



Winnipeg synod

The Synod of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, the first in its history, began last fall with Listening Sessions held across the archdiocese. The results have now been analyzed and will help to guide the synod process.

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Conference marks 150th

A two-day conference for students and the public marking Canada's 150th anniversary, "Glorious and Free?! Generous Citizenship for the Next 150," was held at The King's University in Edmonton.

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A rich history

Much has changed and shifted on the Island of Montreal since the first permanent settlement was founded 375 years ago, but not the holy ground upon which stands the historic Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel, writes Eric Durocher.

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Ordained deacon

Warren Dungen, former youth minister for the Prince



Albert diocese, has been ordained to the diaconate for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy

of Saskatoon.

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Prophetic role

In the wake of Trump's election, people cannot become complacent, writes Joe Gunn. "My prayer is that pastors will lead us to become active participants in more inclusive communities where we can dialogue about our differences . . . and reduce the fear that creates perceived friction."

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March for justice

Christians have at times failed or remained silent in the moments when we have been called to speak out, writes Anna Czarnik-Neimeyer. But God provides a pathway toward justice. Though "the world may break our hearts . . . we know what to do."

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Christians must pursue peace, non-violence

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The teachings of Jesus Christ require Christians to pursue peace and non-violence, said Dr. Walter Klaassen, one of the speakers at an ecumenical event about peace held Jan. 20 in Saskatoon.

"The aim of this conversation is to urge and encourage Christian people to take the time and the effort to think about violence and turning the other cheek, about war and peace in the human family," said Walter Klaassen, who as a Mennonite registered as a con-

scientious objector during the Second World War.

Born in the Rosthern area, the retired scholar has taught history and theology at colleges and universities in the United States, Ontario, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Several years ago, he and his wife Ruth, a longtime peace advocate, were received into the Catholic Church.

The Klaassens participated in the panel discussion along with Archbishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina. It was the first of two evening sessions in which the

three speakers will address the topic of why Christians should care about peace. Beginning and ending in prayer, the event was organized through the Academy of Discipleship (a Mennonite inter-church ministry in Saskatoon), and moderated by local Anglican priest Rev. Colin Clay.

"We need to help each other. We need to dialogue," said panelist Ruth Klaassen, who will be a featured speaker at the second session on peace Jan. 27 at the cathedral.

"War is one of the most pressing of Christian ethical issues —

and yet when in recent years have you attended a church gathering called especially to reflect on war and violence?" challenged Walter Klaassen in his opening talk.

International tensions are again rising, and all governments accept conventional warfare as an instrument to solve international quarrels. "The nuclear armed nations continue to express their readiness to use these atomic flame throwers to annihilate this planet," said Walter Klaassen. "Canadian governments are prepared to spend as much as \$80 billion of the taxes that we pay to acquire weapons whose only purpose is to destroy and kill. People are threatened today, worldwide, by killers who in the name of God destroy themselves and many others with them. Even as we sit here, thousands of our human sisters and brothers young and old are being sacrificed to achieve political goals."

In the face of all of these issues, Christians must not simply "shrug their shoulders" and say there is nothing to be done about war and violence, asserted Walter Klaassen.

"Christians should listen to their Lord when he said blessed are the merciful, blessed are the

— COMMUNITY, page 6



CNS/Bob Roller

WOMEN'S MARCH — Crowds of more than 500,000 gathered for the Women's March on Washington Jan. 21. Marches were also held worldwide to stand up for women's rights and send a signal to President Donald Trump the day after his inauguration about a wide range of issues, including immigration reform, health care and religious tolerance. In Ottawa between 6,000 and 8,000 people marched, and thousands marched in cities across Canada (see story, page 16).

Catholics, Lutherans must work for unity

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Although great strides have been made through 50 years of ecumenical dialogue, Catholics and Lutherans must continue to work toward becoming a full and visible sign of unity for the world, Pope Francis said.

A continued "communion of harmony" will allow Catholics and Lutherans to "find further convergence on points of doctrine and the moral teaching of the church," the pope told members of a pilgrimage from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland Jan. 19.

"I pray to the Lord that he may bestow his blessing on the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Commission in Finland, which is working diligently toward a common sacramental understanding of the church, the eucharist and ecclesial

ministry," he said.

The pope met the Finnish delegation during the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The theme chosen for the 2017 observance was: "Reconciliation: The love of Christ compels us."

The week of prayer, Pope Francis said, urges Catholics and Lutherans to reconcile and "draw closer to one another anew through conversion."

"True ecumenism is based on a shared conversion to Jesus Christ as our Lord and redeemer. If we draw close to him, we draw close also to one another," the pope said.

Recalling his visit to Sweden last October to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's efforts to reform the church, the pope said Luther's intention "was to renew the church, not divide her" and that the joint commemoration "was important

on both the human and theological-spiritual levels."

"The gathering there gave us the courage and strength in our Lord Jesus Christ to look ahead to the ecumenical journey that we are called to walk together," he said.

Helping those who suffer persecution and violence, he added, can further unite Christians "on the journey toward full communion."

In doing so, the pope said, Catholics and Lutherans can put their witness of faith into practice "through concrete acts of service, fraternity and sharing."

Speaking off-the-cuff, Pope Francis thanked Lutheran Archbishop Kari Mäkinen of Turku for bringing his grandchildren to the meeting.

"We need the simplicity of children; they teach us the way to Jesus Christ," the pope said.

TORONTO (CCN) — As Donald Trump takes the reins of the United States' presidency, Canadian scholars and politicians are wondering how faith and politics will get along in a world where right-wing, anti-immigrant, anti-trade policies appear to be on the rise.

"From my western bias or perspective, we need to respect the integrity and autonomy of the state to do its thing and the autonomy and integrity of faith communities to do their thing," said Toronto city councillor and Catholic theologian Joe Mihevc. "It's an intersecting set. One should not dominate the other."

The former St. Michael's College lecturer in theology, who lived through the populist Rob Ford administration on city council, is worried about the Ford-Trump populist style of politics on a national stage.

"I absolutely fear that it would be the politics of faith justifying national populism gone awry," said Mihevc, who will be one of

— ECONOMIC, page 5

Bishops meet in Holy Land for prayer, solidarity

By Judith Sudilovsky

TENT OF NATIONS, West Bank (CNS) — Bishops from Europe and North America lauded this 100-year-old hilltop family farm southwest of Bethlehem

as an example of the non-violent resistance needed to oppose Israeli expansion onto Palestinian land. “This farm is what we want to encourage — a peaceful resistance . . . a moral voice to the internation-

al and local community,” said U.S. Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, chair of the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace. A Canadian bishop agreed. “Non-violence is very important. This is what the pope has been telling us. He said that the first reaction to a violent situation is to become violent if you don’t have other values. (One of) these values (is) respect for human rights of others,” said Bishop Lionel Gendron of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Quebec.

Thirteen bishops from North America and Europe visited the Tent of Nations as part of the Holy Land Co-ordination, which meets every January to focus on prayer, pilgrimage and solidarity with the Christian communities in the Holy Land. When the bishops arrived at the farm Jan. 16, they were greeted by brothers Daoud and Daher Nasser.

Embroiled in a legal battle to protect their property from confiscation by the Israeli government for 25 years, the Nasser family has made their farm — the last Palestinian controlled hilltop in the area — a symbol of non-violent resistance simply by remaining on their land and farming and bringing in international volunteers of all religions for their varied activities under the slogan “We refuse to be enemies.” The Lutheran brothers are also the only Christian family who remains in the area.

The co-operation among people of different faiths, including Jews, created at the Tent of Nations through different programs throughout the year was an encouraging sign during a trip that included visits to the Gaza Strip and Hebron, West Bank, said Bishop William Nolan of Galloway, Scotland. Nolan was one of three bishops who travelled to Gaza. He said although they saw some new construction, he left feeling “sad and helpless” at the poverty and lack of basic commodities, mainly due to the Israeli blockade

Prayer brings light of hope in dark times, pope says

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Prayer has the power to awaken hope in men and women, even in the face of death and destruction, Pope Francis said.

People often feel unworthy to turn to God when they are in need “as if it were a self-interested prayer and, thus, imperfect,” the pope said Jan. 18 during his weekly general audience.

“But God knows our weakness; he knows that we remember him to ask for help and, with the indulgent smile of a father, he responds graciously,” he said.

Greeting thousands of people in the Paul VI audience hall, the pope seemed to lose his balance several times as pilgrims clasped his hand and tried pulling him toward them, hoping for a hug or a blessing.

Still, the pope took time to greet people, stopping to bless a pregnant woman’s belly and embracing a young boy in tears, who was overcome with emotion at meeting him.

The audience took place at the beginning of the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which for 2017 had the theme: “Reconciliation: The love of Christ compels us.”

Addressing the different language groups, the pope prayed that all Christian communities would “be open more to reconciliation” and communion.

“In this same spirit of hope and with gratitude for the progress already made in the ecumenical movement, I ask your prayers for this important intention,” the pope told the English-speaking pilgrims.

During the audience, the pope reflected on the prophet Jonah, a man who first tried to run away from God’s call and initially refused “to place himself at the service of the divine plan of salvation.”

Nevertheless, the story of Jonah is a “great lesson about the mercy of God who forgives,” the pope said.

Jonah fled from his task of preaching salvation to the people of Ninevah who — in the eyes of the Israelites — “deserved to be destroyed, not to be saved,” the pope said. But when a dangerous storm hit, the pagans aboard his ship immediately prayed to their gods; a just reaction in the face of death because only then “man experiences his own frailty and his own need of salvation,” he said.

“The instinctive horror of death awakens the need to hope in the God of life,” the pope said. People think, “ ‘Perhaps God will think of us and we will not perish.’ These are the words of hope that become a prayer, that plea full of anguish raised by the lips of man in front of an imminent danger of death.”

“Prayer brings you to hope,” the pope said. “And when things become dark, with more prayer there will be more hope.”



CNS/Paul Haring

GREEN BURIAL — Raoul Bretzel and Anna Citelli set up a sample biodegradable burial pod developed by their company, *Capsula Mundi*, at their design studio in Rome Oct. 11. Their prototype is an egg-shaped sarcophagus that can hold a corpse in the fetal position. A young tree, chosen ahead of time by the deceased, will be planted over the pod in place of a headstone. Citelli and Bretzel imagine a future where “sacred forests” co-exist with cemeteries. The burial pods are part of a widespread movement focused on “green burial” practices, which use decomposable materials and avoid the use of embalming chemicals. Recent Vatican guidelines on cremation and burial address the growing trend of “green burials.”



CNS/Marcin Mazur

BISHOPS VISIT HOLY LAND — Bishops from the U.S, Canada and Europe walk through a street Jan. 16 in Hebron, West Bank. Bishop Lionel Gendron of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Quebec, left, represented Canadian bishops.

imposed following the election of the Hamas-led government in 2006. Israel, the United States and the European Union have listed Hamas as a terrorist organization and have imposed economic sanctions against them.

Following their Jan. 15 visit to Hebron, the bishops criticized the Israeli “encroachment” on Palestinian land. The visit was led by a member of the Israeli non-governmental organization, Breaking the Silence, made up of Israeli defence forces veterans who served in the Palestinian territories since the second intifada.

“It becomes clearer that (the settlements) are not just about outlying settlements but something more systematic; more about infiltrating Palestinian land and forcing Palestinians out by making them so uncomfortable with such limited freedom they

don’t want to continue living there,” said Cantu.

He said the tension in the streets of what used to be Hebron’s main market area, now closed off to accommodate the security needs of some 800 Israeli settlers, is immediately noticeable.

“Hebron is a sad situation not all are aware of,” said Nolan, commenting on the amount of land Palestinians are not allowed to enter. “The continuing encroachment on Palestinian land does not give much hope for the future.”

However, Cantu noted the importance of having been led by a group of Israeli veterans who have had a part in the conflict.

“It is encouraging that this truth is breaking out,” he said. “Unfortunately, their voice is disparaged by many in the (Israeli) government.”

Vatican policy supports ‘two-state solution’

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican’s hopes for a peaceful world and its defence of the right to religious freedom have supported its consistent position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for 70 years.

The key concern of the Holy See, and of the Catholic Church as a whole, since the Middle Ages has been for the Christian holy sites and Christian communities present in the Holy Land from the time of Jesus. The vast majority of Christians in the region are Palestinians.

More recently, it has supported the “two-state solution” with independence, recognition and secure borders for both Israel and Palestine.

While support for the two-state system evolved over time, the Vatican consistently has called for a special status for Jerusalem, particularly the Old City, in order

to protect and guarantee access to the holy sites of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

As Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Vatican’s permanent observer to the United Nations, told the UN General Assembly in November: “The Holy See views the holy city of Jerusalem as the spiritual patrimony of the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.”

Since the early 1990s, the Vatican has seen as separate issues the need for a special status for the city and questions over the political sovereignty or control of Jerusalem. The political question, it has insisted, must be the result of negotiation.

The internationally unsettled status of Jerusalem and its central importance to Jews, Muslims and Christians explains why, while recognizing the state of Israel, no nation has its embassy in the holy city.

Before his inauguration,

President-elect Donald Trump said he would move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. Former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush said the same thing during their campaigns for election, although once in office, they did not carry through with the move, citing its potential negative impact on Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, chair of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace, told Catholic News Service that Trump’s promise to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem poses a “serious problem” to any possible two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“We are hoping that other, clearer minds will convince the president-elect to change his mind,” he said, promising the U.S. bishops would engage with the new administration in “as friendly a way as possible.”

Listening Sessions analyzed in Winnipeg synod

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The people of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg find their churches welcoming, but they thirst for an increased commitment to evangelization, faith formation, youth ministry and social justice, says a report based on the 13 Listening Sessions that opened the ongoing two-year archdiocesan synod.

The Synod of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, the first in its history, began last fall with the Listening Sessions held across the archdiocese attracting nearly 800 people. Other respondents were able to submit their thoughts online using the archdiocesan website.

The report is an analysis of all written and spoken submissions gathered at the sessions and was compiled by Catholic Leadership Institute, a Pennsylvania-based group helping to guide the synod process.

