



Solidarity

Saskatoon residents have been expressing solidarity with the Muslim community in the wake of a deadly shooting at an Islamic prayer centre in Quebec City.
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Study sessions

The Catholic and Lutheran churches of Winnipeg are presenting ecumenical study sessions to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.
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Euthanasia threat

Even though medical assistance in dying has been legal in Quebec for almost a year and in Canada for a few months, Bishop Noel Simard has not yet come to terms with this new reality. To him, medically assisted death is just plain euthanasia.
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TV series condemned

The Catholic Women's League and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities have both condemned the Global TV series *Mary Kills People* because they say it seems to glamorize euthanasia.
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Indigenous voices

The strategic plan of St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan speaks of a duty "to make of STM a truly welcoming community where indigenous voices are heard and celebrated," writes Christopher Hrynkow, chair of the Academic Indigenous Working Group at STM.
— page 6

Sundance Film Festival

Opening the day before the inauguration of Donald Trump as U.S. president, the timing of the Sundance festival — the world's premiere showcase for independent cinema, both dramatic and documentary — carried an extra consciousness-raising edge that was evident throughout, writes Gerald Schmitz.
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Bishops address physician-assisted suicide

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

REGINA — The Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan have released three documents offering insights, reflections and guidelines about death, dying and pastoral care in an era of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

Sent to pastors and parishes and posted on diocesan and eparchial websites, the documents include a pastoral letter ("Living Through Our Dying"), a reflection ("Jesus: the Word Who is Life"), and a set of guidelines for priests, deacons and laity providing pastoral care to the sick and dying.

The three texts were released Feb. 6, 2017 — exactly two years after the Supreme Court decision that struck down the ban on physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. The new reality came into effect across the country when Bill C-14 received royal assent in June 2016.

"Priests and chaplains now face the possibility that they will be called to offer pastoral care in complex and painful situations where people are considering or have chosen euthanasia or physician assisted suicide," said Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina. "There is a need and a desire to have resources and clarity. The guidelines and the pastoral letter are meant to serve as tools to help navigate those situations."

In addition to Bolen, the texts were signed by Archbishop Murray Chatlain of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, Bishop Albert Thévenot of the Diocese of Prince Albert, and diocesan administrator Rev. Kevin McGee of Saskatoon. The documents were released in time for the World Day

of the Sick, marked on Feb. 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Within the pastoral guidelines the Saskatchewan bishops have introduced a process whereby priests and lay chaplains faced with complex pastoral situations related to assisted suicide and euthanasia can get assistance in discerning how best to respond.

Priests and those working for

the Catholic Church in pastoral care are asked to contact their bishop for designated resource persons to support discernment "around the pastoral approach to those who have raised the possibility of physician-assisted suicide, or regarding funeral requests for those who have died in this way," state the pastoral guidelines.

"We will have resource people

in our respective dioceses and our eparchy for priests and chaplains to consult," explained Bolen. "This will help us to capture the dual challenge, of responding pastorally to any given situation, while also holding firm to the framework of church teaching. Rather than issuing a set of very precise directives

— CATHOLIC, page 7

Salesians help former child soldiers heal

By Junno Arocho Esteves

ROME (CNS) — While the process of healing and reconciliation continues in Colombia after 52 years of war, Salesians in the country are helping some of the most vulnerable victims of the conflict: former child soldiers.

On the lush green hillsides of Colombia's second-largest city, Medellín, sits *Ciudad Don Bosco* (Don Bosco City), an oasis of peace for young men and women who continue to bear — both physically and mentally — the scars of war and violence.

Two former child soldiers along with Salesian Father Rafael Bejarano, director of *Ciudad Don Bosco*, and James Areiza, the home's program director for child protection, were in Rome Feb. 2 to present a documentary on some of the children's journey toward recovery and reintegration.

The Salesian-produced short film, *Alto de Fuego* (Ceasefire), follows the stories of Catalina and Manuel, two former child-soldiers who are slowly rebuilding their lives at the Salesian house after enduring the carnage of guerrilla warfare at a young age.

Nineteen-year old Catalina — her real name kept hidden —



CNS/Junno Arocho Esteves

COLOMBIA CHILD SOLDIERS — Former child soldiers, Manuel and Catalina, speak to journalists Feb. 2 in Rome at the presentation of *Ceasefire*, a Salesian-produced documentary on the process of recovery and reintegration for former child soldiers of Colombia's 52-year war.

joined the guerrilla group FARC, the Spanish acronym for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, at the age of 13 after

enduring physical abuse by her stepfather and an attempted sui-

— CHILDREN, page 15

Palliative care bill passes to Health Committee

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Bill C-277 calling for a national pallia-



CCN/D. Gyapong

Marilyn Gladu

tive care framework passed the House of Commons unanimously Jan. 31 and now goes to the Health Committee for consideration.

"We're grateful to MP Marilyn Gladu for introducing this much-needed bill," said Campaign Life Coalition Ottawa lobbyist Johanne Brownrigg. Campaign Life was among numerous groups that support the bill, including the Catholic Women's League, the Catholic Organization for Life and Family and an interfaith coalition that included the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"She knows we support it entirely," said Brownrigg. "Hopefully the committee recognizes the need for palliative care, now more than ever."

"I'm pleased to see everybody come together to do the right thing for Canadians," said Gladu

the day after the bill passed second reading.

"There are a few amendments that they want to see: one to include First Nations on the bill and the second is to make sure they are clear on provincial jurisdiction and federal jurisdiction issues," she said.

Gladu acknowledged the Health Committee already has a lot on its agenda, including a study of the opioid crisis, and a study of the impact of violent online pornography, but she expects her bill won't get delayed.

"Palliative care is a priority and I think you can see from the discussion and the all-party support we got last night," she said. "People see this as a priority. We have to move. There's money in the budget so I think it's time for action."

Gladu, who was first elected to the House of Commons in 2015 as the Conservative MP for Sarnia-Lambton, Ont., said she carefully consulted across the aisle with all parties to craft her bill, and relied heavily on the findings of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Palliative Care that released a 2011 report calling for a national palliative care strategy, suicide prevention and elder abuse prevention.

"I would like to congratulate the member for Sarnia-Lambton for following up on the committee's work with this important initiative," Liberal MP Francis Scarpaleggia, an original member of the All-Party committee, told the House Feb. 1.

"Unfortunately, it is not within federal jurisdiction to give, or

— ACCESS, page 4

Hope is more than ‘wishing for something nice’

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christian hope isn’t about believing in something that may or may not come true, like hoping tomorrow’s weather will be pleasant, Pope Francis said.

“Christian hope is the expectation of something that already has been fulfilled and that certainly will be attained for each one of us,” that is, knowing Christ died and is truly risen so that all of humanity may gain salvation and live together with God, the pope said Feb. 1 during his weekly general audience.

Continuing a series of talks on Christian hope, the pope looked at St. Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians (5:4-11) and what it teaches about the Christian belief in life after death.

The early Christian community at Thessaloniki was firm in its belief in Christ’s resurrection, but trusting in one’s own resurrection and the resurrection of loved ones was a bit harder to grasp, the pope said.

Such doubts and uncertainty still exist today as “we all are a little afraid of dying,” he told those gathered in the Paul VI

audience hall.

St. Paul, he said, writes words of encouragement, telling Christians to arm themselves against the onslaught of doubt and difficulties by “putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet that is hope for salvation.”

This kind of hope, the pope said, has nothing to do with wishing for “something nice,” something “that may or may not happen.”

“For example, people say, ‘I hope it will be nice weather tomorrow,’ but we know that it might be terrible weather instead.”

Christian hope isn’t like that, he said. It is belief in “a sure reality” because it is rooted in the real event of Christ’s resurrection and his promise of eternal life with him.

It’s knowing and seeing that “there is a door over there,” he said, pointing to the entryway into the Paul VI audience hall.

“There is a door. I hope to get to the door. What do I have to do? Walk toward the door. I am sure I will make it to the door. That is what Christian hope is like. Being certain that I am walking” with that destination, he said.

Christian hope is living like an expectant mother, the pope said.

“When a woman realizes she is pregnant, she learns to live each day in expectation of seeing her child’s gaze,” he said.

Everyone needs to learn to live each day with this same joyful anticipation — “to live in expectation of gazing at the Lord, of finding the Lord,” he said.

Learning to live in “sure expectation” isn’t easy, but it can be learned, he said.

