exercising our ministry, we must be careful to avoid falling into extremes: into extreme rigour on the one hand and laxity on the other,” the bishops wrote to their priests.

Christian witness takes three stages: pope

By Cindy Wooden

ROME (CNS) — Being a real Christian does not mean being a saint, but giving witness to Jesus in word and, especially, deed, Pope Francis told members of a parish on the eastern edge of Rome.

Spending more than three hours Jan. 15 at the parish of St. Mary in the Setteville neighborhood, Pope Francis had the same basic message for the children and youth as he did for the parish as a whole: “Christian witness is done with three things: words, the heart and the hands.”

As is his custom for parish visits in the Diocese of Rome, Pope Francis arrived in the late afternoon and held separate meetings with the children and teenagers from the religious education program and Scout groups; with the parents of the 45 babies baptized in the parish over the past year; with a group of parishioners who are sick or have disabilities; and with the parish council and more than 100 parishioners active in parish activities.

Before celebrating mass, he heard the confessions of four parishioners. The Vatican press office said they were the young couple who care for the 50-year-old assistant pastor, who has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; a young



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE VISITS PARISH — Pope Francis kisses a child in the crowd outside the church after celebrating mass at the parish of St. Mary in the Setteville neighborhood of Rome Jan. 15.

man from the parish post-confirmation program; and the father of a sick child.

In response to the questions of the parish young people, Pope Francis insisted, “If I say I am Catholic and go to mass every Sunday with my parents, but I don’t speak (about Jesus), I don’t help my grandparents, don’t help the poor, don’t visit the sick, then it is not witness and it is useless.”

“It is nothing other than being a parrot-Christian — words, words, words,” he said. Christian witness requires action.

Celebrating mass with a standing-room-only congregation and hundreds of people watching on jumbo screens outside, Pope Francis focused on the witness of St. John the Baptist, who pointed to Jesus as the Messiah.

Many of the first people to follow Jesus, including some of the first apostles, had been followers of St. John the Baptist. “How did they meet Jesus?” the pope asked. “Because there was a witness,” who told them Jesus was the one. “It is the same in our lives.”

Faith is not like being “the fan of a team” or “having a philosophy” or just following a set of rules, he said. “Being a Christian is first of all giving witness to Jesus.”

Christianity has spread throughout the world because people have given witness in word and deed to Jesus as saviour. Sometimes, he said, the witness was given in small ways and

other times through the great witness of martyrdom.

“The apostles didn’t take a course to learn to be witnesses of Jesus,” the pope said. Instead, they followed him and listened to him and tried to imitate him.

“But they were sinners,” he said. “All 12 of them” as the Gospels recount. They experienced pride and jealousy and “when Jesus was taken, they all ran away.”

“Peter — the first pope — denied Jesus,” he said. But they were witnesses to Jesus because they recognized their sinfulness and that their salvation came not from anything they did, but from Jesus’ love and sacrifice. “They allowed themselves to be saved.”

“Being a witness does not mean being a saint, but being a poor man or poor woman who says, ‘Yes, I am a sinner, but Jesus is lord and I will try to witness to him every day and to correct my life and follow the correct path,’” he said.

One sin the Gospels did not accuse the apostles of, the pope said, is gossip. “They didn’t speak ill of each other.”

“Do you want a perfect parish?” Pope Francis asked the people. “Then no gossip. None. If you have something against another, tell him or her directly.”

The pope returned to the theme at the end of mass. After final blessing, he told them, “Don’t forget to pray for me and no gossip.”

Order of Malta questions legitimacy of commission

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The leadership of the Order of Malta denied the legality of a Vatican investigation into the forced resignation of the group’s former grand chancellor, but the commission established by Pope Francis said it “is completely legitimate and authorized” to investigate the matter and inform the pope.

According to one of the legal notes prepared for the commission, the pope’s right to be informed of the circumstances surrounding the removal of Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager relates “to the authority he exercises directly and immediately over all baptized faithful, whether lay or clerical.”

“This is not about interfering in the internal affairs of the order because the purpose of the commission, as is evident, is to give an account to the Holy Father on the procedures (used to remove von Boeselager) and nothing else,” said the note, which was dated Jan. 11 and shown to Catholic News Service.

The Grand Magistry of the order had released a statement Jan. 10 stating its refusal to cooperate with the Vatican commission, citing what it termed the “legal irrelevance” of the commission and claiming that the members were “appointed by the Secretary of State of the Vatican.”

The grand master of the order, Fra Matthew Festing, also insisted that the former chancellor’s removal was an act of internal governance that falls exclusively within the order’s power.

Meeting with members of the

diplomatic corps accredited to the order Jan. 10, Festing told the international representatives that von Boeselager’s removal will not affect the order’s charitable operations.

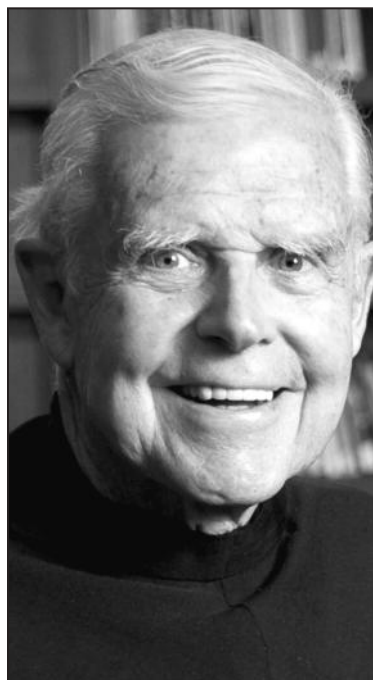
“Our decentralized nature ensures that our activities assisting people in difficulty and need, continues unaffected in the 120 countries where the Order of Malta operates,” Festing said.

Von Boeselager, a German nobleman, was removed due to “severe problems” during his tenure as grand hospitaller of the Order of Malta and “his subsequent concealment of these problems from the Grand Magistry,” the order said. Numerous media reports have said the problems specifically regarded the distribution of condoms by aid agencies working with the order’s Malteser International.

Festing, in the presence of U.S. Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, patron of the order, requested that von Boeselager resign. His refusal to resign resulted in his removal in early December. John E. Critien was elected grand chancellor ad interim Dec. 14.

Pope Francis established the commission Dec. 22 to gather the facts and “completely inform” the Holy See about the situation and circumstances leading to von Boeselager’s removal as well as to foster dialogue and a peaceful resolution, according to a Vatican statement.

The order’s sovereignty is at the heart of its argument against the legality of the commission, which is led by Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, former Vatican representative to UN agencies in Geneva.



CNS/Kevin R. Cooke, Franciscan University

SCANLAN DIES — Franciscan Father Michael Scanlan, retired president of Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, died Jan. 7 after a long illness. He is pictured in a 2009 photo. The priest transformed the struggling College of Steubenville — now known as the Franciscan University of Steubenville — in the 1970s. He was its longtime president — from 1974 to 2000.

Happiness is to appreciate what you have; unhappiness is to dwell on what you don’t have.

— Rabbi Shimon Ben Zoma (2nd century)