The Archdiocese of Winnipeg, erected in 1915, stretches far beyond Winnipeg: west from Lake Winnipeg and the Red River to Saskatchewan, south to the U.S. border and north to Barrows,

Man., 600 kilometres north of Winnipeg, covering 187,000 square kilometres. It is home to an estimated 155,000 Catholics.

The archdiocese’s commitment to diversity and welcoming of immigrants and refugees was a major theme among those who mentioned the welcoming atmosphere of churches.

Looking to the future, participants envisioned a dedication to interfaith dialogue, reaching out to inactive Catholics, and an “open-door” policy with an emphasis on mercy. Creating a vibrant encounter has been suggested to bring people back to the church. Throughout every session, but especially among youth and young adults, there were individuals who emphasized the need for understanding and dialogue with the LGBT community.

The people of the archdiocese want more education and faith formation for all ages, with more opportunities for retreats, speakers, and classes. A greater offering of youth and young adult programs was also a major emphasis across all Listening Sessions.

The people of the archdiocese seek to emulate the call of Pope

Francis in living out their faith through mercy and good works. Respondents seek to continue reconciliation efforts with First Nations, to assist refugees, and to offer more in the local community to help the poor.

The synod process now moves to Focus Commissions — nine groups of from six to eight people that will discuss and discern what the faithful of the archdiocese have said at the Listening Sessions, and the goals to be pursued.

The Focus Commission topics are: New Evangelization and Missionary Outreach; Catechetics and Faith Formation; First Nations; Youth and Young Adults; Marriage and Family Life; Sacramental Preparation, Prayer and Devotional Life; Vocations and Leadership; Church Governance; and Social Outreach.

The Focus Commissions’ task will be to answer the question, “How could we as an archdiocese address the concerns and hopes raised in the Listening Sessions?” The recommendations that are put forth by the Focus Commissions are to be “doable” actions that can be accomplished now and will

have an impact in the near future.

The final report of each Focus Commission will be two or three pages long and include an opening vision statement that reflects the hopes and concerns raised in the Listening Sessions, related theological reflection and a list of three to five recommendations which will lead to the next synod phase, the Synod General Session, which will establish more concrete and specific actions.

The Focus Commissions will meet from February to April and will produce first drafts of white papers by May 1 to be circulated throughout the archdiocese for review and comment. The final draft of white papers will be completed in June to be presented to the Synod General Session in fall 2017.

The full 10-page report on the Listening Sessions from Catholic Leadership Institute can be found on the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website.



James Buchok

Freedom of speech can be protected

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Though freedom of speech is under attack in Canada, historian John Robson says it can be defended by returning to Canada’s founding principles.

“This is a nation proudly founded on liberty,” Robson told a gathering of POGG (Peace, Order and Good Government) Canada here Jan. 14. In 1867, Canada was constitutionally “founded by people who were

those other liberties that were given in 1867, is the basis upon which Canada became the great nation that it is; and Canada is prosperous, open, tolerant and dynamic” and has been a bulwark against tyranny in the world in the last century.

Robson said if one uses “evidence-based decision-making” the evidence is there that “liberty has worked.”

Yet often people who defend freedom of speech do so “in a kind of apologetic way,” as if acknowledging, “this isn’t how we do things in Canada” but maybe we need to change it.

A Canadian elite attempting to bring in “ever more burdensome government regulations and laws, and evermore limitations on our traditional freedoms” has a strange relationship with Canada’s past, he said.

Instead of arguing Canada was a free country and “it didn’t go very well, it could have gone a lot better so now we’re going to change things,” they put up an “ersatz history,” a “fake version,” he said.

This fake version asserts: “we’ve always believed in big government; we’ve always relied on the state; and we were never like those awful Americans with their devotion to freedom,” he said. “It’s not just that it’s not true, it’s dull! Who would want to live like that?”

Robson said both Canada and America can trace their founding principles back to the Magna Carta, an 800-year tradition recognizing ancient British liberties and has produced the best government system in the world.

The Americans were revolting because they thought King George was subverting them with taxation without representation, he said, so their founding

was in line with the Magna Carta as well.

In the system we inherited from the British, “government is small because citizens were big,” he said. “Government could not deprive you of your rights or your wallet” because the executive branch was controlled by the legislative branch under the control of the people, he said. “The government could not plunder you for the sake of the elite and powerful.”

John Stuart Mill laid out the arguments for freedom of speech, he said. They include: unpopular ideas may turn out to be true; the “Dracula effect” that “sunlight destroys bad ideas,” but if they are suppressed they fester, and go underground; and freedom of speech “reinvigorates truth in the minds of those who care about it.”

The Canadian story is one that includes “successful resistance to the usurpation of freedom,” he said.

He urged those arguing for freedom to be neither apologetic nor belligerent, because both attitudes undercut one’s arguments.

“All rights tie together and are essential to human dignity and to being Canadian,” he said.

“Don’t be afraid. Don’t be apologetic. Be polite,” he said. “This stuff is truer and more exciting.”

Young people who have been fed junk food all their lives will find real food off-putting at first, but once they get used to it, they will develop a taste for it and prefer it, he said.

Most history offered young people is “tasteless, mass-produced sludge,” he said. “We must offer them the real thing.”

“We have something to offer the other side doesn’t, and that’s a real adventure worthy of a human being,” he said.



CCN/D. Gyapong

John Robson

enormously proud to be the freest people on earth.”

“They deliberately set out to preserve in the British North America Act the constitutional order coming out of the Magna Carta,” said Robson, a columnist and documentary maker who teaches American history at the University of Ottawa.

Those attempting to defend freedom of speech in Canada have a number of advantages, Robson said, because “freedom of speech in principle is a good thing; freedom of speech, like all

WEEK OF PRAYER — From left, Rev. Mark Gnutel, pastor at St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church in Winnipeg, and Rev. Yaroslav Buduykevych welcome staff members from various Christian church offices in Winnipeg for an annual ecumenical worship and lunch gathering at the outset of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 18. A different local Christian church hosts the event each year. In Winnipeg the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity opened Jan. 18 at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church followed by services through the week at Kirkfield Park United Church and St. Chad’s Anglican Church; The Salvation Army — Heritage Park Temple; St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church; Grace Lutheran Church; Kildonan United Church; and St. John XXIII Roman Catholic Church.

Trudeau extends greetings to Trump

OTTAWA (CCN) — Prime Minister Trudeau stressed Canada’s close ties with the United States on trade and security in his message of congratulations to U.S. President Donald Trump on his inauguration Jan. 20.

“On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to extend my congratulations to Donald J. Trump on his inauguration as 45th President of the United States of America,” said Trudeau in a statement. “Canada and the United States have built one of the closest relationships between any two countries in the world. This enduring partnership is essential to our shared prosperity and security.”

“Together, we benefit from robust trade and investment ties, and integrated economies, that support millions of Canadian and American jobs,” he said. “We both want to build economies where the middle class, and those working hard to join it, have a fair shot at success.”

These close trade ties might come under some stress under the

new American administration.

During his presidential campaign, Trump called NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) the “worst trade deal in history” and said he would renegotiate it.

In his inaugural address Trump stressed his campaign promise of putting America first, signalling his commitment to more protectionist trade policies. He also said he intended to “make America safe again.” One campaign promise concerned tighter control over America’s borders, particularly that with Mexico.

“Canada and the United States have unparalleled co-operation on matters of national security, and have always worked side by side to protect our citizens and ensure our shared border is secure,” Trudeau said. “We look forward to working with President Trump, the U.S. administration, the 115th Congress, and officials at the state and local levels to restore prosperity to the middle class on both sides of the border, and to create a safer and more peaceful world.”

Apology needed in unjust treatment of Tamils

By Glen Argan
Special to the
Prairie Messenger

EDMONTON — After six weeks at sea on “a rusty old cargo ship,” Maran Nagarasa and 75 other refugees from Sri Lanka saw Canadian planes circling above them.

It was Oct. 16, 2009, “an unforgettable day in our lives.”

The men, who had set sail from Thailand on the boat without knowing where they were headed, were overjoyed that they were going to land in Canada. That night, “we all slept peacefully,” Nagarasa told a conference at The King’s University.

“When we awoke the next morning, people were boarding the ship and pointing guns at us,” he recalled in his Jan. 18 presentation.

The men were held at gunpoint all day before being arrested and taken into custody where they were held for four months. “We had no idea why we were in prison and when we would get out.”

Only when they viewed Canadian TV new channels while in prison did they learn they were being characterized as terrorists. They saw then-prime minister Stephen Harper and Jason Kenney,

immigration minister at the time, standing on their ship, the Ocean Lady, “promising to protect Canadians from people like us.”

Ten months later, the MV Sun Sea, with 492 asylum seekers aboard, was intercepted off the coast of British Columbia. The two incidents led the government to amend the Immigration and Refugee Act in 2012 to give the immigration minister broad and unprecedented powers over the refugee system.

Nagarasa told his story at a two-day conference for students and the public marking Canada’s 150th anniversary, “Glorious and Free?! Generous Citizenship for the Next 150,” that was held at the Edmonton Christian university.

A journalist in his homeland who reported on the human rights abuses of “the inhuman Sinhalese government,” Nagarasa fled Sri Lanka when 10 fellow journalists were killed and threats were made against his family. More than 100,000 Tamils had been massacred in 2009 and 300,000 were displaced, he said.

Talking with other refugees in Thailand, he realized he had no hope of finding a permanent home if he went through the United Nations bureaucracy there. Like the other men, he paid the equivalent

of about \$40,000 for a ride on the Ocean Lady to an unknown country where they would be safe.

Nagarasa recounted the harsh conditions, times of despair and moments of joy during the ship’s long voyage.

“Although I know terrorists exist, there were none on that ship,” he said. All 76 men had witnessed horrible crimes committed by the Sri Lankan government.

“What was our crime? Our crime was that we wanted to live.”

Freed from prison after four months, he remained under house arrest with a friend in Toronto and had to report weekly to the Canadian Border Services. It was only last year, seven years after fleeing Sri Lanka, that he was permanently reunited with his wife and daughter.

That reunion took extensive work by Romero House, a Toronto agency that advocates for and provides housing to refugees.

Jennifer McIntyre, director of Romero House, said the agency focuses its attention on “inland refugee claimants,” those who arrive in Canada without having been granted refugee status. Navigating the Canadian system to win refugee status for such claimants is both difficult and

confusing.

These claimants, McIntyre said, include Eritreans working in Saudi Arabia until about two

to prevent undocumented refugees from entering the country. It sends border officials to airports around the world to ensure airlines do not allow people without proper documentation to come to Canada, McIntyre said. Airlines that fail to stop such refugees face hefty fines.

The government’s approach is “Welcome to Canada if we don’t stop you before you get here.”

The Tamils from Sri Lanka who arrived here in 2009 were treated abysmally and suffered from “unbelievable violations” of Canada’s privacy laws, she said.

Kenney challenged every court ruling in favour of the Tamil refugees, she noted. People who sought hope in Canada were “villainized and thrown into detention.”

Canadian refugee policy changed dramatically because of the two ships that bore Tamils to Canada. One’s status is now dependent on how one arrives in the country, she said. Sri Lankans arrive at Canadian airports daily without being challenged; for those who arrive by boat, it is a different matter.

As for Nagarasa, he believes an apology is in order. Other groups have received apologies from the Canadian government 100 years after they were treated unjustly. The Tamils shouldn’t have to wait that long.



Glen Argan

Maran Nagarasa

years ago when the Saudis established new laws giving preferred employment status to their own citizens. If the Eritreans return to their homeland, they face mandatory military conscription.

Another refugee was a police detective who was persecuted for fighting corruption on the Juarez, Mexico, police force.

“The stories are many, and every story is unique,” she said.

Canada goes to great lengths

The suffering need one-to-one encounters

By Glen Argan
Special to the
Prairie Messenger

EDMONTON — The parable of the Good Samaritan should be seen as a call not to help everybody, but to help anybody, “anybody that God throws in your path,” says political theologian William Cavanaugh.

Key to understanding the parable is the realization that the Samaritan rescues the wounded Jew, not because of a moral obligation, but because “he felt a movement in his entrails. It was a gut reaction,” Cavanaugh told a crowd of several hundred people at The King’s University Jan. 19.

The modern tendency is to see the Good Samaritan story as pointing to a universal command to love others — “my neighbour is everybody,” he said. But such an approach leads to an institutionalized and depersonalized societal response to poverty and suffering.

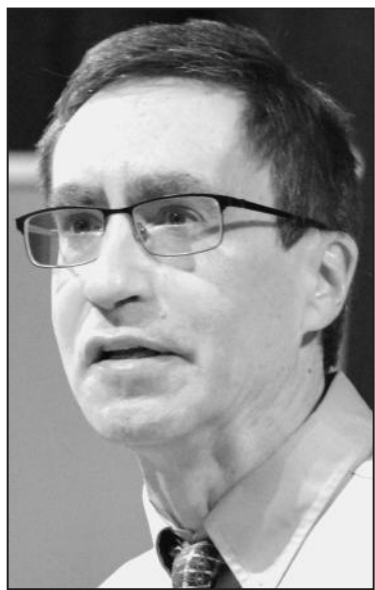
Instead, “networks of living concern” are needed in which people help suffering people they encounter on a one-to-one basis, said Cavanaugh, director of the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University in Chicago.

He was speaking on the political meaning of the church at a conference on Canada’s 150th anniversary, “Glorious and Free?! Generous Citizenship for the Next 150,” at The King’s University in Edmonton.

lift people out of poverty but always made life worse.”

Illich defended “the ability of ordinary people to make a life for themselves,” despite the efforts of institutions ranging from development agencies to the church “to improve people,” he said.

Illich also emphasized “the radicality of the Incarnation” in which God took on human flesh



Glen Argan

William Cavanaugh

to create “a network of particular people,” not a universal brotherhood of humanity, he noted.

The church, Cavanaugh said, has a different goal than the state. It aims to lead people to find the centre of their spiritual lives in these networks of concern.

“The end of the Gospel is incorporation into the Body of Christ which includes all people, not just Christians.”

The state, meanwhile, seeks to liberate people from all forms of dependency — the poor from charity, employees from employers, wives from husbands, chil-

dren from parents, and aging parents from their children, he said.

“The price of such liberation is dependency on the state; you depend on the state so you don’t have to depend on other people.”