“A humble, poor heart” knows how to wait, but it is difficult for someone who is “full of himself and his possessions.”

The pope asked everyone to repeat aloud with him St. Paul’s words (1 Thes 4:17) as a way to find peace and consolation, knowing that one day the faithful will be united with God and their loved ones: “Thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

At the end of his main audience talk, the pope greeted members of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, which seeks to act upon the pope’s encyclical *Laudato Si’* and address climate change.

He thanked them for their dedication to “taking care of our common home during this time of serious social-environmental crisis.”



CNS/Paul Haring

GENERAL AUDIENCE — Pope Francis embraces a man while meeting the disabled during his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican Feb. 1. He continued his series of talks on Christian hope.

He encouraged them to continue to expand and strengthen their networks “so that local churches

may respond with determination to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

Religious called to be mothers, fathers

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When religious orders focus on survival rather than on sharing the joy and hope of faith in Jesus, they end up being “professionals of the sacred, but not fathers and mothers,” Pope Francis said.

“The temptation of survival turns what the Lord presents as an opportunity for mission into something dangerous, threatening, potentially disastrous,” the pope told consecrated men and women who joined him Feb. 2 for mass on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord and the World Day for Consecrated Life.

Speaking as a fellow member of a religious order, Pope Francis urged religious to keep alive the faith, hope and audacity of the men and women who founded the orders to which they belong.

“We are heirs to those who have gone before us and had the courage to dream,” he said during the mass, which began with the blessing of candles celebrating the presentation of Christ as the light of the world.

The feast day Gospel reading from St. Luke tells the story of Mary and Joseph bringing the newborn Jesus to the temple in fulfillment of the law. The elderly and pious Simeon and Anna are in the temple and rejoice when they see Jesus, recognizing him as the Messiah.

Simeon and Anna, the pope said, testified that “life is worth living in hope because the Lord keeps his promise.”

The pope said religious have inherited Simeon and Anna’s hymn of hope from their founders and elders, who “had the courage to dream.”

Hope in the Lord and the prophetic announcement of his presence “will protect us from a



CNS/Paul Haring

WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE — Pope Francis celebrates mass marking the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Feb. 2. The mass also marked the World Day for Consecrated Life.

temptation that can make our consecrated life barren: the temptation of survival” and of preserving institutions above all else, said the pope, a member of the Jesuit order.

“The mentality of survival makes us reactionaries, fearful, slowly and silently shutting ourselves up in our houses and in our own preconceived notions,” he said. “It makes us look back to the glory days — days that are past — and rather than rekindling the prophetic creativity born of our founders’ dreams, it looks for shortcuts in order to evade the challenges knocking on our doors today.

“A survival mentality robs our charisms of power, because it leads us to ‘domesticate’ them, to make them ‘user-friendly,’ robbing

them of their original creative force,” Pope Francis continued. “It makes us want to protect spaces, buildings and structures, rather than to encourage new initiatives.”

The temptation of survival, he said, “turns us into professionals of the sacred but not fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters of that hope to which we are called to bear prophetic witness.”

Like Mary and Joseph, religious are called to bring Jesus into the midst of his people, the pope said. “Only this will make our lives fruitful and keep our hearts alive.”

All Christians, but especially those consecrated with the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, are called to be the leaven of the Gospel in the world, he said.

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican’s doctrinal chief said some bishops are interpreting Pope Francis’ document on marriage and family in a way that is not in accordance with Catholic doctrine.

“I don’t like it. It is not correct that many bishops are interpreting *Amoris Laetitia* according to their own way of understanding the teaching of the pope. This is not in line with Catholic doctrine,” said Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In an interview published Feb. 1 with Italian magazine *Il Timone*, Müller said the interpretation of *Amoris Laetitia* falls solely to the pope or the Vatican’s doctrinal congregation.

“To all these (bishops) who are talking too much, I urge them to study first the doctrine (of the councils) on the papacy and the episcopate,” the cardinal said. “The bishop, as teacher of the Word, must himself be the first to be well formed so as not to fall into the risk of the blind leading the blind.”

In their directives on how to apply the pope’s teachings in their dioceses, some bishops have indicated a possibility that after a serious process of accompaniment and discernment, some divorced and civilly remarried couples may be able to receive sacramental absolution and the eucharist; other bishops have said the pastoral accompaniment and discernment should help those couples recognize they are still part of the church and encourage them to live without sexual relations if they want to receive the sacraments.

Müller, who said in an interview Jan. 9 that the teaching in the pope’s exhortation is clear, told *Il Timone* that a contradiction between personal conscience and doctrine “is impossible” and that no circumstances exist where “an

act of adultery does not constitute a mortal sin.”

If a Catholic has not obtained an annulment of their sacramental marriage, entering into a new relationship would be considered adultery.

While the pope’s apostolic exhortation emphasizes the importance of the sacrament of reconciliation in accompanying penitents on the path to receiving the eucharist, Müller said that contrition, the resolve to sin no more and confession are requirements that must also be respected.

“This is the dogmatic doctrine of the church, independent of the fact that people may or may not accept it. We are called to help people — bit by bit — to gather the fullness of their relationship with God, but we cannot make concessions,” he said.

Pope Francis’ teaching on the family, he continued, is a help for those living in situations that are not in keeping with the “moral and sacramental principles” of the church, but want to comply.

Nevertheless, he added, the church cannot justify irregular situations “that are not in accordance with divine will.”

When asked if the abstinence requirement for divorced and remarried couples who cannot separate still stands, Müller said that the requirement is “not dispensable.”

Müller highlighted the need for bishops to read *Amoris Laetitia* in its entirety rather than choosing and citing brief passages. He also said that the “task of priests and bishops is not to create confusion but to clarify.”

“It is not *Amoris Laetitia* that has provoked a confusing interpretation, but rather some of its confused interpreters,” the cardinal said. “We must all understand and accept the doctrine of Christ and of his church and, at the same time, be ready to help others to understand it and put in practice even in difficult situations.”

Saskatoon residents show solidarity with Muslims

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Local residents and community leaders have been expressing solidarity with the Muslim community in the wake of a Jan. 29 deadly shooting at an Islamic prayer centre in Quebec City.

Alexandre Bissonnette, a 27-year-old student at Laval University, has been charged with six counts of first-degree murder and several counts of attempted murder in the shooting at *Centre Culturel Islamique de Quebec*, which left six men dead and some 20 others wounded.

Many are also speaking out against the American president's executive order, signed two days before the shooting, which bans refugees, migrants and foreign nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

A number of local prayer services and public rallies have been held, including a public prayer service at the Islamic Centre in Saskatoon Jan. 30, public rallies Jan. 30 in Regina, Jan. 31 in Saskatoon, and Feb. 2 in Prince Albert, events at the University of Saskatchewan, as well as an inter-faith prayer service Feb. 5 at St. John's Anglican Cathedral in Saskatoon.

The Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan were among leaders in

the community to address the shooting at the mosque, sending a message to the Muslim community Jan. 30 expressing sorrow and solidarity.

"We stand together with you and leaders of all faith communities in condemning violence, particularly violence in the name of God, whose name is peace. Violence profanes the name of God," wrote the bishops.

"Such inconceivable violence violates both the sacredness of human life as well as the respect due to a community at prayer and its place of worship," said the statement, signed by Archbishop Donald Bolen of the Archdiocese of Regina, Archbishop Murray Chatlain of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Eparchy of Saskatoon, Bishop Albert Thévenot of the Diocese of Prince Albert, and diocesan administrator Rev. Kevin McGee of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

The message quoted Pope Francis' 2017 message for the World Day of Peace: "May we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words, and deeds, to becoming non-violent people and to building non-violent communities that care for our common home. Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in



Kiply Yaworski

WINTER VIGIL — Hundreds gathered in the cold Jan. 31 for an outdoor vigil at Saskatoon City Hall in support of those killed in a mosque shooting in Quebec, and those affected by the U.S. travel ban on travel from seven Muslim countries.

prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace."

The executive order restricting travel to the U.S. has affected students, faculties and staff at Canada's 97 member universities, according to a statement from Universities Canada. The order poses an impediment "to the free flow of people and ideas and to the values of diversity, inclusion and openness that are hallmarks of a strong and healthy society."

Hundreds attended the Saska-

toon rally held at City Hall Jan. 31, braving bitter cold under a crescent moon to express sorrow, stand in solidarity, and call for action in response to recent events. Many held candles during the hour-long vigil, while others signed a declaration of support, or carried signs calling for peace and inclusion. The rally opened with a prayer and song by a First Nations elder.

Organizer Arisha Nazir, a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in Saskatoon, said the event was held to show solidarity and support to all people affected by the Muslim ban and other actions of the U.S. government, as well as to express sorrow and support for the family and friends of those killed or hurt in the tragic attack on the Sainte Foy mosque.

During the vigil Arif Juma, director of religious affairs at the Islamic Centre of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon), said, "We as Canadians condemn this act of terror. In Canada there is no room for such hate."

Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark also spoke, standing alongside six city councilors. He described a special meeting of council earlier that day, held to address the U.S. travel ban and the tragic events in Quebec City.

Clark read statements issued by city council about the recent events. "Saskatoon has a long history of being a safe place of arrival for people seeking refuge, beginning with the welcome received from the First Nations people to the first settlers on this land. In just the past 13 months, individuals and groups throughout our community have been supporting hundreds of people from Syria and Iraq fleeing conflict and persecution on their home soil," said the first statement about the American president's executive order.

"We offer any support that we can to Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Wall in their commitment to assist people affected by the U.S. travel ban, and we will continue to welcome refugees and new Canadians to Saskatoon because we believe that our strength as a city lies in our capacity to be inclusive, resilient and a compassionate city for all."

Standing below flags lowered

to half-mast, Clark continued, reading council's statement about the shooting: "We condemn all acts of violence, and this is a chance for all of us in Saskatoon to stand together, neighbour-to-neighbour, to ensure everyone feels safe in our community. Our strength is when we work together, continue to build relationships based on understanding and respect with each other, and show that all peoples of faiths are valued and important in our community."

Don Kossick also spoke, suggesting that Saskatoon officially become a "Sanctuary City," joining communities across the United States that are protecting undocumented citizens and others across Canada that are reaching out to assist stranded travellers and to welcome refugees.

Ayisha Kurji, a physician specializing in pediatrics in Saskatoon, described her initial fear of speaking out at the rally. "I was afraid. Afraid to identify myself as a Muslim, afraid to speak up, afraid I wouldn't have the words, that I would say something that would offend or be taken out of context, that I would be judged," she said, but added that she reconsidered when considering how to explain this to her young children.

Kurji said she turned to her faith and the call to show kindness and compassion. "Families were hurt, and that is not okay. These families feel alone now, and so we are here. We light candles for them and we show them we are with them, so they feel stronger, and those that made the bad choices they made will know that we will not let this happen; that this is not okay. It is not fair and it is not OK."

She added: "My faith does not teach me to hurt. It teaches me to love. My faith does not teach me that there is only one way to God. It teaches me that there are many. My faith does not teach me that I am less because I am a woman. It teaches me that I am equal. And so I am sharing my voice with you, because I am lucky enough to have one, and because our voices are the most powerful thing that we have. We need to speak up and we need to speak out."

Joel Schindel, a family physician and a member of the Muslim chaplaincy team at the University of Saskatchewan, called on the crowd to address the rise of Islamophobia, which he described as "one of the main issues that has contributed to this horrific tragedy," and stressed the importance of creating safe spaces on campus and in the community for all people.

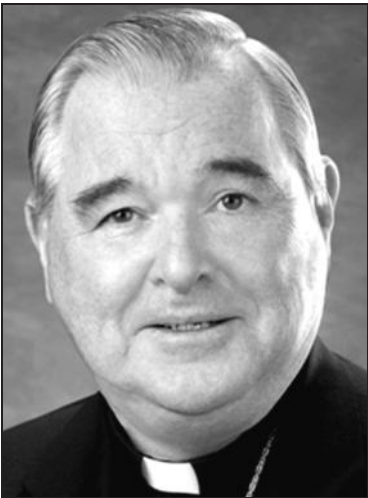
He said that Muslims are eager to engage their neighbours — and not just at times of tragedy. "We are waiting to engage you, because we are your neighbours; we are your classmates, your teachers, your co-workers, your doctors, your lawyers, your bus drivers — and we would love for all of you to do whatever you can to strive to better understand the way of life that we call Islam."

Working against Islamophobia and hatred will result in a better city, a better province and a better country, Schindel said.

Lutheran-Catholic study sessions held

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The Catholic and Lutheran churches of Winnipeg are presenting ecumenical study sessions to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.



Archbishop Richard Gagnon

Co-chairs of the Roman Catholic-Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada working group for the 500th Year Commemoration of the Reformation are Roman Catholic Archbishop of Winnipeg Richard Gagnon and Rev. Susan Johnson, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

The bishops will join in the five gatherings, under the banner of "Together in Christ," for conversation, study and prayer at Lutheran and Catholic churches, one each month from February to June. The first session is Feb. 28 at Lutheran Church of the Cross on Arlington Street. The evening will begin with a Shrove Tuesday

Pancake Supper.

Designated Lutheran and Catholic parishes in rural Manitoba are making their own arrangements to host and gather for some or all of the five ecumenical study sessions. Dates and venues for sessions outside of Winnipeg will be announced as plans are finalized.

The study sessions will touch on some of the events and theological questions surrounding the Reformation and advancements in reconciliation which have occurred over the past 50 years.

The Winnipeg sessions will each feature a different theme connected to the commemoration of the Reformation based on the document, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*, a product of Lutheran and Roman Catholic dialogue over the past 50 years; and the theological agreement outlined in *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, signed in 1999.

In a letter last year to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Gagnon explained the "immense significance" of the events of Oct. 31, 2016, at the 1,000-year-old Lutheran cathedral in Lund, Sweden, when Pope Francis joined with leaders of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The LWF bishop, Dr. Munib A. Younan, and general secretary, Rev. Dr. Martin Junge, participated with Pope Francis "in a communal liturgy highlighting the fruits of Lutheran-Catholic dialogue."

Gagnon states that the gathering in Lund served as an opportu-

nity for Catholics and Lutherans to commemorate together the Reformation through a symposium and using a liturgical service entitled *Common Prayer*, "one of the fruits of the Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration document."

The Lund meeting, writes the archbishop, was part of the "reception process of this document and is meant to reverberate throughout the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church during 2017."

"In Canada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada have formed a joint working group to develop a study guide for Lutherans and Catholics at the local level to commemorate the Reformation together in light of their common baptism and the principles agreed to in the document. Commenting on the mutual commemoration, Pope Francis stated, 'I believe that it is truly important for everyone to confront in dialogue the historical reality of the Reformation, its consequences and the responses it elicited.'"

The archbishop also quotes Junge, who said at the Lund gathering, "I am convinced that by working toward reconciliation between Lutherans and Catholics, we are working toward justice, peace and reconciliation in a world torn apart by conflict and violence."

The full schedule of dates and locations for the "Together in Christ" sessions can be found on the Archdiocese of Winnipeg and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod websites.

Euthanasia could be seen as moral obligation: bishop

By Philippe Vaillancourt

VALLEYFIELD, Quebec (CNS) — Even though medical assistance in dying has been legal in Quebec for almost a year and



Diocese of Valleyfield

Bishop Noel Simard

in Canada for a few months, Bishop Noel Simard of Valleyfield has not yet come to terms with this new reality. To him, medically assisted death is just plain euthanasia.

Simard acted as a spokesperson for Quebec and Canada's Catholic bishops on issues related to life. The bishops have not been able to persuade the legislators to refrain from legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide. Despite his numerous interventions on the issue, Simard had to watch this new paradigm reshape the Canadian medical world.

"This 'medical assistance in dying' is a threat to the foundations of our society," he said, arguing that it challenges some basic values: the way laws used to prohibit homicide and the way medical personnel are expected to treat their patients.

Vaillancourt is editor of the Montreal-based Presence info.

In the past few years Simard has been one of the most vocal Canadian bishops on this issue. He sometimes used harsh words to express his opposition to euthanasia.

In the early 1990s, in his early years as a priest, he accompanied a score of terminally ill AIDS patients in Sudbury, Ont. When he recalled those years, his voice became soft and muffled by emotion.

"I've seen people die, many. We all assume that terminally ill patients desperately wish to die. But it isn't the case: What they long for, first and foremost, is someone to hold their hand and accompany them," said Simard.

He said this whole process helps them give meaning to their suffering and reclaim for themselves some dignity.

"Too often, we tend to limit one's dignity to his ability to interact, to speak, and to remain conscious. But dignity shouldn't be related to a capacity: dignity is intrinsically and inherently attached to us, as a human being. And that intrinsic dignity remains attached to us, no matter what happens," the bishop said.