When people want to be autonomous, charity threatens autonomy and becomes a form of humiliation, he said. The only way to overcome the humiliation is for the state to depersonalize acts of charity.

St. Paul, however, maintained that all are equal in the Body of Christ, even though some are weaker. In fact, God arranged the Body so the weaker members receive greater honour, not humiliation, Cavanaugh said.

Paul also wants the strong to see that they depend on the weak for their existence.

Another risk of personalized charity is that boundaries break down between the strong and the weak, he said. “Far from merely protecting recipients (of charity), bureaucratizing charity immunizes the wealthy classes from the messy and potentially life-altering encounter with people who suffer.”

Crucial in the last judgment scene of Matthew 25 is that Jesus identifies with those who suffer, not those who provide help. “The victims of this world are divinized.”

Cavanaugh stated the emphasis on personalized charity does not mean government programs helping the poor and hungry should be abolished. But the church should say such programs are a lesser good than the direct personal care of the suffering.

“Government aid is a safety net; it’s not the kingdom of God.”

The Gospel, he added, “is corrupted if all we can hope for is independence from one another, and ultimately independence from God.”



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Historic chapel stands as enduring welcome to refugees

By Eric Durocher

MONTREAL (CCN) — Much has changed and shifted on the Island of Montreal since the first permanent settlement was founded 375 years ago, but not the holy ground upon which stands the historic Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel.

Archbishop Christian Lépine underlined that fact during his homily Jan. 15 in the Old Montreal Chapel, where he celebrated mass to mark the feast day of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys.

Known as the Mother of the Colony — Bourgeoys was Montreal’s first teacher — she was the driving force behind the building of Montreal’s first pilgrimage chapel, then located just outside the walls of the fledgling missionary colony. The religious community Marguerite later founded, the Congregation of Notre Dame, has been the custodian of the chapel ever since.

The land was blessed in 1655, 13 years after Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance had founded Ville Marie, now Montreal, with about 40 settlers. Bourgeoys came during the second great wave of settlement, in 1653.

At various moments in the city’s gallop through history, pressure had been exerted to expropriate or reconfigure the property, but “the Congregation of Notre Dame defended this chapel (along with the Sulpicians) and preserved this consecrated land,” noted Archbishop Christian Lépine in his homily.

In this milestone year for the city, the archbishop focused on the meaning of journey that Marguerite and others embraced to establish a City of Mary here in the New World.

To make a pilgrimage, to embark on a journey to a holy

Durocher is editor emeritus, Catholic Times Montreal.

place or for a holy mission was a familiar and noble pursuit in the 17th century. The Ville-Marie mission, however, did not capture the public imagination; it was considered “foolish, headed for destruction,” the archbishop pointed out.

“Crossing the Atlantic in those days was like walking on water, you never knew whether you were going to make it or not. Why did she do it?” the archbishop asked. “Because of belief in God.”

“She knew Christ was with her; she reached out to him, trusted him; she was attached to Jesus Christ through prayer and through the blessed sacrament.”

For Marguerite and her contemporaries, “prayer and action went hand-in-hand; they weren’t separate,” Lépine explained. “That is why Marguerite’s model was Our Lady of the Visitation. Mary went to visit Elizabeth. This is what it means to be in the world; it means to bring God with us.

The Jan. 15 bilingual celebration was held on the Sunday closest to St. Marguerite’s feast day (Jan. 12), which coincided with the church-sponsored World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

In the welcoming address, museum animator Carole Golding invited the assembly to remember “all those who have crossed the ocean of indifference as refugees and who are often treated as a problem.”

“Let us welcome immigrants, refugees, our neighbours as Marguerite did,” she exhorted the assembly of 250 laity and religious who filled the small chapel.

The entrance procession for the 10:30 a.m. mass included a scale-model “tall ship” carried by Cape Breton native Sister Agnes Campbell, CND, congregation leader. It was placed in the sanctuary, opposite a painting of St. Marguerite welcoming the newly arrived *filles du roi*.

The ship represents the journey, Sister Joyce Roberts of the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum



FEAST DAY MASS — Archbishop Christian Lépine preaches at the historic Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel on Jan. 15, 2017, feast day mass for St. Marguerite Bourgeoys.

and Chapel said during an interview.

“The first settlers arrived by ship; Marguerite herself made seven trips across the Atlantic to secure resources for the colony,” she explained. “Until the 1960s, most newcomers to Canada arrived by ship and on this Sunday, dedicated to praying and working for refugees and migrants, the boat represents the hardships that many endure to seek a refuge from difficult circumstances,” she said.

were Canadiennes, but they also included a couple of Anglo-phones and two Amerindians.

Over the last three-and-a-half centuries, more than 7,000 women have followed in Marguerite’s footsteps. Today, the congregation has 850 members, present in nine countries; more than 600 are Canadian-born. In Canada, they have served in eight of the 10 provinces and in the territories. The languages spoken in the congregation are French, English, Spanish and Japanese.

Economic inequality caused by trade policies

Continued from page 1

the panelists discussing the potential for religion and politics to collide on Jan. 25 at St. Michael’s College in an event sponsored by the Intercultural Dialogue Institute

Whatever people think about Trump’s sometimes vulgar and incoherent rants on a variety of subjects, it’s clear that he has struck a chord with a populace tired of status quo. It’s the same kind of populist movement that led to Brexit in England.

“It clearly has to do with globalization,” said Champion College professor of political science Ann Ward from Regina. “And democratic publics are having second thoughts about globalization, and that is tied to immigration.”

While Trump is being inaugurated, world corporate and political leaders from around the world are meeting in Davos, Switzerland, an annual gathering of pro-trade one-per-centres. Ward worries about the inclination to accept the fact that global trade produces winners and losers.

“Talking about citizens as winners and losers is problematic,” she said.

If the church and other faith communities want to engage the new politics, they’re going to have to talk substantively about the anxieties driving Trump’s popularity, according to Ward.

“This is a clarion call to thinkers and leaders in society.

You can’t just call democratic citizens losers in free trade. There has to be a more equitable distribution of wealth — not to end trade, but to produce fair trade,” she said.

It also means following Pope Francis’ lead in decoupling migration from economic inequality.

“Pope Francis has been very strong in having Catholics in the West accept migrants, especially from poverty and war,” Ward said. “To connect economic inequality to trade. . . . Economic inequality is not caused by people who don’t look like you coming into your country. Economic inequality is caused by trade policies that benefit corporations and not their workers.”

Catholic studies professor Reid Locklin at St. Michael’s College contrasts the Trump phenomenon against the democratic institutions that have governed life in the West since at least the Second World War. The challenge to faith communities is “to say to what degree are different religions or religious traditions themselves invested in the democratic project,” Locklin said. “The Catholic Church wasn’t always.”

Between Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and the Second Vatican Council, Catholics and their church only gradually embraced democratic politics. At the beginning of the 20th century it was not clear

whether it was licit for Catholics to found or participate in Christian Democratic parties in Europe.

But now that Catholics are democratic, how do they engage with what Locklin calls “crass populism”? As a dual citizen of Canada and the U.S., Locklin sees the first order of business as protecting minorities. Trump’s message on Muslim immigration demands a Catholic response.

“If any particular religious group is demonized, history suggests that others are not far behind,” he said. “So there’s a real reason for caution.”

Locklin sees the Canadian situation in contrast to the U.S. debate.

“In Canada, the days of outright majorities are done,” he said. “In a certain sense, all of us religiously are minorities of different kinds. So all of us should be concerned about minorities.”

In his 2015 address to the U.S. Congress, Pope Francis encouraged politicians to “build as one the greatest common good: that of a community which sacrifices particular interests in order to share, in justice and peace, its goods, its interests, its social life.”

That’s a message religious leaders need to repeat, says Ward.

“Political leaders, economic leaders, have to see that politics is not just about economics or profits. It’s about justice,” said Ward.



HISTORIC CHAPEL — The Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel (chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours, “Our Lady of Good Help”) is a church in the district of Old Montreal in Montreal, Que. One of the oldest churches in Montreal, it was built in 1771 over the ruins of an earlier chapel.

Christ’s church is a community of peace

Continued from page 1

peacemakers, do not resist those who wrong you, love your enemies,” he said. “Christians must listen to their Lord Jesus and translate his words into action.”

There are no easy answers to the problems of war, violence and aggression, he admitted. “But that does not mean that we do nothing and give up on our Christian obligation to the world, which is our home. We believe that Christ’s church is, in the first place, a community of peace created by God in order to bring his peace to all of humanity.”

Christians are called to be God’s peacemakers, he said, citing Ephesians 2. “Jesus is our peace. He has made us all one in his own body in flesh and blood, he broke down the barriers which separated us, thus making a single new humanity.”

Walter Klaassen offered three examples to illustrate the different ways that Christians have responded to war and violence, including Austrian farmer Franz Jägerstätter, who was executed when he refused to serve in the military for the Nazi forces. Now recognized as a martyr by the Catholic Church and beatified in October 2007, at the time Jägerstätter was urged by his family, friends, priest and bishop to comply with the Nazi demands that he serve as a soldier. “He replied simply that he dare not disobey Jesus.”

In another example, Walter Klaassen recalled the events of Aug. 9, 1945, when a Catholic and a Lutheran chaplain offered prayer and blessings on a plane that set off to drop a plutonium bomb on a Japanese city. Nagasaki was the home of a Catholic community founded by Jesuit missionaries — a Christian community that had persevered through centuries of persecution. The spire of the Catholic cathedral was the crew’s landmark for dropping the bomb that extinguished the city and the Catholic community of Nagasaki, he described. “Christian chaplains had blessed the weapons that cremated the community with whom they were united by faith in Jesus, by baptism and eucharist.”

He also related the sacrifice of Dirk Willems in 1569, persecuted for his Anabaptist religion, in which he was re-baptized as an adult after making a personal confession of faith in Jesus. Pursued by police, Willems safely crossed the ice of a canal, before looking back to see that one of his pursuers had broken through the ice and was floundering in the water. “Willems turned around, recrossed the ice and rescued his pursuer.” In spite of this act of mercy, Willems was arrested, went to trial and was condemned to death by fire.

Different individuals in each of the three examples acted from their Christian convictions, noted Walter Klaassen, asking: “How can Christian conviction result in such contrasting action?”

Former bishop of Saskatoon and now archbishop of Regina, Bolen also spoke, providing a reflection on the teachings of Pope Francis related to war, peace and violence.

“The church’s mandate to seek peace and be peacemakers is grounded in the first instance on the life and teaching of Jesus,” said Bolen. He cited a prayer service for an end to violence in Syrian which Pope Francis exclaimed: “How I wish that all men and women of goodwill would look to the cross if only for a moment! There, we can see God’s reply: violence is not answered with violence, death is not answered with the language of death. In the silence of the cross, the uproar of weapons ceases and the language of reconciliation, forgiveness, dialogue and peace is spoken.”

PEACE CONVERSATION — Moderator Rev. Colin Clay, and panelists Dr. Walter Klaassen, Ruth Klaassen, and Archbishop Donald Bolen (from left) participated in a discussion about why Christians should talk about war and peace.

Pope Francis describes war as a scandal to be mourned every day, continued Bolen. “War always marks the failure of peace; it is always a defeat for humanity.”

In Christian understanding, peace is not simply the absence of war or violence, it is a gift from God, and it is to be actively worked for, said Bolen. Peace is costly, it asks and requires something of us, he stressed.

Pope Francis critiques those using empty political rhetoric about peace while continuing to support the arms industry, which he describes as one of the great curses of the human race, added Bolen. The pope says it is an “absurd contradiction to speak about peace, to negotiate peace, and at the same time to promote and permit the arms trade.”

The pope has also reflected on the relationship between poverty, inequality and violence, saying: “Today in many places we hear a call for greater security. But until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence. The poor, and the poorest populations, are

accused of violence, yet without equal opportunities the different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile terrain for growth and eventually explode.”

Bolen pointed to encounter and dialogue as key tools in peacemaking. “When leaders in various fields ask Pope Francis for advice, his response is always the same: ‘Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue!’ ”

Bolen also reflected on the messages and examples provided by Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton — three American peacemakers who have been among the formative influences of Bolen’s own life and spirituality. “They held a largely common vision of peace and how we obtain peace,” said Bolen.

The archbishop also traced the history of non-violent resistance as a Christian response to war, explored the concept of a “just war” (noting that some have questioned whether any war has ever met the criteria), and introduced the developing idea of “just peace.”

Bolen quoted Pope Francis’ message for the World Day of Peace Jan. 1, 2017, which focused on non-violence as a response to war and aggression. “When victims of violence are able to resist the temptation to retaliate, they become the most credible promoters of non-violent peacemaking. In the most local and ordinary situations and in the international order, may non-violence become the hallmark of our decisions, our relationships and our actions, and indeed of political life in all its forms,” writes Pope Francis.

Bolen concluded by noting how in recent years Pope Francis, Pope Benedict and Saint Pope John Paul II have conveyed a sense that there is no moral justification for violent acts of warfare in this day and age, with contemporary weapons. “There is a growing sense that we need to translate that language of the ‘just war theory’ into ‘just peace,’” he said.



Kiply Yaworski

Dungen ordained to diaconate

By Teresa Hiebert

OTTAWA — Warren Dungen of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon was ordained deacon by Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSSR, Jan. 8 at St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine in Ottawa.

Dungen has been studying for the priesthood since 2014, moving from Saskatchewan with his



Teresa Hiebert

Warren Dungen

Bayda. “These icons are to illustrate the transformation the family is going to undergo.”

Bayda said, “Evangelization is for all of us together — be it the family, or the domestic church — that is where we learn first and foremost to love, to forgive, to have faith, to be humble, to take direction.”

Born in Edmonton, Dungen has a long history in youth ministry, beginning in Calgary, where he met and married Lori-Lou. Over the years, the couple and their growing family journeyed through Louisiana, Alabama, and finally to Prince Albert with Dungen serving as the director of youth ministry in various dioceses.

While in Prince Albert in 2010, Dungen began the transfer process into the Ukrainian Catholic Church, with the family joining St. George Parish. He and Lori-Lou completed the two-year Eparchial Lay Formation Program in Saskatoon. Dungen joined the Knights of Columbus, and then began summer theology classes through the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute at St. Paul University, Ottawa.