"Each individual is becoming his own standard. He's offered values of self-fulfilment through pleasure. No wonder suffering is being thrown away. It's an obstacle to pleasure and enjoyment. In a hedonistic and epicurean society such as ours, suffering is a nonsense that needs to be eliminated. When I'll no longer be able to enjoy myself, help me get out of here," said Simard.

In today's society, one's ultimate value is too often determined by what he or she can produce, said Simard.

"When we're no longer able to produce the things that are valued by our society, we become a burden," said the former ethics professor. "What our society is saying to us is that one's worth is determined by his ability to produce

and to contribute. That specific context is a direct threat for the sick, the crippled and the weak."

The bishop said he was troubled when he saw a study recently published by the Canadian Medical Association suggesting that medical assistance in dying could eventually allow the country's health care system to save \$139 million yearly. Such projections are Simard's worst fears.

"My biggest worry is that euthanasia — now enshrined as a right — will become a (moral) duty. I'm afraid that pressures will be exerted on individuals to make sure they ask to be euthanized, because they've become a

burden, an expense," said Simard. "Beyond medical euthanasia, one must be particularly attentive to 'social euthanasia' that abandons and casts some people aside, instead of helping and accompanying the most vulnerable members of our society."

In the past few months, the Canadian Catholic Church has had debates about the pastoral attitude to use with people who choose a medically induced death. Bishops from Alberta and the Northwest Territories opted to refuse funeral rites or sacraments to people that deliberately want to be euthanized. The Atlantic bishops said funeral rites could be offered. In Quebec, the Assembly

of Catholic Bishops simply published a document to offer some spiritual guidance to terminally ill people. The Saskatchewan bishops released their statement Feb. 6 (see story, page 1).

Simard said he was not surprised to see so many church debates around the pastoral responses to medical assistance in dying. As the official statistics reveal that more and more Canadians opt for euthanasia, the church must continue its reflection on "how to communicate Christ's message, as well as the teaching of the church, so to offer some compassion and a soothing and healing voice to broken hearts," he said.



RNS/Reuters/Chris Wattie

MOURNERS PRAY — Mourners pray during a funeral ceremony in Montreal Feb. 2 for three of the victims of the deadly shooting at the Quebec Islamic Cultural Centre in Quebec City. At a second funeral in Quebec City for the other three victims, Imam Hassan Guillet's message resonated across the country: "Let's go from today to be a real society, united. The same way we are united today in our sorrow and in our pain, let us start today to be united in our dreams, our hopes and our plans for the future. Let the future that our friends planned for their kids, let us build this future ourselves too. In this way we will respect their memory. Revenge will do nothing."

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More access needed

Continued from page 1

require provinces and territories to give, access to palliative care," he said. "That said, the federal government is well placed to support the efforts of the provinces and territories and stakeholder organizations, by focusing on aligning and extending federal levers in relation to health care system improvements."

But he noted the government can use leverage to make palliative care funding part of its health agreements with the provinces.

"Given the federal government's duty to the First Nations communities, it is essential that they be at the discussion table to express their needs," said NDP MP Christine Moore during the debate. "In addition, there are enormous needs for palliative care in indigenous communities, because there are virtually no projects. Often the communities are too small, so the feeling is that resources cannot be allocated specifically to palliative care."

In the closing remarks of her

second and final hour of debate on the bill, Gladu pointed out only 30 per cent of Canadians have access to palliative care "that allows them to choose to live as well as they can for as long as they can."

"Bill C-277 is the next action required to define the services to be covered, to bring standard training requirements to the various levels of care providers, to come with a plan and mechanism to ensure consistent access for all Canadians, and to collect the data to ensure success," she said. "Canada has an ever-growing number of individuals of all ages experiencing chronic and terminal conditions. Good palliative care covers a wide range of services, as we have heard, such as acute care, hospice care, home care, crisis care, and spiritual and psychological counselling."

After going through the Health Committee, the bill, with any amendments, will come back to the House of Commons for a vote on third reading before passing over to the Senate.

CWL and disabilities council condemn TV series

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Catholic Women’s League (CWL) and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) have both condemned the Global TV series *Mary Kills People* that seems to glamorize euthanasia.

“A lot of our members are really concerned,” said League president Margaret Ann Jacobs in an interview. “I watched the trailer. It was appalling and really upsetting to me.”

“Death by any means is not glamorous and should not be portrayed as such,” said a news release by the League on behalf of the executive representing more than 82,000 members. “League sisters are encouraged to contact Global Television Network and request the removal of *Mary Kills People* from the television lineup.”

“Members are also encouraged to use this moment to discuss compassionate end-of-life options

with loved ones, educate themselves about assisted suicide and pray for those who are considering taking their own lives,” the CWL said.

The miniseries, which began Jan. 25, also alarms the Council of Canadians with Disabilities.

“My main concern is that it’s making a hero out of someone who basically euthanizes people,” said Amy Hasbrouck, director of *Toujours Vivant* Not Dead Yet, a project of CCD.

“There’s no consideration of the possibility of palliative care; it’s dismissed out of hand,” said Hasbrouck. “The assumption is a terminal diagnosis inevitably leads to suffering, but the nature of the suffering is never discussed and the only alternative is euthanasia or assisted suicide,” she said.

“As soon as disability is going to be portrayed, (it will convey) the assumption life with a disability is a fate worse than death,”



CCN/D. Gyapong
Amy Hasbrouck

Hasbrouck said.

According to Global TV, *Mary Kills People* features “an ER doctor who maintains a sideline within the hospital as an ‘angel of death,’ working outside the bound-

aries of the law to help terminally ill patients end their lives so they can go out on their own terms.”

“CCD is worried that celebrating a euthanasia doctor as the hero of the drama is meant to portray euthanasia as a desirable response to disability and terminal illness, and is nothing short of propaganda,” said a Jan. 24 CCD release. “We are also especially concerned that *Mary Kills People* will advance the ‘better dead than disabled’ message so common in fictional portrayals of euthanasia and assisted suicide, such as *Me Before You*, and *Million Dollar Baby*.”

The CCD wrote Global TV a letter last fall, Hasbrouck said, raising concerns the series might violate CRTC’s Equitable Portrayal Code.

Under the CRTC’s guidelines, programs are “not supposed to discriminate against any group, or portray hatred against a particular group,” Hasbrouck said. “When people with disabilities are portrayed with the idea life with disability is a fate worse than death, that perpetuates a negative view of people with disabilities and that’s our principal concern.”

In a statement via email from a media spokesperson, Global TV defended the series as balanced.

“As a national broadcaster, we want to assure you that it is not our intention to promote or oppose any topic but rather to include varied and relevant content in our lineup that represents

and engages our diverse audience,” Global TV said. “While this fictional series does feature assisted dying, it does not sensationalize this controversial topic or encourage any one point of view. *Mary Kills People* is mindful to include various perspectives on the issue of assisted death, including those who do not agree with its practice.”

Mary Kills People “does not encourage one point of view,” the statement said. “It is ultimately centred around the character of Dr. Mary Harris, a dedicated ER doctor who believes in doing everything she can to save lives.”

“Dr. Harris ensures that she explores all the medical alternatives available to her patients,” Global TV said. “Once she has exhausted these options, she respects the wishes of those who have made the decision to end their lives. These characters all have their own unique stories and reasons for reaching this decision, but none are treated lightly. This is a sensitive topic and all storylines are depicted with the utmost respect and dignity.”

Jacobs said she received a version of this statement in response to her complaint to Global TV.

“I am choosing not to support Global TV in this,” the CWL president said. “My biggest concern is they are glamorizing something that isn’t glamorous.”

Jacobs said good palliative care is the answer to providing care for people who are dying.

‘Catholic’ means having a wide vision: Penna

By Glen Argan
Special to the Prairie Messenger

EDMONTON — Catholic educators must stir their students with a grand vision of goodness and beauty that can transform society, Rev. Stefano Penna told Catholic education leaders from across Alberta.

“The teacher who gives beauty doesn’t teach what the kid wants to hear; they teach what the kid needs to hear,” Penna told a Feb. 4 Conversation on Catholic Education and Contemporary Secular Society at the St. Anthony Teacher Centre.

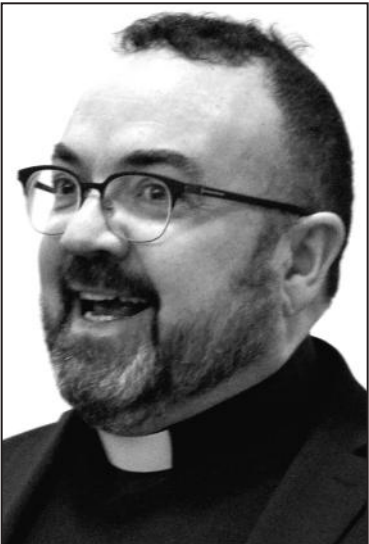
Penna recalled telling students at Edmonton’s Archbishop MacDonald High School the previous day, “Don’t be small; don’t aim at small things. Don’t let people tell you that your marks, your paycheque, your little group is your identity, that that’s what you are.”

“‘Catholic’ means a wide vision, so live for something powerful and real, for something that is worthy. Live for God. Don’t let yourself be treated as an object.”

Penna, a priest of the Saskatoon diocese, is now director of the Benedict XVI Institute for New Evangelization at Newman Theological College in Edmonton. The college and St. Joseph’s College at the University of Alberta sponsored the day of “conversation.”

Penna quoted Pope Francis —

the first high school teacher to become pope — as saying the challenge of education today is not to teach students what to think or how to think, but simply to think.



Glen Argan
Rev. Stefano Penna

If there is no search for truth and students are simply left with their own opinions, according to the pope, then there is no solution to the global economic crisis, no tool with which to critique pornography and the enslavement of women, Penna related.

If there is no truth, but only opinions, then there is no structure for freedom, he said.

“Kids come to us in a culture that loves tickling and distracting their ears,” Penna said. To accept that approach would be to give students a small vision. That would be “a complete betrayal” of the Catholic vision of the human person.

Beyond the secular world of the fragmented self and a lack of meaning, the Catholic vision is one where science, nature, spirituality and faith each have their part in “a harmonious ordered whole,” he said.

“The only reason we engage ourselves in the field of education is the hope for a new mankind in another possible world. The possible world is the reign of God.”

The eucharist is what shapes the Catholic understanding of the human person, he said. Just as the Holy Spirit transforms the elements of bread and wine into Christ’s body and blood, so the Spirit “transforms our humanity to be the bread of the new world.”

“This gives us wings, opens up horizons beyond the crippling demands of the present moment.”

Evolution: the way God created the world

By Glen Argan
Special to the Prairie Messenger

EDMONTON — By embracing the theory of evolution, Pope John Paul II became “one of the great heroes in science and religion,” says a University of Alberta professor.

The late pope was one of the most important people in “breaking through the warfare model of science and religion always being in conflict,” said Denis Lamoureux, who teaches a course in science and religion at St. Joseph’s College at the university.

Lamoureux heralded Pope John Paul’s 1996 statement that evolution is “more than an hypothesis.”

“In other words, evolution is not a problem. It should be seen as the way God created the world.”

However, he said, “Somehow the message did not get out to the church, to the pews.”

A poll conducted by ABC News in 2004 found that 51 per cent of U.S. Catholics believe the world was created in six days and that Genesis 1 presents a literally accurate account of creation.

What the creation accounts in Genesis actually teach, Lamoureux said, is “big ideas” — that God created the universe and life, that humans are created in God’s image, and that creation is good and we need to care for it.

He spoke Feb. 4 at A Conversation on Catholic Education and Contemporary Secular Society sponsored by St. Joseph’s College and Newman Theological College.

People from 20 Catholic colleges or school districts across Alberta attended the event.

The professor, who has doctorates in both biology and theology as well as in dentistry, is the author of several books, including *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!*

His career, he said, has been one of trying to overcome the divide between evolution and creation. In that divide, “You’re either on the evolution side or the creation side; you’re either buying modern science or Christian faith; you either accept God or you reject God; you either accept morality or immorality.”

“I cannot tell you how embedded this dichotomy is.”

In fact, he said, there are more than two positions on evolution, and then proceeded to outline five of them, two of which accept both a divine creator and biological evolution.

Lamoureux devoted one chapter of his recent book to “the religious evolution” of Charles Darwin who put forward the theory of evolution in his 1859 book, *The Origin of Species*.

Darwin, he said, “was not a Darwinist. He was never an atheist.”

Darwin did oppose the prevailing view that the universe was very old, but that each form of life was independently created by God. The evidence, he wrote, accords better with the view that evolution is the result of “the laws impressed on matter by the Creator.”

Lamoureux said Darwin

“crushes” the dichotomy between faith and science. He believed in both a personal God and God’s intelligent design of the universe.

Lamoureux presented the gathering with a comment from a course evaluation by a Catholic student who said she was disappointed with the Catholic school system for not teaching the relationship between science and religion.



Glen Argan
Denis Lamoureux

“This course really helped me to regain faith and see I could be both scientific and religious,” she wrote.

Students, the professor said, come to his class believing that one must choose between evolution and faith, but by the end of the 12-week course, 85 per cent say they have changed their views dramatically.

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Reformation poses a challenge to Christians

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The commemoration of 500 years of the Reformation poses a spiritual and

theological challenge to Christians, said Rev. Dirk G. Lange in a public lecture presented Jan. 26, part of the De Margerie Series on Christian Reconciliation and

Unity in Saskatoon.

Originally from Winnipeg, Lange is an associate dean and professor of worship at Luther College in St. Paul, Minn. He is also project officer for the global Joint Commemoration of the Reformation being prepared by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and a Lutheran member of the International Joint Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Commission.

The Reformation was an event that affected the life of the church and the faith of millions, said Lange, tackling the question of how the past 500 years might be celebrated in 2017. “Can Catholics and Lutherans say and do anything together on this significant anniversary, and if so, what would it be?”

He reflected on the unique document from the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, entitled *From Conflict to Communion*, which was prepared to mark the common commemoration of the Reformation anniversary in 2017.

The document includes sections

on commemorating this anniversary in an ecumenical and global age, as well as on considering new perspectives related to Martin Luther, the Reformation and the Catholic response, and examining themes of Martin Luther’s theology in light of Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues.

The document and the anniversary invite all the faithful on a spiritual and a theological journey, he said.

“It is meant to be read and studied by anyone in our parishes interested in understanding what Catholics and Lutherans can say to one another today, based on our history,” Lange said.

He pointed to five ecumenical imperatives that conclude “From Conflict to Communion,” citing the first all-encompassing imperative: Catholics and Lutherans should always begin from the perspective of unity, and all that is held in common, rather than from a point of view of division, and that Catholics and Lutherans should “witness together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world.”

The document concludes by affirming “The beginnings of the Reformation will be rightly remembered when Lutherans and Catholics hear together the Gospel of Jesus Christ and allow themselves to be called anew into community with the Lord.”

Lange also offered reflections on the events of the Joint Commemoration of the Reformation held Oct. 31, 2016, in Sweden to open a “year-long vigil” leading up to the 500th anniversary in October 2017.

As one of the co-ordinators of that event, Lange expressed the hope that it might serve as a “symbol of what we wish to do together and how we wish to commemorate together,” while offering a model for other groups seeking to mark the anniversary.

Rather than a conference or a symposium, the event featured common prayer, Lange noted. “A liturgy launched this commemoration of the 500 years.”

Worship was jointly led by Pope Francis and the president of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop Munib A. Younan, Lutheran bishop of Jordan and the Holy Land. The liturgy was held at the Lund Cathedral: built as a Catholic cathedral in the 12th century, it became a Lutheran cathedral after the Reformation in the 16th century.

“In this liturgy, both Lutherans and Catholics gave thanks for the gifts that the Reformation brought to the church, they lamented and repented of the division and the violence that ensued, and they committed themselves to a common witness and service.”

A larger public event at the Malmö Arena focused on the commitment to common witness and service of Catholics and Lutherans in a world, wounded and broken by conflict.

“The origins of this joint commemoration lie in 50 years of dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans,” Lange said. The celebration’s origins can also be traced back to the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justifica-

tion” signed by the World Lutheran Federation and the Catholic Church in 1999.

The Lutheran-Catholic dialogue continues to work on questions that remain to be answered, especially on questions of church, ministry, and eucharist, he said. “The next round of the joint commission is addressing the question, if we are one in baptism, why aren’t we one at the table?”

Lange also pointed to the ever-relevant question, “As people of faith, how does our witness today continually point to the life, the death and resurrection of Jesus?”