In 2014, after discerning a call to priesthood, and with help of family friends, their parish, the Knights of Columbus and the Ukrainian Catholic Women’s League of Canada (UCWLC), the family moved to Ottawa in order for Dungen to attend seminary. Lori-Lou is employed as a bookkeeper and their four sons attend Catholic French immersion schools.

Dungen is in the last semester of his studies for the priesthood; the family plans to return home to the Eparchy of Saskatoon in July 2017.

Pastor installed for Davidson region

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

DAVIDSON, Sask. — Parishioners from four parishes in the Davidson pastoral region gathered Jan. 15 to celebrate the official installation of Rev. Madonna-Godwin Aghedo, OP, as pastor.

A Dominican priest from Nigeria, Aghedo arrived in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon earlier this fall to serve at the parishes of Sacred Heart in Elbow, St. Andrew’s in Kenaston, and Immaculate Heart of Mary in Outlook.

In recent months, diocesan administrator Rev. Kevin McGee has presided over the pastoral installation of several of the recently arrived international priests presently serving in the Diocese of Saskatoon.

The installation liturgy held during the celebration of Sunday eucharist at Sacred Heart Parish in Davidson included prayers and promises made at various spots throughout the church building: at

the baptismal font, at the confessional, before the holy oils, at the ambo, before the altar, and at the priest’s chair.

After a Scripture reading and reflection on priestly service related to each location, McGee asked Aghedo and the congregation to express their commitment to celebrate and live the sacraments and to proclaim and live the Word of God.

During his homily, McGee reflected on the call to do God’s will in every present moment — including in the midst of everyday life with its challenges and difficulties, large or small. “If you want to become a saint, say to God, courageously, with heart open: ‘I come to do your will,’ ” he said, citing the psalm refrain from the Sunday readings.

“At some point in his life Father Madonna-Godwin also said, ‘Here I am Lord, I come to do your will,’ and answered the call that included religious life with the Dominicans in Nigeria,” said McGee. “And that generosity and openness also brought him

here to the cold prairies of Saskatchewan.”

To do God’s will means to live the calling that God has placed before each one of us, McGee added, whether that is the call to marriage, to religious life, to priesthood or to single life. “It is also living each day with the people that surround you — your children, your spouse, your friends, your work, your career — and living every present moment as God’s will for you.”

Addressing the faithful at the conclusion of mass, Aghedo expressed appreciation for the support and friendship of McGee, the first person in the diocese that he spoke to, and the support of the parish communities. He also expressed his delight in serving four parishes named for the Sacred Heart/Holy Redeemer, for the Immaculate Heart of Mary and for the Apostle St. Andrew. “And I have yet to feel cold,” he said, with a smile. “I know your prayers are there, to keep carrying me on the wings of the wind.”

With Trump, church needs to assume prophetic role

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



The culminating event of 2016 was the election victory of Donald Trump in the United States.

If you're convinced this development will not touch your life in any substantive way, please pause to ask yourself: Will your own faith life, and faith community, remain the same? Do tumultuous changes in world politics, economics and security issues mean your personal and communal prayer must change, too? Or is our religious practice better seen as an unchanging constant, a timeless refuge from the world and its many, seemingly endless, complexities?

As you are reading these words, the reality TV show host and real estate magnate will have been inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States of America. (You might have noticed New York's Cardinal Timothy Dolan in attendance.) As one religious commentator gently put it, the remarks of Mr. Trump often "played to the darker sentiments of the human soul." Mexican immigrants were portrayed as rapists and criminals — and the resulting chant at Trump

Gunn is the Ottawa-based executive director of Citizens for Public Justice, www.cpj.ca, a member-driven, faith-based public policy organization focused on ecological justice, refugee rights and poverty elimination.

rallies was "Build the Wall!" The thrice-married Republican candidate declared himself "pro-life," but was heard on tape describing how he sexually assaulted a woman (causing several more women to come forward to allege similar incidents). Trump doubted the science of climate change, while encouraging more coal mining. And his cozy relations with Vladimir Putin have caused international concern and accusations of election meddling by the Russian state.

Despite these negatives, many voters (although not the majority) found his contender, and her platform, to be even more grievous. The rural/urban divide was pronounced, with Republicans winning the small towns and Democrats dominating in the cities. Additionally, the more often voters reported going to church, the more likely they were to choose Trump.

According to the Pew Research Center, "fully eight-in-10 self-identified white, born-again/evangelical Christians say they voted for Trump, while just 16 per cent voted for Clinton. . . . White Catholics also supported Trump over Clinton by a wide, 23-point margin (60 per cent to 37 per cent) . . . Trump's strong support among white Catholics propelled him to a seven-point edge among Catholics overall (52 per cent to 45 per cent) despite the fact that Hispanic Catholics backed Clinton over Trump by a

41-point margin (67 per cent to 26 per cent)."

Washington's Jim Wallis remarked in *Sojourners Magazine*: "Our original sin of racism in America — how it still lingers in all of our institutions and how it was effectively used in this election — was not faithfully addressed in the pulpits of white American churches. There was absolutely no difference between the votes of other white Americans and the votes of white Christian Americans; there was no leaven, no salt, no light from white Christians to the rest of America."

After the election, the pope's representative in the U.S. said that the church needs "to assume a prophetic role." Archbishop Christophe Pierre acknowledged that "the pope is more prophetic than the Catholic bishops here today . . . we have not done much, to be honest with you, on the issue of refugees in the United States. And we could do much more."

The American Catholic church is split politically along racial and rural/urban lines. Does the same split exist in our Canadian church? Do basic Christian values and teachings now influence a majority of religious voters less than the values of "civil religion" — the status quo society's acceptance of unbridled capitalism, overt racism and damaging sexism?

My prayer is

that pastors will lead us to become active participants in more inclusive communities where we can dialogue about our differences, learn from one another, and reduce the fear that creates perceived friction. Faith communities are among the few remaining social institutions that have the power to bring people together in our individualistic hyper-consumptive societies — convoking discussions leading to values clarification and the growth of charity. It would be a prophetic testament to the power of the Christian message if our churches became beacons of peace, refusing to countenance militarism and war.

Following the example of Pope Francis, our churches should exhibit selfless commitment to welcoming refugees, defending the rights of migrants, and advocating for their security. In the week after the election, 700

hate crimes were reported in the U.S. Faith communities must renounce all hateful speech in the weeks and months ahead.

On a Saturday morning after the election, my wife and I attended a multifaith solidarity rally in the Machzikei Hadas synagogue, following a spate of racist graffiti being sprayed on a Jewish prayer centre, two synagogues, a mosque and a United Church that has a black pastor. The mayor and police chief, as well as religious leaders, emphasized the need for education toward understanding in our communities. In a letter to the local paper, Anglican Canon John Wilker-Blakley directly linked the racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism "bubbling just below the surface of our society" to the election of Donald Trump. And as Ontario's premier stated, "People cannot be complacent. We have to stand together."



CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz

DOLAN AND TRUMP — Donald Trump, then the Republicans' nominee for U.S. president, sits between New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan and wife Melania during the 71st annual Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner in New York City in October. Dolan is among religious leaders who read from Scripture at Trump's presidential inauguration Jan. 20.

A Christian packing list for those who march for justice

By Anna Czarnik-Neimeyer
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The following commentary was written before the Jan. 20 inauguration of Donald Trump as president of the United States.

On Jan. 21 I will join thousands in D.C. for the Women's March on Washington. My first stop will be at a local congregation, one of several hosting a prayer service and warming station for marchers. I'm an anti-racist feminist Christian, and for me, faith will be part of the day.

I've been disappointed with Christian silence and even active resistance to social justice imperatives, but my commitments to justice stem from my faith, and that's why I march.

So I've been poring over numerous guides and packing lists. I've got the app. I've got my sharpies, my layers, my trail mix, my map.

But as a Christian marching

Anna Czarnik-Neimeyer is a social justice writer, facilitator and speaker.

for justice, what should I pack? What is my way, my fuel, my gear for the journey?

I'm convinced that these days, when the justice forecast seems particularly bleak, it's best to put one foot in front of the other, starting humbly, powerfully, right from where I stand. Be intentional to do the things I can do to carry on, in order to do the work that must be done and stay healthy.

Sure, one alternative is to walk around defeated, a zombie. There are days, recently, I have done this. I have cried. I have wanted to stay in bed. My body sometimes shakes. One time I hyper-ventilated.

But given the circumstances, all I can do is the job I've set out to do, the job I know how to do, with justice, kindness, humility. There is urgent work to be done in our world, and we must get on it. Jesus was an activist. Martin Luther, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King Jr.: these are Christians who followed Jesus' example of action for justice. We each have gifts, and as Christians, it is our call to use them to mobilize: health care for the poor, full inclusion of the LGBT communi-

ty, welcome to immigrants and all faiths, value for the lives and voices of people of colour, equity for women.

Sometimes that means making myself call senators even if I feel nervous. Sometimes it means thanking someone who is working hard for equality. Sometimes it means writing a post on Facebook from an anti-racist Christian perspective. One time I worked with colleagues to crowdsource an "Ally Advent Calendar" listing daily justice actions that can be done by anyone, any day, Advent or not. I've realized I need the dailiness of it.

As feminist poet Marge Piercy writes in "To Be of Use":

"The pitcher cries for water to carry / and a person for work that is real."

The trouble of this very real work, I know, is that it can be devastating. What I have come to expect is that each day I will read about or watch things that will cause me to come undone.

But here's what we know as Christians:

We are already broken. Imperfect, weak sometimes.

And we love anyway. We pray and then get to work anyway. We have faith and believe in our worth, anyway. We search for work that is real, but we need fuel to do it.

What I've learned as a Lutheran is that grace and forgiveness are tools for justice. Why?

Because grace frees and feeds us, radically, to do the hard work that must be done. If we believe that our value comes not from whether we succeed or fail, are lauded or criticized, but rather from God's deep, unwavering love and faith in us, ALL of us, then we are liberated. We have gotten free. We can't fail. And then we can work to liberate others.

As black feminist writer Toni Morrison says to her students, "When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else."

Because of God's radical grace, we draw from a store of energy and power that cannot be

drained. We have inherent worth because we are loved, forever. The cup is always full, overflowing, and God is the source. "Let justice roll like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream."

So, when we march, when we work, when we write and call, we have a uniform, we have the gear we need. It's not a plaid school jumper or a monogrammed polo, not even a solidarity armband or a pussycat hat, though I wear those things too. We put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. We wear love. These are our impenetrable armour.

God provides us with a pathway toward justice, and as Christians — who have at times failed or remained silent in the moments when we have been called to speak out — we see what to wear, we have our sustenance, and we understand how to move forward. The world may break our hearts, but each day, we already know what to do.

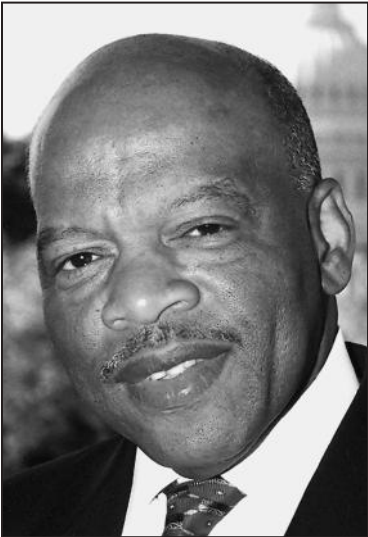
As Christians, God sends us out the door, ready to go. So let's get to work. Now. I'll see you at the march, and beyond.

Reaching breaking point in the Trump twitterverse

By Caitlin Ward

My father is a rather gentle character. He doesn't like raised voices, or excessive swearing, or even pointing, if he can avoid doing so. That's how I knew how angry he was last night when I walked into my parents' house swearing a blue streak and he didn't comment on how many f-bombs I was dropping. I didn't even have my coat off before I asked, "did you see what Donald Trump said about John Lewis?" And then proceeded to rant for the better part of five minutes.

Of all the things that the wretched president-elect has said



PBS.org

John Lewis

(inaugurated as president by the time this goes to press, I fear), nothing has made me more angry than his flippant tweet about Congressman John Lewis on Jan.

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>

14: "all talk talk talk — no action or results. Sad!" It was the second of two tweets, and came in response to Lewis saying he wouldn't go to the inauguration. He questioned the legitimacy of Trump's presidency on *Meet the Press*, given the strong evidence of Russian interference in the American election, FBI politicking under the guise of security in the days leading up to the election, and the fact that even with that interference, Trump had not won a mandate. At final count, Clinton won the popular vote by almost three million.

Of course, none of that is news anymore. Many people have questioned the legitimacy of Trump's presidency on those grounds, and others. There's a maddening hypocrisy in Trump's hysterical reaction to these criticisms, considering he built his political profile questioning the legitimacy of Obama's presidency with far less reason than Trump's critics have. But this, again, is not news. Tell me something Trump hasn't got hysterical about, and I'll consider that "news."

The fact that we spend so much time being surprised by the ridiculous statements constantly flowing from that man is probably distracting us from the more boring but also far more sinister statecraft at play in the United States at the moment. Senate confirmation hearings in which we are learning just how distressing his cabinet picks are, for example. I don't think he's distracting us on purpose, mind you — I think it's just what's happening. Senate hearings are long. Tweets are short.

So, generally, I've been trying to ignore the articles about Trump's online presence, and ignoring Trump's Twitter feed. There's not much to be gained by paying attention, except the sinking feeling that the world might really be close to ending. I'm not sure how much there is to gain by



CNS/Yoichi Okamoto, courtesy LBJ Library

PASSION FOR JUSTICE — John Lewis is pictured with four civil rights activists meeting U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. Lewis was one of the 13 original Freedom Riders in 1960 and in 1965 he marched with Martin Luther King Jr. on Bloody Sunday in the Selma to Montgomery March. Donald Trump sunk to a new low when he insulted the civil rights leader.

paying attention to the senate hearings, either. I'm Canadian, after all. There's not much for me to do except pray that, left or right, cooler heads prevail at some point in the country to our south.