For instance, he pointed to “a deep, unnamed anxiety or anguish today, similar to the 16th century fear of punishment — the anguish of separation or isolation . . . a deep yearning for communion.”

Lange cited the emotional moment when a delegation from a small Catholic parish in the Swedish community processed into the cathedral as part of a liturgy the night before Pope Francis arrived at the joint commemoration event at Lund Cathedral in 2016. “Tears and emotion in the cathedral expressed this deep longing for reconciliation. In that moment, in that procession, we all glimpsed, felt, touched unity,” he said. “It was at that moment that I realized the wounds of separation are deep-seated in the hearts of people.”

This is true for the entire human family, he said, pointing to the Canadian documentary film *Reserve 107*, which highlights the same longing for reconciliation in a different context — among the Young Chippewyan First Nation, Lutherans and Mennonite communities just north of Saskatoon.

“Here we see in our own backyard, on Treaty 6 land, a journey that renders reconciliation real from the head to the heart, from paper to actual lives, from an idea into a communion. In that movement, something of the foundation, the root, the ground of our humanity, our inter-connectedness and the goodness of humanity is revealed. And when that goodness is revealed, something of God’s immeasurable goodness is also revealed to the world,” Lange said.

For 50 years, Catholics and Lutherans have been part of an intense dialogue, but with the commemoration of 500 years of the Reformation, dialogue gives way to liturgy, to prayer, to common witness and service, Lange said.

“The very fact that the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church are together commemorating, giving thanks, lamenting, and committing to joint witness and service is a huge symbolic gesture in itself,” he said.

“Reconciliation is a work that is never completed, it is not just a Catholic-Lutheran issue, it is one for all the faithful,” he said. “The common prayer becomes a call to us, a commitment. We enter the next 500 years in dialogue, yes, but in prayer and action together. We will struggle, we will fuss, we will admonish and console each other as we attempt to engage that ongoing reformation of the church, of our lives and our society.”



Kiply Yaworski

DE MARGERIE LECTURE — Dr. Darren Dahl, executive director of the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, Rev. Bernard de Margerie, and guest speaker Rev. Dirk Lange at the De Margerie Lecture held Jan. 26 at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

Indigenous voices to be celebrated

By Christopher Hrynkow

SASKATOON — The strategic plan of St. Thomas More College (STM) at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) speaks of a duty “to make of STM a truly welcoming community where indigenous voices are heard and celebrated.”

On Jan. 17, STM’s Academic Indigenous Working Group held an event in support of this imperative. Four panelists came together to help the college community answer the question: What does a Catholic college need to know to be truly welcoming for indigenous people? This question-based approach was chosen because it encourages the type of listening on the part of Catholic institutions that is part of the spirit of the truth and reconciliation process that continues across the country.

The panelists were offered tobacco before they spoke in order to follow protocol and to bring into being a sense of accountability in terms of the knowledge they shared in this public form. All the panelists mentioned personal connections to Catholic education, which helped to set the stage for their contributions that evening.

First to speak was Marie Battiste, a Mi’kmaq educator from Potlotek First Nation and a professor in the School of Education at the U of S. She poignantly laid out a requirement for decolonization in education, emphasizing the importance of empowering indigenous people to negotiate the divide between indigenous knowledge and university qualifications. Battiste further emphasized the need for anti-racist education as a

basis to build quality relationships that will provide lasting foundations for success after indigenous students have completed their formal education.

Next up was John Merasty, a 65-year-old member of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation in his third year of Environment and Society at U of S. Merasty spoke about the significance of basic gestures that make room for indigenous students, including handshakes, greetings, the exchanging of gifts, smudging and powwows. He later recounted his personal experience of abuse at residential school and his appreciation of systematic abuse in those schools being acknowledged in STM’s classrooms.

Merasty was followed by Verna St. Denis of the U of S’s Department of Educational Foundations, who is both Cree and Métis and a member of the Beardsy’s and Okemasis First Nation. She argued for anti-racist, anti-colonial education as a path to heal the legacy of cultural genocide that is a deeply regrettable product of Catholic-indigenous encounters. St. Denis also spoke of the need for allies among settler academics, who are willing to listen and learn from indigenous voices.

Erica Violet Lee, a Nehiyaw woman from inner-city Saskatoon and Thunderchild First Nation who helped to start the Idle No More movement and who has co-taught a philosophy course at STM, rounded out the panel contributions. Lee emphasized the need to more fully recognize the importance of indigenous knowledge at the college. She also called on settlers to ensure that they fulfil the treaty obligation for tuition-free access to university education for indigenous students, particularly from northern communities. Additionally, Lee addressed the need to create faculty positions for indigenous academics at STM.

STM’s Academic Indigenous

working group met the next day to begin acting on the insights shared by the panelists. This response was organized under three pillars, each accompanied by an initiative that is now in process.

Under the “Support” pillar, the working group is establishing a “Reconciliation Bursary” specifically for indigenous students from northern communities. Under the “Learn” pillar, the college is now planning a 14-session version of the U of S’s successful “Indigenous Voices” program to be tailored for the STM community, the first instalment of which will be given at the faculty and staff retreat in August. Under the “Engage” pillar, the working group is organizing a faculty-partner colloquium to be held twice each term, via which an STM faculty member co-presents with an indigenous scholar or community collaborator on a topic of mutual interest.

The inaugural session will be on March 7, while on May 9 Harry Lafond of the Treaty Commissioners Office and STM associate dean Darrell McLaughlin will co-present on the experience of co-teaching the Seminar in Critical Perspectives on Social Justice and Common Good this term.

These initiatives will join with existing programming at the college. However, the panelists helped to demonstrate how there is still a lot of work to be done within the STM and larger communities to foster meaningful reconciliation. Indeed, in terms of the focus question of the panel, there is a cogent sense in which the work of hospitality, most especially when ensuring indigenous students feel welcome at a Catholic college, is never done. Yet undertaking the duty to make STM a welcoming community is essential if the college is to fulfil many of the commitments to social justice and the common good it lays out in its strategic plan.

Hrynkow is the chair of the Academic Indigenous Working Group at St. Thomas More College.

Panel discusses disability issues

By Caitlin Ward

SASKATOON — Members of the Saskatoon community gathered with staff, faculty and students at St. Thomas More College (STM) on the evening of Feb. 1 to discuss how we approach disability as a society. The discussion, led by three members of the STM faculty, addressed how social stigmas associated with disability adversely affect members of the disability community, where these stigmas come from, and how the larger community can move forward to become more inclusive and respectful of those with disability.

Dr. Kylee-Anne Hingston, a lecturer in English, began the discussion with a brief history of Disability Studies. Disability Rights, a movement that finds its roots in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, first rose to prominence in the 1970s. According to Hingston, a fundamental aspect of understanding the disability rights movement is distinguishing between “impairment” and “disability.”

Whereas impairment speaks to a physical or cognitive limitation in an individual, disability refers to the social limitations imposed on people who have physical or cognitive limitations. As an example, Hingston asked the audience if society would consider a person in a wheelchair “disabled” if every

Ward, a regular PM columnist, is the Engaged Learning co-ordinator at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

staircase was replaced with a ramp. Though the person may still not have complete use of his or her legs, that person’s ability to move around would not be constricted, and that person would not be “disabled” in any meaningful way.

Hingston went on to explain how significant stories are in forming and changing the way we understand disability, which dovetailed with clinical psychologist and professor Dr. Paulette Hunter’s presentation. Rather than begin with an explanation of her professional work studying the effects of dementia, she told the audience her own story of growing up with an aunt who had spina bifida. Hunter explained how her grandparents’ decision to bring her aunt into the family home rather than institutionalize her was key to her aunt not only living, but thriving.

The final panelist, sociology professor Dr. Sarah Knudson, said she became interested in disability studies not through personal experiences, but through expanding her area of study to be inclusive of different communities. Knudson has studied intimate relationships, dating, and family for most of her academic career, but only recently began doing research around the experience of people with disabilities when they pursue relationships, whether romantic or friendship.

She noted that there have been many studies exploring mainstream attitudes toward disability. Though this can be helpful to understand and change negative attitudes, there are surprisingly few

studies that engage directly with people who have disabilities. She has recently begun several community research projects that she hopes will help give voice to this often-marginalized population.

A lively question period followed the panel, in which audience members asked questions ranging from larger historical discussions around theory and institutionalization, to concrete questions about how audience members could change their behaviour to support people who have disabilities in their own lives and communities.