But then Trump had to go and say, "All talk talk talk — no action or results. Sad!" And any sense of equilibrium I had about

Fight the Power
Public Enemy

anything to do with any of this went out the window. Because . . . well, you can't f-ing say that about John Lewis. You can't. You're just wrong. He was one of the founders of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC). He was one of the 13 original Freedom Riders in 1960. As chair of the SNCC in 1963, he was the youngest member of the Big Six who organized the March on Washington. In 1965, Alabama

state troopers fractured his skull while breaking up a praying crowd on Bloody Sunday in the Selma to Montgomery March. Before he was taken to hospital, he went on camera, calling on President Johnson to intervene in the situation. He still bears the scars on his head. In 2009, he was arrested for protesting genocide in Darfur outside the Sudanese Embassy in the United States. Just last June, he and fellow Democrat Katherine Clark led a sit-in demanding the right to vote on gun control legislation in the House of Representatives.

As a young man, Lewis endured violence and brutality in the pursuit of justice and fairness, always maintaining a strict adherence to the principles of non-violence and reconciliation. As a politician, he has stood by those principles as best he could. He has consistently stood up when millions of people have been too afraid or too apathetic to stand up. It's because of the work that people like him have done, the violence they allowed to be enacted upon their bodies, the decision always to walk forward

when there was no safe way of doing so — it's because of them that the Civil Rights Act passed. It's because of them that the Voting Rights Act passed. It's because of him, and people like him, that America has ever been anything resembling great.

None of this should be news, either. I'm not sure why this statement of Trump's in particular, over all the absurd, ill-considered, nasty, or stupid things he's said has made me so much angrier than anything else. Perhaps it's because Lewis is what a leader should be — visionary, convicted, forthright, thoughtful. Perhaps it's because Trump has said something so clearly, demonstrably untrue and thinks he can get away with it. Perhaps it's because Lewis is a living legend and deserves far more respect for what he's endured and accomplished than that fluffy-headed orange goat has given him.

Or perhaps it's because I have a sneaking suspicion Trump might not actually know who John Lewis is, and what he's done for that country. And that's just . . . WTF?

1989 the number another summer, get down
Sound of the funky drummer
Music hittin' your heart, 'cause I know you got soul
Brothers and sisters

Listen if you're missin' why'all
Swingin' while I'm singin'
Givin' whatcha gettin'
Knowin' what I know and

While the black bands sweatin'
And the rhythm rhymes rollin'
Got to give us what we want
Got to give us what we need
Our freedom of speech is freedom or death
We've got to fight the powers that be

CHORUS
Lemme hear you say
Fight the power (x5)
We've got to fight the powers that be

As the rhythm designed to bounce
What counts is that the rhymes designed to fill your mind
Now that you've realized the pride's arrived
We got to pump the stuff to make us tough

From the heart, it's a start, a work of art
To revolutionize, make a change, nothin's strange
People, people, we are the same
No, we're not the same, 'cause we don't know the game
What we need is awareness, we can't get careless

You say what is this?

My beloved, let's get down to business
Mental self-defensive fitness
Yo, bum rush the show
You gotta go for what you know
To make everybody see
In order to fight the powers that be

CHORUS

Elvis was a hero to most
But he never meant shit to me you see
Straight up racist that sucker was
Simple and plain
Mother f___ him and John Wayne

'Cause I'm black and I'm proud
I'm ready and hyped plus I'm amped
Most of my heroes don't appear on no stamps
Sample a look back you look and find
Nothing but rednecks for four hundred years if you check
Don't worry be happy was a number one jam
Damn, if I say it you can slap me right here

Let's get this party started right
Right on, c'mon, what we got to say
Power to the people, no delay
Make everybody see in order to fight the powers that be
Fight the power

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Scorsese’s Silence speaks volumes on trials of faith

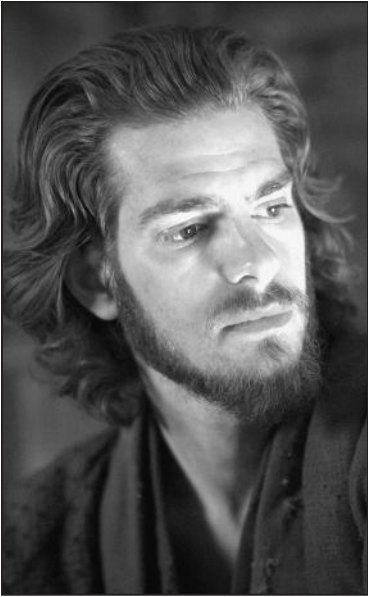
Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



“I’m a believer with some doubts. But the doubts push me to find a purer sense of the other, a purer sense, if you want, of the word ‘God.’ ”
— Martin Scorsese, Interview in the Hollywood Reporter, Dec. 8, 2016

Martin Scorsese is arguably America’s greatest living director and he has never shied from controversy. He may be best known for films that feature a culture of violence on the streets and in the ring (*Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, *Goodfellas*, *Gangs of New York*, *The Departed*). His 2014 satire *The Wolf of Wall Street* was laced with profanity. But as much as he has explored human nature’s darker side, the 74-year-old filmmaker has also been drawn to the most profound questions of human existence that touch on the spiritual and matters of faith. His roots in New York City’s rough Little Italy neigh-



SPIRITUAL EXERCISE — Andrew Garfield stars as Rev. Sebastian Rodrigues in *Silence*. Garfield underwent the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, as part of his preparation for playing a Jesuit priest in Martin Scorsese’s new film.

bourhood also reflect a devoutly Catholic influence that included a brief period as a seminarian. In 1988, Scorsese’s adaption of the 1955 Nikos Kazantzakis novel *The Last Temptation of Christ*, with its provocative suggestions about the humanity of Jesus, set off a storm of mostly undeserved criticism. At the same time, after the movie was screened for religious groups, Paul Moore, New York Archbishop of the Episcopal Church, sent the director a copy of Japanese Catholic convert Shusaku Endo’s 1966 historical novel *Silence* about the role of Portuguese Jesuits in 17th-century Japan at a time when Christians faced fierce persecution. As recounted in an essay by Paul Elie, “The Passion of Martin Scorsese,” published in the Nov. 21, 2016, *New York Times Magazine*, Scorsese read the book, engrossed by its quandary

of faith and doubt, while on a train in Japan where he was to play the part of Vincent van Gogh in a production by master Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa. Thus began a decades-long attempt by Scorsese to realize a movie version, a true passion project long delayed by a tangle of legal, financial and logistical hurdles. Fortunately he has succeeded with a budget of nearly \$50 million and a screenplay co-written by longtime collaborator Jay Cocks. An arduous shoot in Taiwan required extraordinary commitment on the part of his principal actors and was followed by a year and a half of post-production. The result, the 161 minutes of *Silence* (<http://www.silencemovie.com/>), is one of the most remarkable films ever made about what drove European missionaries and the trials of faith they endured. Paul Elie, who calls Scorsese a “missionary for the cinema,” writes that “*Silence* is a novel for our time: It locates, in the missionary past, so many of the religious matters that vex us in the post-secular present — the claims to universal truths in diverse societies, the conflict between a profession of faith and the expression of it, and the seeming silence of God while believers are drawn into violence on his behalf.” Jesuits followed in the footsteps of St. Francis Xavier who first brought the word of Christ to Japan in 1549. They made hundreds of thousands of converts in the predominantly Buddhist country. But the next century ushered in the Edo period during which Christianity, considered dangerous by the Tokugawa shogunate, was ruthlessly suppressed. The movie opens in 1633 with a searing scene in which we hear Rev. Christóvão Ferreira’s agonized voiceover as he is forced to witness the gruesome torture and execution of Japanese Christians in an attempt to get him to “apostatize” — deny the faith by the symbolic gesture of the stepping on the “fumie,” a copper plate bearing an image of Christ. Years later disturbing news reaches Portugal that, as the Jesuit superior Rev. Valignano (Ciarán Hinds) puts it, “Ferreira is lost to us.” Not wanting to believe this, two devout young priests, his former students Rev. Francisco Garupe (Adam Driver) and Rev. Sebastião Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield), insist on journeying to Japan to find the truth, knowing they will be in mortal danger. Setting out in 1640, in China they meet an unkempt



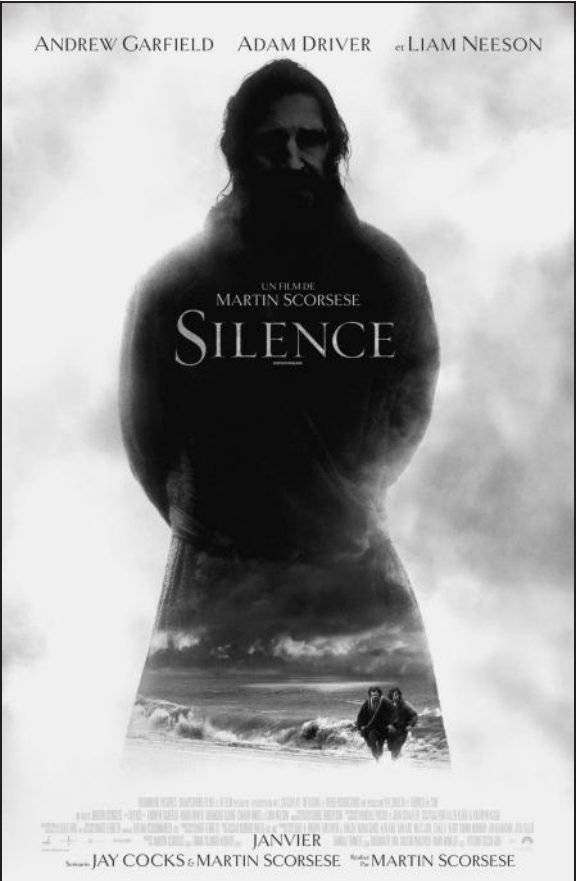
SECOND JESUIT PORTRAYAL — Liam Neeson stars as Cristóvão Ferreira in *Silence*. Three decades ago Neeson portrayed a Jesuit martyr in the 1986 film *The Mission*.

cowering Japanese man, Kichijiro (Yosuke Kubozuka), who has learned their language from other “padres.” They convince him to become their guide to reach the shores of Japan where they enter the frightened underground world of the hidden Christians. From this moment, Rodrigues assumes the narrator’s voice. Kichijiro becomes a troubled recurring figure in the story. Surviving by apostatizing, repeatedly, he recalls the first time when he watched his faithful family being burned alive. What place is there for a believer who is a weak person? he asks. Later he will crave absolution for a Judas moment. The priests are concealed by day while exercising a secret nocturnal ministry, until their presence becomes known to the authorities and the trials begin. They will not be offered the grace of a quick martyrdom. Instead they will have to witness the horrible punishments (crucifixions, drownings, beheadings) meted out to their Japanese faithful, the simple peasant believers who trust in them and refuse to apostatize. Rodrigues is separated from Garupe whom he will not see again until another cruel test. Rodrigues becomes the focus of the attentions of the feared “inquisitor” Inoue (Issei Ogata). The face of the persecution is an elderly highly intelligent official who plays a long game of outwitting Rodrigues. Taken to Nagasaki and kept in solitary confinement, Rodrigues prays not to be forsaken, pleading forgiveness for his questioning of God’s silence and his doubts. His interpreter (Tadanobu Asano) needles him about the futile conceit of the European missionary project while the inquisitor works on him in stages, adding psychological torment to the horror of seeing converts put to death. “The price of your glory is their suffering,” the would-be martyr is told. Japan is a “swamp” in which Christianity will never take root. The breaking point is when Ferreira is brought into the picture as the apostate who has become a Buddhist, taken a Japanese name and the wife and children of an executed man. He relates how he was subjected to a slow bleeding torture while held upside down over a pit until he relented. As a group of Christians is similarly tortured, Ferreira challenges Rodrigues. Is further resistance not just hopeless but a mark of hubris? “You see Jesus in

Gethsemane and believe your trial is the same as his. Those five in the pit are suffering too, just like Jesus, but they don’t have your pride. They would never compare themselves to Jesus. Do you have the right to make them suffer?” An epilogue from a Dutch trader recounts the path of surrender and collaboration of the apostate priests. But there is always doubt about the endurance of faith through trials and denials. In his last meeting with Kichijiro, Rodrigues momentarily lets down his guard, confessing, “It was in the silence that I heard Your voice.” Indeed the ultimate truth is known only to God. There is much to reflect on in this masterfully realized historical epic with its meticulous recreation of the atmosphere of feudal Japan and its attention to the voices of the Japanese, both persecuted and persecutors, as much as to the Europeans faced with the defeat of their mission. As Justin Chang wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*: “With ruthless wit and an incisive grasp of cultural and theological nuance, *Silence* subverts the familiar narrative of imperialist conquest and lays waste to the conventional Hollywood wisdom of East bowing to West. In particular, Scorsese grants his Japanese characters the full measure of their vivid, thorny humanity — something he manages with no small help from some exceptional acting talent.” The making of the movie had a profound impact on the actors portraying the Jesuits. Liam Neeson, raised Irish Catholic, had three decades ago portrayed a Jesuit martyr in the 1986 film *The Mission* set in 18th-century South America. Rev. Daniel Berrigan, the renowned Jesuit activist who died last

year, was an adviser on that production and celebrated mass with the actors. As Neeson told Paul Elie: “I remember Father Dan saying, ‘Do you know that Stanislavski based his Exercises for actors on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius?’” Andrew Garfield and Adam Driver, who both lost almost a third of their body weight, undertook intense spiritual as well as physical preparations for their demanding roles. They spent time at a Jesuit retreat house in Wales, where Garfield completed the arduous Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola as if he were a Jesuit in training. As he described it: “It’s almost like a 12-step program. In fact, it’s the basis for a lot of 12-step programs, a long-form meditation and prayer spent imagining the life of Christ, story by story, gospel by gospel, and sitting with his teachings, sitting with him as he discovers who he is in the wilderness, and really meditating upon his life and even crucifixion.” Garfield has come a long way since being cast as Spiderman in that superhero franchise. He has also been recognized for his 2016 role in Mel Gibson’s *Hacksaw Ridge* as a genuinely heroic religious conscientious objector dur-

— JESUIT, page 10



SILENCE — This is a poster for the movie *Silence*, directed by Martin Scorsese.

There are times when nothing is left but to trust



Both Lungs

Brent Kostyniuk

As Christians, one of the things we most strive for is to trust God. Most of us are familiar with the image of Christ with his arms extended toward us, offering his Divine love and protection. *Jesus I trust you:* this holy image admonishes us.