Overall, the panel agreed that the most important thing any community or person could do is to open their minds when considering disability. Knudson noted that one of the biggest barriers she has encountered in this work is from people assuming that nothing can change — or worse, nothing needs to change.

The panelists, who have all made volunteering an optional part of many of their classes through STM’s Engaged Learning Office, said that a fundamental part of changing mindsets is giving people the opportunity to encounter people with disabilities. It is through meaningful encounters that people are transformed, and the fear or discomfort people might feel concerning disability is able to dissipate.

“Unless you die very young, at some point in your life you are more than likely going to have to deal with a disability of your own,” Hingston said. “We need to get away from the idea that there is such a thing as ‘normal.’”



Alisha Pomazon

DISABILITY PANEL — A panel convened at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon to discuss society’s attitude toward those with perceived disabilities included (from left) Sarah Knudson, Kylee-Anne Hingston and Paulette Hunter.

Catholic teaching affirmed

Continued from page 1

and attempting to give answers to many possible circumstances, we put a process in place to assist in discerning the best response to each unique situation.”

The pastoral guidelines begin by affirming Catholic teaching about respecting and protecting human life from conception to natural death, stating, “we cannot and will not participate in or support euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide, to which we are morally opposed.” The document from the Saskatchewan bishops goes on to say, “We offer these guidelines to help our parishes to cultivate a healthy and positive attitude toward life, even amidst trials, and to assist our pastoral ministers and caregivers in walking compassionately and faithfully amidst painful and complex end-of-life situations.”

In addition to articulating the Christian call to accompany those who are dying, the bishops call on priests, deacons and the Catholic faithful to join “in doing formative work in your parishes and communities to change the conversation about dying so that fewer people will feel that ending their lives is an appropriate option . . . that witness is especially needed in a context where many have lost sight of the dignity of human life even amidst suffering and dying.”

In their two other texts, the bishops themselves offer such formation: the pastoral letter articulates the challenge of placing trust in God and explores the invitation to hope offered by Christian faith, while the pastoral reflection situates the Paschal Mystery of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection as the foundation for understanding the meaning of human dying.

The pastoral letter states: “The world is in desperate need of our witness of living through our dying. So many have forgotten, or never knew, that death could be gift. With God’s grace, and the prayers and support of others, we can live through this dying as a gift even as we face difficulties we would never have chosen. And God, who knows the pain and struggle of death (cf. Heb. 5:8),

will use our courage to witness to the value of this work to the people and the world we leave behind.”

In the letter on Living Through Our Dying, the bishops call on Christians to transform conversations about death and dying. “By sharing our perspectives, beliefs and actions, we can become authentic witnesses to the gift of living through dying in a world that is often afraid of death and desperate to control it,” states the letter. “God has called us to walk through this life together, and this includes journeying with people to the end of their days on earth. Now more than ever, our world needs to know that we will not leave them to face their dying alone.”

Bolen is hopeful that the pastoral letter and the pastoral reflection will bring greater understanding and engagement around the issues of death and dying.

“There are those who do not understand the church’s opposition to assisted suicide and euthanasia. We are inviting them from the depths of our tradition, from the very heart of it, to consider attitudes toward living and toward dying,” said Bolen. “We hope to initiate a dialogue with our culture.”

“I would hope that our parishioners and people working in our Catholic facilities and perhaps other Christian communities would grapple with this idea of living through our dying and give serious consideration to the idea that dying is a part of living, and God does not abandon us in our dying,” said Bolen.

“We hope that the word that is heard throughout these texts is a strong word about the dignity of that last phase of human life, and the possibility of living it in a hope-filled way in spite of darkness and suffering.”

The release of the three texts is the third time that the Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan have written to the faithful on this issue: they also issued a pastoral letter in July 2015 on the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia, the importance of conscience rights and the need for palliative care, as well as addressing the issues again in March 2016.

Bolen addresses prayer breakfast

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Archbishop Donald Bolen used his personal motto — Mercy within Mercy — to begin his talk to the Christ the King Ladies Prayer Breakfast held Jan. 28 in the church hall. The archbishop explained how he came to use this motto: “I was reading Thomas Merton’s book, *The Sign of Jonas*, and this phrase comes near the end of the book,” and he felt it appropriate in expressing his beliefs.

With that explanation, Bolen led into his talk about how God’s love and mercy is at the core of our Catholic faith. He explained that the Word that is often referred to in liturgies is the great

love of God: “God is a God who embraces us with a great love and infinite mercy. He is willing to go to any length to get to us. That’s the Word, and it is at the heart of our Christian faith. Hope lies in God’s inexhaustible energy. There is no limit to God’s mercy. Mercy is at the heart of God.”

Bolen asked his audience how they could take this forward. He suggested 10 of his own views of the church, including that we need to preach about God’s mercy; we need to be transformed by God’s mercy. He quoted Pope Francis, who spoke often about God’s mercy during the extraordinary Year of Mercy and referred specifically to Pope Francis’ response when he was asked, “Who is Jorge

Bergoglio?” and he responded, “I am a sinner who has experienced God’s mercy. God never tires of showing us his mercy. Eventually we are transformed by God’s mercy.”

The archbishop repeated the thought: “Eventually we are transformed by God’s mercy.” He expressed to the women that this should make us a joyful people. Our parishes should be places of joy and mercy. If you are filled with mercy, why wouldn’t you be joyful?

Bolen referred briefly to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the call to action and the harm done to indigenous people. “Justice and mercy are not exclusive. Mercy causes us to work together to build community.”

He asked his audience to be receptive to other people’s gifts, as “We need to find God in our everyday lives as God finds us in our everyday lives.”

The Christ the King Ladies Prayer Breakfast was an initiative of the parish’s welcoming committee. Committee chair Annette Polasek said the event was the first of what the committee would like to be a series of events to bring the parish community closer together.



Frank Flegel

REGINA — The Christ the King Ladies Prayer Breakfast in Regina Jan. 28 was an initiative of the parish’s welcoming committee. Committee chair Annette Polasek said the event was the first of what the committee would like to be a series of events to bring the parish community closer together.

Series examines pre-papal life of Jorge Bergoglio

By Chris Byrd

NEW YORK (CNS) — “What am I doing in Rome? People retire at my age,” a pensive, melancholy Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio (Sergio Hernandez) says early on in *Call Me Francis*. Netflix’s miniseries renders a textured, honest, yet sympathetic portrait of our current pontiff before he was pope.

Having recently arrived for the conclave that would eventually see him succeed Pope Benedict XVI, the Argentine cardinal stands on his balcony outside St. Peter’s Square as a reverie transports the 76-year-old back to his youth.

Italian director Daniele Luchetti and his co-writer, Martin Salinas, use this scene to frame Bergoglio’s story from his entrance into the Jesuits to the conclave of 2013.

Originally produced as an Italian feature film, *Call Me Francis* has been recast as a series of four 50-minute episodes, in which Hernandez plays the older Bergoglio, and Rodrigo de la Serna plays him in youth.

The series contains some gratuitous profanity; it also depicts

Byrd is a guest reviewer for Catholic News Service.

the Argentine military dictatorship’s brutality and use of torture during their “dirty war” of the 1970s and ’80s. The scenes of abuse are difficult to watch, but essential to the story and not lurid in their presentation.

In this context, *Call Me Francis* makes appropriate viewing for discerning adults. In Spanish with English subtitles, the dramatization became available for streaming Dec. 16.

As a Jesuit novice, Bergoglio displays his arrogance and naivete to his superiors when he expresses his desire to become a missionary to Japan, confident of his untested ability to win souls. First, his more seasoned confreres advise Bergoglio, he needs “to learn how to do simple stuff.”

His theology instructor, Rev. Franz Jalics (Alex Brendemuhl), introduces Bergoglio to Ignatian spirituality, which encourages believers to use their imagination to place themselves amid the scenes of the Lord’s earthly life.

Bergoglio’s devotion to this form of meditation brings him to the attention of Rev. Pedro Arrupe (Bernardo Baras), the order’s superior general. Arrupe made Bergoglio provincial superior of the Argentine community in 1973, when he was only 36.

Bergoglio was provincial during a period when strongman Gen. Jorge Videla’s regime killed

more than 7,000 people and more than 30,000 persons suspected of sympathizing with the guerrillas fighting the government were “disappeared.”

When Jalics and a brother Jesuit named Yorio (Agustin Rittano), who have been living among Argentina’s poor people, fall under suspicion, Bergoglio tells the priests he can’t protect them — and the military kidnaps them.