Trust comes in many forms and degrees. Ultimately we should turn our entire lives over to God. God did, after all, create us, and certainly knows what is best for us — whether we accept it or not. Sometimes, the reality he presents us is so out of tune with our own expectations it seems impossible to believe there can possibly be a beneficial outcome.

On Jan. 1 as my wife and I, along with the rest of our family, were preparing to celebrate our 39th wedding anniversary, I developed a severe pain in my right leg. While no stranger to athletic injuries, this was different. Without too much delay they took me to a nearby hospital. I was quickly passed through triage. By that time, however, the pain was severe and my foot had turned cold and lost all sensation. A clot was preventing

blood from flowing through my leg. The choices were not pleasant. In short order, unless something was done, my leg would die.

Miraculously — yes miraculously — a vascular surgeon was available at another hospital only a few kilometres away. Even as an ambulance took me there, the surgeon and her team prepared for the emergency surgery that would, hopefully, save my leg. At that point, trust became central. Obviously I had no choice but to trust in the surgeon’s skill.

However, at a much deeper level, I realized I had to place my trust in God in a way I never had before. It wasn’t just a matter of still having two legs in a week. The surgery included the possibility of lethal complications.

Three hours earlier I was getting ready to celebrate. Now I was having an intimate conversation with God, trying to figure out why all this was happening. I cannot deny that a lot of very human worries dominated the first part of that conversation. *What happens if I lose the leg? Why didn’t I see this coming?* (As it turned out, based on my medical history, no one could have.) *Why me and why now when we are supposed to be partying?* Of course — *what happens to my family if I am not here tomorrow?* Finally, and most terrifying of all — *what will happen at the Judgment Seat?*

Then a strange thing happened. Up to that point the conversation had been about me. I like to know what is going to be going on; I like to plan things. At that point, neither of these was happening. Now the conversation took a turn. Now, it seemed, it was time for me to listen.

While it would be nice to take credit for this change of heart, at that moment I didn’t really seem to have much choice. Still, no matter how it happened, I did lis-



Brent Kostyniuk

Jesuit adviser Martin on set

Continued from page 9

ing the Second World War. For his character in *Silence*, he speaks of the acting process in transformational terms: “It became a very personal journey for me, a dual journey: It was me and Rodrigues, walking together, so that I could allow the events of the story to affect me in the way that a young, ambitious, intelligent, articulate, learned Jesuit would respond to being dropped into the front lines of the battle for Christianity. . . . I was filled up with all this information and all this longing to spread the teachings of Christ, which I truly started to adore.”

Rev. James Martin, SJ, an editor at large of the Jesuit magazine *America*, was an adviser on the

movie, the first audience for which was in Rome Nov. 29, 2016, when it was screened for hundreds of Jesuit priests. During Scorsese’s subsequent meeting with Pope Francis in the Vatican, the first Jesuit pontiff told him he had read the Endo novel.

In pursuing his vocation through a mastery of cinematic storytelling, Scorsese has created a work of art that probes some of the deepest questions of religious culture and belief. As New York critic Joshua Rothkopf observes, *Silence’s* “parable about faith under fire . . . ranks among the greatest achievements of spiritually minded cinema. . . . It’s a movie desperately needed at a moment when bluster must yield to self-reflection.” Amen.

ROOM WITH A VIEW — Brent Kostyniuk shares the view from his hospital room where he awaits surgery with trust — trust in Jesus’ love and protection.

ten. I’m not always very good at taking hints, but I think this time pain was the “hint” I needed to listen to that voice. It wasn’t a booming voice from the heavens, but rather a gentle sort of whisper. “You have no choice,” the voice told me. “It’s time for you to remember that I am taking care of you. You can trust me. Don’t you think I know what is best for you — after all, I made you. You have to let go of your desire to control everything.”

And then, in the most beautiful of ways, in a manner I cannot possibly begin to describe, the voice let me know that it was in control. “I am taking care of you. I am taking care of your family and will continue to do that. Just trust me. Really. There are beautiful things

ahead, let me bring them to you.”

Recovering from surgery the next morning, I learned the tests done to more fully understand my condition discovered a blockage in my heart. I would have open heart surgery within a week. Potential tragedy led to a life-saving discovery.

I have much to be grateful for. Not the least my life. Trust.

C.S. Lewis writes, “He selected one particular people and spent several centuries hammering into their heads the sort of God he was that there was only one of Him. . . . the Old Testament gives an account of the hammering process.”

Sometimes it takes a bit of hammering to learn things like trust in God.

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Engage with the world and bring life to our faith



At his installation mass as Cardinal of Newark, New Jersey, Joseph Tobin, CSsR, gave a powerful homily that I wish to quote from. It began this way:

“At a dinner party recently, I was asked; ‘what is the greatest challenge the church faces today?’ I thought a moment and replied: ‘The chasm between faith and life.’ My questioner looked at me a little quizzically and remarked: ‘Now that answer I didn’t expect!’ I imagine she was looking for one of the so called ‘hot-button’ issues that dominate the discourse both inside and outside the church. As noisy and divisive as those issues are, they don’t worry me as much as a growing trend that seems to isolate us, convincing us to neatly compartmentalize our lives. . . . During this Christmas season, God makes every effort to convince us that faith has everything to do with life, all of life.”

It seems that this issue of faith and life has been a pre-occupation of many religious leaders over time. In today’s first reading Isaiah is pointedly concerned that the rituals of the Jewish practice of fasting be understood as a representation of the sacrificial love we are called to in caring for and about oppression and injustice in our world. He

Williston gives parish missions and is a former missionary with the Redemptorists. He is also a song writer and recording artist.

thinks that religious practices have value if they spur us on to finding ways to make our world a little more just and to lift the burdens of those who are oppressed. If we are engaged in spiritual practices as ends in themselves, but disengaged in a world that needs us, we may be missing the mark. Religion can be used as the Great Escape from the world. Isaiah has a number of warnings against severing the life of faith from the life of the world. (Check out these Isaiah readings: 1:12-14, 9:1-6, 58, 61, 66.)

John the Baptist ushered in the new reign with his fiery brand of justice and right relationship to God and God’s world. Jesus himself contrasts the self-righteousness of the pharisees’ prayer in the temple with that of the penitent

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 58:6-10
February 5, 2017	Psalm 112
	1 Corinthians 2:1-5
	Matthew 5:13-16

sinner who simply asks for mercy. The pharisee, so full of himself, went home unjustified in Jesus’ eyes.

The point of fusing faith with life is that Jesus wants us to be the “salt” and the “light” for the world. Today’s Gospel proclaims a mission for all believers. Be a zesty salt and a bright light for the world around you. Find a poetic language and courageous self-giving actions that others will pay attention to because it reflects the light of Jesus. We cannot be “zesty” and “bright” if what we say about our faith is not backed up by what we do with our life. It also loses effectiveness if we create our own closed circle and make Christianity some kind of private club with its own private set of rituals that only the most initiated can understand and appreciate.

The outside world may stretch the chasm by its rejection of religious values, but we “religious” folk widen the chasm at times by our lack of willingness to engage the world. We might do well to recall the prologue in John’s Gospel that begins with: “For God so loved the world that

he gave his only son . . .” It’s a world that we are called to love as well.

St. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians is a great example of Paul engaging a world, not with “worldly” wisdom or philosophy, but with the message of hope given by Christ’s sacrificial love on the cross. Paul was truly a “zesty” salt and a bright “light” shining in the gentile world. He knew very well the connections between life and faith. He worked very hard in his letters to build a bridge between life and faith. He also backed it up with his life and his death for the sake of the Gospel message.

My brother-in-law just went to glory after a long battle with dementia. His faith was less connected to the official church, although he prided himself on having been baptized in both the Catholic and Baptist traditions. He did begin a Mennonite community of faith in Fort Collins, Colorado, many years ago. But his faith was concretized in the way he engaged with people. At his funeral, people called him a “warm light” and “a gentle kind heart” along with other accolades that showed how he left his mark on people’s hearts. When you were with him, there was no one else in the room but you. He fixed his loving attention on each person he met. This gift flourished in his life as both an academic and a social worker. He trained others on how to engage in a world that was wounded by injustice and oppression. He said to me many times that his “work” was spiritual. Having witnessed the fruits of his labour, I am more than inclined to believe him.

A concluding remark can be found with a few more summary images from Cardinal Tobin’s homily:

“The church is neither an elite club nor a static container of truth. It is a community that speaks with and listens to the world. The church senses a responsibility not as an institutional presence or a benevolent NGO, but a movement of salt, light and leaven. For this reason, our kindness must be known to all.”

Let us find ways to build bridges across the “chasm” by bringing life to our faith and faith to our life!

We need to take our wounds to the eucharist, the ultimate healer



Recently a man came to me, asking for help. He carried some deep wounds, not physical wounds, but emotional wounds to his soul. What surprised me initially was that, while he was deeply wounded, he had not been severely traumatized either in childhood or adulthood. He seemed to have just had to absorb

the normal bumps and bruises that everyone has to absorb: some belittling, some bullying, never being the favourite, dissatisfaction with his own body, unfairness within his family and siblings, career frustration, unfairness in his workplace, the sense of being chronically ignored, the sense of never being understood

and appreciated, and the self-pity and lack of self-confidence that results from this.

But he was a sensitive man and the combination of all these seemingly little things left him, now in late mid-life, unable to be the gracious, happy Elder he wanted to be. Instead, by his own admission, he was chronically caught up in a certain wounded self-absorption, namely, in a self-centred anxiety that brought with it the sense that life had not been fair to him. Consequently he was forever somewhat focused on self-protection and was resentful of those who could step forward openly in self-confidence and love. “I hate it,” he shared, “when I see persons like Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul speak with such easy self-confidence about how big their hearts are. I always fill with resentment and think: Lucky you! You haven’t had to put up with what I’ve had to put up with in life!”

This man had been through some professional therapy that had helped bring him to a deeper self-understanding, but still left him paralyzed in terms of moving beyond his wounds. “What can I do with these wounds?” he asked.

My answer to him, as for all of us who are wounded, is: *Take those wounds to the eucharist.* Every time you go to a eucharist,

stand by an altar and receive communion, bring your helplessness and paralysis to God, ask God to touch your body, your heart, your memory, your bitterness, your lack of self-confidence, your self-absorption, your weaknesses, your impotence. Bring your aching body and heart to God. Express your helplessness in simple, humble words: *Touch me. Take my wounds. Take my paranoia. Make me whole. Give me forgiveness. Warm my heart. Give me the strength that I cannot give myself.*

Pray this prayer, not just when you are receiving communion and being physically touched by the Body of Christ, but especially during the eucharistic prayer because it is there that we are not just being touched and healed by a person, Jesus, but we are also being touched and healed by a sacred event. This is the part of the eucharist we generally do not understand, but it is the part of the eucharist that celebrates transformation and healing from wound and sin. In the eucharistic prayer we commemorate the “sacrifice” of Jesus, that is, that event where, as Christian tradition so enigmatically puts it, *Jesus was made sin for us.* There is a lot in that cryptic phrase. In essence, in his suffering and death, Jesus took on our wounds, our weaknesses, our infidelities, and our sins, died in them, and then through love and trust brought them to wholeness.


Every time we go to eucharist we are meant to let that transforming event touch us, touch our wounds, our weaknesses, our infidelities, our sin, and our emotion-

al paralysis and bring us to a transformation in wholeness, energy, joy, and love.

The eucharist is the ultimate healer. There is, I believe, a lot of value in various kinds of physical and emotional therapies, just as there is immeasurable value in 12-step programs and in simply honestly sharing our wounded selves with people we trust. There is too, I believe, value in a certain wilful self-effort, in the challenge contained in Jesus’ admonition to a paralyzed man: *Take up your couch and walk!* We should not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by hyper-sensitivity and self-pity. God has given us skin to cover our most raw nerves.

But, with that being admitted, we still cannot heal ourselves. Therapy, self-understanding, loving friends, and disciplined self-effort can take us only so far, and it is not into full healing. Full healing comes from touching and being touched by the sacred. More particularly, as Christians, we believe that this touching involves a touching of the sacred at that place where it has most particularly touched our own wounds, helplessness, weaknesses, and sin, that place, where God “was made sin for us.” That place is the event of the death and rising of Jesus and that event is made available to us, to touch and enter into, in the eucharistic prayer and in receiving the Body of Christ in communion.

We need to bring our wounds to the eucharist because it is there that the sacred love and energy that lie at the ground of all that breathes can cauterize and heal all that is not whole within us.



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The gift of grace is enough for today

Barefoot and Preaching

Leah Perrault



One of the greatest gifts of living in a cold prairie climate is that it gets cold enough for hoar frost. It is the frozen form of dew, an icy proof of the movement of moisture even on such cold mornings. Breathtakingly beautiful, I would like to keep it all winter long, but there is only ever enough for today.

I resist the idea of enough at almost every level. When I am

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thinking about the meals and the groceries, I get nervous if there isn't an extra can or two of tomatoes more than I need for what I have planned. What if I change my mind, and I have an urgent need to make pasta sauce and do not have enough tomatoes? I better get an extra can or two.

A friend calls and there is an opportunity to visit; technically the calendar has space, between two other things. I want to say yes, even when I know there is already too much going on. What if what is already happening is not enough?

When I have a day where everything seems to fall apart in

my hands, I get worried that God is not enough, does not know what I need, cannot be trusted. I am not alone in complaining about the same old manna in the desert.

The problem, it turns out, is not with the way the frost melts on the trees in the blinding winter sunlight. Neither the absence of the last can of tomatoes nor delaying a visit next week is life-threatening. My own disappointment, sadness, and fear aren't the issue either. I have been seduced by the lie that it is possible to secure everything I need. I have been betrayed by the false promise of the lie. My challenge is that I cannot be, make, or provide the grace that sustains me. I can only receive it — and only enough for the present moment.

When traffic is backed up and I left late, I want a guarantee that *I will never be stuck in traffic again*. What is offered to me is a beautiful sunrise and my favourite song on the radio from the comfort of my warm car. For as long as I am attached to my impatience and hope for a life without inconvenience, I cannot receive the gift in what is — it will never be enough for me.

While someone I love is facing



Andrea Carol

PAYING ATTENTION TO GRACE — “The evidence of God’s movement in and around me often melts as quickly as the frost,” writes Leah Perrault. “If I am not paying attention, I miss it altogether . . .”

‘Play it again, Stan’



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

I have seen a limit to all perfection.
— Psalms 119:96

My mother always misremembered sayings. “Better late than lost,” she might say, or, “Early to bed, and you get up even earlier.” It was charming, and I thought of her often when I encountered characters in literature prone to misquotations. Catherine, the maid in Jules Verne’s *Extraordinary Voyage*, is one of these. “He who laughs last, laughs from his backside,” she announced, instead of “he who laughs last laughs best.”

Sometimes misremembered sayings take on a life of their own. I was amazed to learn that the original lyrics to “The Twelve Days of Christmas” included the words, “four colly birds,” colly meaning black. Over time the misremembered phrase, rendered as “four calling birds,” became the accepted norm. And who doesn’t remember Bogart’s famous line in *Casablanca* as “Play it Again, Sam”? Well, he never actually said it — the phrase came from Woody Allen — but no one cares. (For the record, it’s Ingrid Bergman’s character, Ilsa Lund, who says, “Play it, Sam. Play,” about the song “As time Goes By.”)

For me, though, the phenomenon of misremembering traces its way through my church memory. I have spoken before of my confusion over the “miserable chord” the priest kept referring to

(instead of Misericord). And my mom, despite her own mistakes, was furious one year when I belted out, “Joy to the world, the Lord has gum!” during the Christmas carols. Later I took comfort from discovering that this was a shared misunderstanding. Malachy McCourt, in his charming novel, uses a misheard phrase from the “Hail Mary” as the title of his book: *A Monk Swimming*. As in: “Hail Mary, full of Grace, blessed art thou, a monk swimming.” This, as they say, is a perfect mondegreen, a word coined by American writer Sylvia Wright to mean a misremembered phrase.

Perhaps more fascinating is how we have participated in a rewriting of the Bible without realizing it, so that many sentences are spoken as gospel truth when in fact they don’t appear in the holy book. The examples are many and surprising: “Spare the rod, spoil the child,” “God works in mysterious ways,” “The lion shall lay down with the lamb,” and “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.” There are certainly passages that approximate the sentiment of many of these now established sayings, but that’s about it.

Perhaps the takeaway message is simply this: we are flawed and imperfect, searching always for the *mot juste*, but finding only snippets of understanding. In some ways, this is reassuring. As Salvador Dali once put it, “Have no fear of perfection — you’ll never reach it.” Or as my mom might say: “Practice makes . . . a person very tired.” Wise words to welcome in the new year.

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



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In praise of daughters, and of fire extinguishers

Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



I used to laugh at my friend Sid, who nearly set the house on fire one morning while his mother was away.

Sid's father had left under mysterious circumstances some years previously. His mother had chosen to keep up the family farm, and was frequently away during seeding and harvest time while Sid was in school.

Sid was totally maladroit in the kitchen. His mother always cooked for him. When she was away he relied on sandwiches, and he often went to a nearby fast-food outlet for a burger and fries.

One morning he decided to make himself a proper breakfast. He couldn't fry an egg, or even make coffee, but he thought he

could handle a plate of bacon. He opened a package he found in the fridge and put the entire contents in a frying pan, which he turned on high. He then went to have a shower.

When he returned, of course, the pan was on fire. With unexpected presence of mind, he put a lid on the pan, smothering the flames. Then he opened a window.

A neighbour, seeing billows of smoke escaping from the house, called the fire department. When they arrived, they found Sid at the kitchen table, eating a pound of charred bacon and washing it down with Coke.

It made a good story during shop class that morning, and it



George Tenney

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT — It's always a practical idea to have a fire extinguisher in your home. You never know when you're going to need it.

Grace often resisted

Continued from page 12

sadness and its crippling purposelessness. But I want a cure. I have been given the gifts of not being alone in struggling, of compassion, of allowing myself and others to be uncomfortable, of asking for and receiving help. And still, I resist the grace that could be enough for me today. A cup of tea, a nap, a phone call to a friend, the chance to do something small for someone else.

I have survived all of the difficult moments and days until now. There has been enough grace, even when it did not feel like it. Why do I question whether or not there will be enough this time? This is the miracle of God's abundance: all the tiniest drops of water condensing into frost on a branch for just a few hours, and God making a beautiful moment or two out of whatever fumbling offering I can come up with after I give up resisting.

So beautifully little is actually asked of me in each moment of my life — to breathe, to be, to give and to receive. It is enough to live just this moment as well as I can, resisting and letting go, getting scared and showing up. The evidence of God's movement in and around me often melts as quickly as the frost. If I am not paying attention, I miss it altogether. There is enough grace for today — and for me — right here, whether I can see it or not.

has remained with me ever since. I had cause to think of it in a new way a few months ago.

I had the flu and was not at my brightest one afternoon when I decided to make some tea and toast. My head felt as if it was stuffed with cotton wool and my sinuses were completely blocked. I filled the kettle and put it on the burner, which I turned on high. I got out some bread and put it in the toaster.

The trouble was, it was an electric kettle with a plastic bottom. There was a merry blaze on the stovetop by the time I turned again to make the tea. I removed the ruined kettle and put it in the sink, but its bottom stayed behind on the burner.

There was a saucepan on the stove, Remembering Sid's example, I turned the pot upside-down over the fire, intending to smother it. Unfortunately, the handle of the pot lifted it slightly off the horizontal, creating a nice little wind at the base of the fire, effectively creating a miniature blast furnace.

Thanks to a firefighter friend who had long ago convinced us to keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, there was one handy. Such was my state of mind, however, that I couldn't figure out how to work it.

The stove is one of those flat-topped ceramic types with the burners beneath the surface, and the fire was rapidly spreading. Black smoke billowed upward toward the ceiling, staining everything it touched. The wall beside the stove turned in seconds from white to grey.

No doubt I would have burnt the house down had my daughter not entered the kitchen at that moment. Brigid took the fire extinguisher and rapidly put out the blaze, spraying fire retardant across the stovetop.

By this time the smoke alarms were ringing shrilly, not only the one in the kitchen hallway but the one upstairs outside the bedrooms. The phone rang. It was the security company, checking in as they always do when one of the smoke alarms goes off. I assured them, through my clogged sinuses, that things were under control.

We opened the windows to clear the air, and Brigid proceeded to clean up the mess. I was banished from the kitchen. I eventually hired a professional cleaning company to wipe down the walls and cupboards. I have bought a new fire extinguisher, and the new kettle is kept on the far side of the kitchen.

I have had occasion to thank God for daughters before, but never has the occasion been so obvious and immediate. Indeed, thank God for daughters, and thank God for firefighters who convince you to keep an extinguisher in the kitchen.

I no longer laugh when I think of Sid frying his bacon. He was lucky he didn't burn the house down, and so was I.



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Jerusalem, a key to peace

The Holy Land made the news this past week, but with different emphases. Church leaders are supporting policies opposed to the new administration in the United States.

President Donald Trump made an election promise to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Canadians will remember that Joe Clark made a similar promise, but never followed through.

Likewise, both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush pledged to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem but backed down because of its wider implications for peace in the Middle East.

Recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital would put an end to the proposed two-state solution. Palestinians also want to claim Jerusalem as their future capital.

The move is opposed by Arab nations and some commentators suggest it would become a recruitment tool for ISIS. This would fuel the terrorism that Trump says he will eliminate "from the face of the earth."

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Jordanian King Abdullah II both repeated their

opposition. Both have warned of renewed violence if the move happens.

Church leaders have long opposed recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Archbishop Bernardito Auza told the UN General Assembly in November that the Holy See views the holy city of Jerusalem "as the spiritual patrimony of the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam." The vast majority of Christians in the region are Palestinians.

The internationally unsettled status of Jerusalem and its central importance to Jews, Muslims and Christians explains why, while recognizing the state of Israel, no nation has its embassy in Jerusalem.

In their recent visit in support of Catholics in the occupied territory of Palestine, 12 North American and European bishops noted that many people in the Holy Land have spent their entire lives under occupation, with its polarizing social segregation. In a statement on the CCCB website, they said: "For 50 years the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza have languished under occupation, violating the human dignity of both Palestinians and Israelis. This is a scandal to which we must never become accustomed."

They call on countries "to oppose the construction of settlements" by Israel in Palestinian land, such as

in Hebron and East Jerusalem.

They quoted the Holy See's position that "if Israel and Palestine do not agree to exist side-by-side, reconciled and sovereign within mutually agreed and internationally recognized borders, peace will remain a distant dream and security an illusion."

One of the Vatican's earliest mentions of the Palestinians' right to a homeland came in a communiqué issued when St. John Paul II held his first meeting with Palestine Liberation Organization chair Yasser Arafat in 1982.

The pope expressed his hope to Arafat that "a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict would be reached as quickly as possible, a solution which . . . would lead to the recognition of the right of all peoples, and in particular the Palestinian people, to possess a land of their own, and that of the Israeli people to ensure their own security."

Much water has flowed under the bridge since Israel became a nation. Peace is longed for, on both sides, but Israel and the Palestinians continue to suffer from the absence of peace.

Recognizing Jerusalem as a state capital is the wrong path to take. So are new settlements. How long will it take for a change of heart? — PWN

Pro-life groups need to expand their horizons beyond anti-choice

Soul Mending

Yvonne A. Zarowny



"A new commandment I give you: Love one another. . . . By this all people will know you are my disciples; if you love one another."

— John 13:34-35

It is with a heart heavy, with despair, that I write this column.

I am in deep need of being assured our church "gets the message" our "salvation" is through the Way of Hope, Love, and Peace through Justice the Christ Child incarnated into our world.

It is the Light of that incarnation being birthed anew we celebrate this dark time of year as we strive to compassionately nurse our battered souls and that of our suffering world.

As Matthew 7:21 reports Jesus saying: "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the kingdom but those who do the will of my Father in heaven."

This begs the question: "What is the will of the 'Father'?"

When put together with the "Love commandment" and at least 2,000 other passages about social justice, does anyone seriously think church leadership, lay or religious, is doing the will of the Father by enabling an ideology and dominant mode of development necessitating the destruction of God's Creation to maximize profit for a tiny number of humans?

Yet — that is what is happening by limiting "pro-life" to "anti-choice" legislation. How and why is this happening — even with Pope Francis?

The 2015 *Laudato Si'*: Caring for Our Common Home basically restates the unanimous conclusions of the UN's World Commission on Environment and Devel-

opment (WCED) 1987 report Our Common Future.

As with *Laudato Si'*, Our Common Future concluded we are not confronted with multiple life-threatening crises — only one! And it is not "pro-choice" legislation.

It is our dominant development mode which is unsustainable morally, economically, socially and environmentally.

This mode necessitates:

1. infinite growth on a finite planet;

2. an ever-increasing material consumption of "stuff" just to stay afloat (wars are great for this); and

3. humans denied any purpose beyond being consumers. This creates within us an unfillable aching void. Like addicts, we seek to fill it through unsatisfying means.

All this makes our current dominant development path an existential threat which has already killed hundreds of millions while causing even more to suffer life without dignity.

Why, when decrying the secularization of our culture, is our development mode's need to have material consumption replace all other purpose for our life not mentioned by those powerful within our church — both lay and religious?

In order to effectively counter being manipulated by a false notion of what constitutes "pro-life," we need to understand who benefits from it. We also need to understand how they are currently using it to foil our efforts to effectively co-create a variety of cultures of life where all God's Creation has life with dignity.

The Knights of Columbus are

an incredibly powerful organization.

Under their current leadership, it is expanding its power and influence around the world while spreading the "American gospel" of unrestrained capitalism.

In trying to understand why Supreme Knight Carl Anderson made statements he did during the horror show of the 2016 U.S. election cycle, I read a number of his publications. He is greatly influenced by the words and actions of St. Teresa of Kolkata. He repeatedly quotes her statements that abortion is the "worse poverty" and the "greatest threat to love and peace."

He also equates her simplistic views with that of Pope Francis, dropping any reference to life with dignity, the threat posed by our dominant development mode, or the need for "integral ecology" to address it . . . a term "officially" introduced by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

While I greatly admire St.

Teresa's loving service to India's poor, I disagree with her assessment. However, it explains why so many wealthy promote her and the Knights' model of "charity" and why they financed her beatification.

It doesn't threaten their positions of power, wealth and privilege as co-creating authentic sustainable cultures of life would.

Given Pope Francis signed an expanded scope of study and activity for the Pontifical Academy for Life, I checked the EWTN Pro-Life tab.

EWTN, a rapidly expanding American global media network that does not question our dominant development mode, had referenced Mr. Trump's election and his anti-choice stance. However there was no mention of the expanded scope for the Pontifical Academy for Life. In my last column I mentioned their tab for God and Creation makes no reference of *Laudato Si'*.

It seems the multimillion-dol-

lar investment in cultivating anti-choice legislation as the "only" pro-life issue has paid off to the detriment of hundreds of millions as well as future generations. Now "their" guns are turned on further destroying our capacity to understand the existential threat we are facing and how to effectively engage it to co-create authentic cultures of life.

Cardus, a think-tank that promotes our dominant development mode while calling itself Christian, is mounting a campaign for Canada's 150th anniversary.

Another of the "unregulated capitalist" cluster of institutes, the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, is attacking our public schooling. Both use a version of "freedom of religion" as their divisive and deadly weapon of choice.

I hope and pray more of our church leadership has an epiphany that enables them to assist us co-create authentic cultures of life — fast!



CNS/Tyler Orsburn

WASHINGTON INAUGURATION — A woman holds a pro-immigration sign in Washington prior to the start of U.S. President Donald Trump's swearing-in as the country's 45th president Jan. 20.

An educator, writer and engaged citizen living in Qualicum Beach, B.C., Zarowny is also on the leadership team for her parish's Justice and Life Ministry.

People struggling with gender issues need support

The Editor: It is ironic that on page 2 of the Jan. 4 *Prairie Messenger*, there is an article about Catholic organizations filing suits against federal regulations for anti-discrimination purposes to include sexual orientation and gender identity, while on page 3 there is an article in which Pope Francis is encouraging us to build bridges, not walls.

There is so much we do not understand about orientation and gender. One would think that the church would be in the forefront of promoting understanding and compassion for those of people struggling with gender issues, instead of erecting more walls for them to climb over.

Jesus is to have said that “there are many rooms in my Father’s house.” (John 14:2). I am sure that there are rooms in that house for those of a different orientation or those who struggle with gender issues. God created everyone, whether they conform to the norm or not, in the image and likeness of God. God will not lose anything or anyone whom God created. In the end we will all be in the room created for us from the beginning. If I am not mistaken, this idea is Franciscan theology taught by Bonaventure.

I would encourage bishops in the U.S., Canada and the world over to build bridges in a situation where confusion abounds. Look for common grounds to promote understanding. Look for ways to support

people of different orientation and people struggling with gender issues. Instead of going to the courts, look for ways to settle the matter among ourselves, as instructed by St. Paul (Corinthians 6:1).

Jesus did not build walls. Richard Rohr recently wrote: “Jesus never quotes Scripture which is punitive, imperialistic, wrathful, or exclusionary. He does not mention the list of 28 ‘thou shall nots’ in Leviticus 18 and 20, but chooses to echo the one positive command of Leviticus 19:18: ‘You must love your neighbour as yourself.’”

When dealing with issues as complicated as this, Jesus’ example is the way to go. — **Anthony Chezzi, Sudbury, Ont.**

Doing our part to offset carbon emissions

By John Longhurst, Winnipeg

Jane Fonda received lots of criticism recently for travelling to Alberta to criticize future pipeline construction.

Media outlets, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, noted the apparent inconsistency between her comments about fossil-fuel extraction and how she flew to Alberta, used a helicopter to tour the oilsands, had her voice amplified by a microphone powered by electricity and spoke in a building heated to keep out the cold of a Canadian winter.

On all those charges, Fonda can be found guilty. But so could everyone else concerned about climate change who flies, drives a car, lives in a heated house or uses electricity.

That includes me.

It’s one of the conundrums of our time. Climate change is a significant issue. It threatens everyone on the planet, but modern life is pretty much impossible without the use of fossil fuels.

The conundrum of being concerned about climate change but being reliant on fossil fuels is especially troubling for international relief and development organizations, such as the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, where I work.

For example, every year we support programs that help poor farmers in the developing world

deal with the effects of climate change, people who need to grow their own food to survive. These effects include unpredictable and dramatic weather events, erratic or non-existent rainfall or serious disasters brought on by droughts and floods.

At the same time, every year we need to travel thousands of kilometres to visit these programs, checking on progress, meeting the project participants, ensuring accountability and providing training — and generating the very CO₂ emissions that cause climate change.

It’s a serious and troubling contradiction.

There are two ways we are responding.

First, we try to limit our travel and use other forms of communication.

Second, we track the CO₂ emissions generated by our various forms of travel, as well as other energy use, and make a contribution to our climate fund. At the end of each year, we tabulate the amount of carbon we have generated and make a contribution to the fund, at a rate of \$25 per tonne of carbon.

Since 2013, when our climate fund was created, the Foodgrains Bank has contributed more than \$56,000. Together with money contributed by people and churches across Canada, a total of \$77,000 has been raised for the fund.

Every year, we choose a project in the developing world to receive money from the fund. The money is used by our member organizations to help poor people adapt to the effects of climate change.

This year, the money is being used to support people such as

Yvette Nicholas in Haiti.

Yvette hasn’t been growing her own food for very long, but she knows things are different today than when her parents were her age.

“The older people taught me that rain started in April,” said the 19-year-old. “Now people are planting their gardens in June and July because there’s no rain.”

Across Haiti, rainfall patterns have become erratic over the past number of years; farmers say they can no longer predict when rain will come. In 2015, the situation was exacerbated by El Niño; the country was in the grip of one of the worst droughts in living memory.

Through our member organization Mennonite Central Committee Canada, the Foodgrains Bank is assisting Yvette and 150 others in her community with agriculture and reforestation training and other assistance — things such as seeds, trees to hold soil on the steep hillsides, fencing to keep animals out of gardens and farming advice.

Despite the challenges, Yvette saw progress with her garden.

“These peanuts that I planted, there wasn’t much rain, and I didn’t get as much as I wanted, but I bought two chickens with what I made from them,” she said.

Although the Foodgrains Bank can’t make it rain for Yvette and the millions of other small-scale farmers in the developing world who are affected by a changing climate, we can do some things to help.

This includes tracking our carbon emissions through our climate fund.

We invite others who are concerned about climate change to join us — individuals, churches, businesses and other groups.

Everyone is welcome, including Jane Fonda.



Eva Krawchuk

A Picture Says a Thousand Words

Gentle toddler
an aging family pet
spontaneity
words would have broken the spell.

By Eva Krawchuk

Former SNAP employee
sues for wrongful dismissal

By Kurt Jensen

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A former director of development for Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests has charged in a wrongful termination lawsuit that SNAP is more interested in fundraising and taking kickbacks from lawyers suing the Catholic Church than in helping survivors.

Gretchen Rachel Hammond, in her suit filed Jan. 17 in Cook County Circuit Court in Chicago, further accuses SNAP of being “a commercial organization” and “premised upon farming out abuse survivors as clients for attorneys, who then file lawsuits on behalf of the survivors and collect settlement cheques from the Catholic Church.”

Hammond worked for SNAP from July 2011 to February 2013, and is now a journalist for the *Windy City Times*. She claims she was fired in retaliation for a series of discoveries she made about the way settlements were being handled, and that the stress caused by SNAP’s treatment of her sent her to the hospital four times and resulted in a series of health problems.

She also asserts that SNAP “is motivated by its directors’ and officers’ personal and ideological animus against the Catholic Church.” In 2011, SNAP helped publicize the attempt in Europe to bring charges against Pope Benedict XVI for crimes against humanity in the International Criminal Court.

“The allegations are not true,” SNAP president Barbara Blaine said in a statement sent to Catholic News Service as well as other news organizations. “This will be proven in court. SNAP leaders are now, and always have been, devoted

ed to following the SNAP mission: To help victims heal and to prevent further sexual abuse.”

SNAP, founded in 1989 and based in Chicago, is considered the largest and best-known advocacy organization for survivors of clerical abuse.

The lawsuit alleges that after abuse survivors are referred to attorneys, “these cases often settle, to the financial benefit of the attorneys and, at times, to the financial benefit of SNAP, which has received direct payments from survivors’ settlements.”

SNAP, Hammond claims, “regularly communicates with attorneys about their lawsuits on behalf of survivors, receiving drafts of pleadings and other privileged information.” Attorneys and SNAP “base their strategy not on the best interest of the survivor, but on what will generate the most publicity and fundraising opportunities for SNAP.”

Hammond further claims that the bulk of donations to SNAP have come from attorneys — as much as 81 per cent of the \$437,400 in donations made in 2007 and 56 per cent in 2011.

“Tellingly, at one time, during 2011 and 2012, SNAP even concocted a scheme to have attorneys make donations to a front foundation, styled the Minnesota Center for Philanthropy, and then have the Minnesota Center for Philanthropy “make a grant to SNAP in order to provide a subterfuge for, and to otherwise conceal, the plaintiffs’ attorneys’ kickbacks to SNAP.”

Hammond is not seeking a specific sum in damages but is asking for “compensatory damages, plus pre- and post-judgment interest.”

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Pro-life groups participate in Washington march

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — After being removed from a list of partner organizations for the Women's March on Washington, members of a pro-life group

was a good decision.

"Overall, it was an amazing experience," said Destiny Herndon-De La Rosa, of New Wave Feminists, one of the groups removed as a march sponsor.

"We were prepared for confrontation and instead were supported by so many women," Herndon-De La Rosa told Catholic News Service.

The group posted photos on their Facebook and Instagram accounts of their participation, holding signs that read, "I'm a pro-life feminist."

"They kept coming up and telling us how glad they were that we were there and how, even though they didn't necessarily agree on the abortion issue, they thought it wrong that we were removed as partners," said Herndon-De La Rosa. "It was very cool."

Women like Herndon-De La Rosa marched for a cause. In her group's case, they are concerned about President Donald J. Trump's changing position on abortion and say they wanted him to know they'd be watching what he does on pro-life issues such as abortion, the death penalty and violence.

Others marched to voice disapproval of the new president. Many came from places near and far and after filing past the streets

near Washington's most important institutions, they filled the area near the White House where its newest residents have a direct line of view toward the Washington Monument.

They were hoping the newly minted president would hear or see them and consider what they had to say.

Margie Legowski, a parishioner at Washington's Holy Trinity Catholic Church, said she took to the streets "in support of values that I don't see in this administration." Those values include equality for women and also caring about immigrants who need help.

"I want to take a stand. I don't want to be passive about it," she said. "In our faith we're called to solidarity."

That means standing up against wealth inequality and defending the vulnerable, she said. It's a means of building the kingdom of God on earth and she doesn't see that as a priority for the new president.

Like a lot of women attending the march, she hosted other female friends, nieces and a sister-in-law who lives in Germany, all of whom felt enough conviction to travel to Washington and lend their presence to the numbers of participants.

Jean Johnson, another Holy Trinity parishioner, attended the march with 11 nieces and four grandnieces. They arrived in Washington from around the country, some driving long distances and picking up other family members along the way. She said she felt pride in her large group, particularly because they adopted the values of her Irish Catholic immigrant parents and are concerned about the common good, for women and for others.

She wasn't marching against a cause or person, but rather marching for women's dignity, she said.

"I went to a Catholic school where the nuns told me I'm a temple," she told CNS. "The march is for that dignity."

And she was excited to share that moment with a new generation in her family, she said.

Some women who attended said they didn't feel president Trump valued that dignity, particularly after a leaked recording was aired during the campaign in which he was heard making lewd comments about women to an entertainment reporter.

Jack Hogan, who once worked for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the U.S. bishops' domestic anti-poverty program, said he was attending the march with neighbours and friends because he feels that what Trump has said goes against Catholic social teaching. He said he was hoping other Catholics, as organizations and groups, as well as church leaders, would speak up more forcefully for the poor and vulnerable at this time.

He said worries about the new president's stance on climate change, on the poor and other issues that seem to go against what Pope Francis, as the leader of the Catholic Church, says are important. He said he feels Trump lives and espouses the opposite of what the church values, including family.

As a citizen, "what (Trump) stands for is not what our partici-

patory democracy stands for," Hogan said, adding that he could not celebrate his inauguration. Ever since Trump was elected, Hogan said he has participated in various protests and prayer events with other organizations because he worries about what will happen to the vulnerable in society. The Women's March was one of those instances, he said.

While organizers said the event was to "promote women's equality and defend other marginalized groups," some pro-life groups that wanted to be partners in the march were either removed as official sponsors days before the march — or their application to be a sponsor was ignored.

In an interview before the march, Herndon-De La Rosa told CNS no one contacted her group to give them the news they were taken off a roster of sponsors, but they found out after a flurry of stories about it. The groups And Then There Were None and Students for Life of America also were denied or taken off the Women's March roster.

However, many members of those organizations attended the march.

Vatican Museums open doors with mobile-friendly website

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In an effort to share its masterpieces with even more people around the world, the Vatican Museums has established a YouTube channel and revamped its website to offer high-resolution images and

to be compatible with all platforms and devices in order to extend its reach to even "remote corners of the earth," Barbara Jatta, the museums' new director, said at a Vatican news conference Jan. 23.

The site, offered in five languages, features a sleeker design, simpler texts and faster navigation, Jatta said. Links to pages can also be shared via Twitter, Facebook or email.

The website provides information about booking visits and purchasing tickets to the museums, the Vatican Gardens, the *Via Triumphalis* necropolis under the Vatican hill and the pontifical villas at Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome.

For now, the site showcases a little more than 3,000 high-resolution photographs of masterpieces in its collections. The "ideal" plan, Jatta said, is to complete within one year the addition of photographs of all 20,000 objects currently on public display and then begin working on adding images of all art objects in storage, for a total of more than 200,000 works of art.

The site also allows the public to consult and search an online catalogue of some of the museums' paintings, sculptures and other art objects. While the museums already had a registry of their entire inventory, migrating everything to the public-accessible database is still a work-in-progress, Jatta said.



CNS/Paul Haring

Barbara Jatta

mobile-friendly information.

The *Musei Vaticani* YouTube channel lists short visual "tours" of some of its collections along with a handful of promotional videos highlighting specially tailored tours and services offered on-site, including signing guides for the deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Its website, museivaticani.va, has been completely revamped

associations that are responsible for violence and an abuse of power "stained with human blood."

Communities need to be saved from "corruption, extortion, the illegal trafficking of drugs and weapons, the trafficking of human beings, including so many children who are reduced to slavery," he said.

Terrorist and criminal networks are a global challenge that require a global, effective and determined response, Pope Francis said.

The pope urged them to work especially hard in "fighting human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. These are very grave crimes that hit the weakest of the weak."

As such, "it is necessary to increase efforts in safeguarding victims, providing for legal and social assistance for these broth-

ers and sisters of ours seeking peace and a future," he said.

The pope called on schools, sports, families, Christian parishes and organizations and cultural associations to do more in shaping the moral conscience and building respect for the law in the minds of today's young people.

Pope Francis asked that everyone involved in various mafia organizations stop the harm they are causing and change their ways.

Money made from their "dirty business" and crimes is money that is soaked in blood and leads to "unjust power," he said. "We all know that the devil comes in through the pocket," he added.

Mafioso activities and mindsets need to be fought because they are part of "the culture of death," he said. They have nothing to do with the Christian faith, which always supports life.

Victims of traffickers need protection

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Victims of human trafficking and migrants smuggled across borders by criminal networks are the weakest of the weak and need increased protection and care, Pope Francis said.

"All those who flee their own country because of war, violence and persecution have the right to find an appropriate welcome and adequate protection in countries that describe themselves (as) civilized," he said.

The pope made his remarks during an audience Jan. 23 with about 40 representatives from Italy's national anti-mafia and anti-terrorism office.

He thanked them for their difficult and dangerous work and encouraged them to continue their "extremely essential" efforts in liberating people from criminal

A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words.

— Rachel Naomi Remen