Although the film depicts Bergoglio appealing directly to Videla for the duo’s freedom, it doesn’t reveal that Yorio, who was finally released after a five-month ordeal, didn’t forgive the provincial. The series depicts Bergoglio and Jalics reuniting, but doesn’t tell us what happened when they met, missing an opportunity to explore more fully this reconciliation’s impact on Bergoglio.

“When the pain is great, Ignatian discernment is useless,” Bergoglio says to a Venezuelan woman he meets in a German church in the late 1980s.

Though ostensibly in Germany to study theology, Bergoglio was really sent there for a very different reason that the series doesn’t mention: Arrupe’s successor, Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, is said not to have approved of Bergoglio’s style as a seminary rector because of his emphasis on

pastoral work and religious piety. These concepts were out of fashion among the Jesuits, who now focused primarily on social justice instead.

Call Me Francis doesn’t dive deeply into Bergoglio’s total estrangement from his own religious order, however, missing an



CNS/TaodueFilm, distributed by Medusa

Sergio Hernandez stars in a scene *Call Me Francesco*, the first movie based on the life of Pope Francis.

opportunity to craft as full and complex a portrait of this future pope as it could have.

Looking at a painting on the church’s wall, the woman explains that it represents Mary under her title, Untier of Knots. This powerful image moves Bergoglio to tears, begins to liberate him from his pain and informs his work as an auxiliary bishop in Buenos Aires in the 1990s.

The series’ most moving scene occurs during this period in Bergoglio’s life. When developers threaten to uproot poor people to make way for a large commercial development, Bergoglio helps them save their homes. The people lift their bishop up and bounce him like a football coach celebrating a championship.

De la Serna ably shifts from rigid, yet conflicted Jesuit, to liberated and compassionate bishop. And Hernandez may not match the pope’s physicality, but well communicates the older man’s warmth and wisdom.

Enhanced by Ivan Casalgrandi and Claudio Collepicollo’s super-saturated colour cinematography, *Call Me Francis* is largely true to the difficulty, pain, controversies and misgivings which shaped the man who today challenges Catholics and non-Catholics alike to reclaim the joy of the Gospel.

We need to show up, every day, to make sure ‘never again’ is reality

By Caitlin Ward

I can’t talk about Denmark without starting to cry at some point. It’s gotten to the point where I don’t teach certain things in class anymore because,

Salaam
By Sami Yusuf

even after seven years, I can’t get through the part about Denmark without my eyes welling up.

But then, my eyes had been welling up on and off for most of the day, and not about Denmark. On the morning of Jan. 30, when I woke up, I read an article by Yonatan Zunger on Medium.com called “Trial Balloon for a Coup?” that discussed the recent events in the United States in the context of each other. It postulated a rather terrifying future: one in which the executive order to ban refugees and immigrants for a certain period of time was a test balloon for just how easy it would be to subvert and undermine the democratic processes in the country.

Now, Zunger is neither a social scientist nor a social activist, and since that article was written it has come under a certain amount of

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>

scrutiny. At this point, few people are questioning that this White House is autocratic, brazen, and racist, but at the same time no one knows how much of the execution of these executive orders is shrewdness, and how much of it is sheer incompetence.

The question of shrewdness or incompetence aside, though, the thing that struck me most that morning was not the fact that it might be some sort of test to see just how much the American people care about rights and freedoms, or even the order itself. No, what hit me in the gut was a few lines that briefly explained a Fox News interview with Rudy Giuliani, in which he said that, yes, this was meant to be a ban on Muslims. He was one of the people that Trump consulted in finding a way to make that happen legally.

It was the word “legally.” With that word I started praying, begging God aloud that, this time, we would be stronger, and kinder, and braver. That when we said “never again” the last time, we really meant it. I walked around mostly normally for most of the day, made plans to go to the mosque that evening to hold vigil with those who mourned the loss of the men at prayer who had been gunned down in a Quebec City mosque the night before. I told a few people that my heart hurt. But after work, I went to my parents’ house. I barely got a greeting to my father out before I started sobbing. Finally, I managed to choke out, “they’re trying to make people illegal.”

I know history is scattered with the normalized, systematic discrimination of whole groups of people, be it Catholics in Ireland in the 18th and 19th centuries, or Aboriginal peoples in the 19th and 20th centuries in Australia, Canada, and the United States, or a hundred other examples you and I could both come up with if we had five minutes to talk.

But that’s not immediately what this reminded me of — a

I dream for a day
When there’ll be
No more misery

When there’s no more hunger
No need for shelter
Isn’t there enough to share
Or is that we just don’t care?

We’re here for a day or two
Let me show my way
Salaamu alaik, Salaamu alaik, Salaamu alaikum

I pray for a day
When there’ll be
Justice and unity

Where we put aside our differences
Fighting makes no sense
Just a little faith
To make it a better place

We’re here for a day or two
Let me show my way
Salaamu alaik, Salaamu alaik, Salaamu alaikum
Salaamu alaikum Ya ahl-as-salaam, Salamu alaikum
Salaamu alaikum Sayyid al-Kiram, Salaamu alaikum
Let me show my way . . .
Salaamu alaikum, alaikum, alaikum

professional life dedicated in part to studying and discussing the Shoah (or, as it’s more commonly known, the Holocaust) puts the word “legal” in giant neon letters. Because that’s how the Shoah happened. They made a particular group of people illegal. And once they were illegal, there was very little to protect them except the physical bodies who chose to stand in the way. Tragically, and embarrassingly, not many physical bodies chose to stand in the way.

That is why I have so much trouble talking about Denmark. Unlike so many other people and so many other countries, the people of that nation spent the Second World War standing in the way. There is an apocryphal story that Christian X, the King of Denmark at the time, wore a Star of David to express his solidarity with Jewish D a n e s . T h o u g h

never substantiated, the story serves as a perfect metaphor for occupied Denmark. Militarily, the country fell to the Nazis in a matter of days, but the people’s resistance was constant and extraordinary. By and large, their Jewish population lived.

That night, at the mosque, I began to feel better. They had to bring out more chairs twice, and there were still not enough for the hundreds of people who came to support Saskatoon’s Muslim community. Representatives from the government, the police, and most of the major religious groups in the city offered solidarity, protection, and prayers, respectively. Afterward, we ate potato pakora and samosas together, and there were once again not enough chairs.

It’s easy to sound alarmist at times like this, I know. But it’s also easy to forget that totalitarian dictatorships do not blossom overnight. Genocides don’t happen without laying groundwork first. Abusive relationships don’t start with a punch to the head. It’s a slow creep, a dawning realization that things are no longer as they once were.

And I also know that tears, on their own, mean very little. I know friendship must not only be offered in times of crisis, but always. I know real resistance is not showing up to one event, but showing up in one way or another every day. But I think — or I hope, at least — that if we all show up in one way or another, “never again” will at least be, “not this time.”

Sundance: cinema’s challenge of Truth to Power

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



You want to look for where the light is going to come from.
— Robert Redford, president and founder, Sundance Institute, opening press conference of the 33rd Sundance Film Festival, Jan. 19, 2017

Opening the day before the inauguration of Donald Trump as U.S. president, the timing of the Sundance festival — the world’s premiere showcase for independent cinema, both dramatic and documentary — carried an extra consciousness-raising edge that was evident throughout. The excellent four-hour PBS documentary series *Divided States of America* that aired just before I

from over 30 countries — took place in two parts. In the first, founder Robert Redford was in conversation with two filmmakers whose work has benefited from the support of the Sundance Institute: Sydney Freeland, a recipient of the Institute’s Native Lab Fellowship, and Texas writer-director David Lowery. Both had films in the festival’s innovative “NEXT” category — Freeland with *Deidra and Laney Rob a Train* and Lowery with *A Ghost Story*. In the second part, Redford appeared with institute executive director Keri Putnam and festival director John Cooper to take questions from the assembled media.

Sundance was not conceived as, nor does it intend to be, an advocacy organization, Redford emphasized. But neither can it be indifferent to the political context. In particular it’s important to reaffirm the values of diversity and inclusion that have always guided the festival when these come under threat. By nurturing independent creative voices through the labs and giving them an opportunity to tell their stories, Sundance contributes to a culture of openness.

The current challenging media environment was on the minds of many. (Among the excellent panels at the Park City Filmmaker Lodge was one on “Post-Truth and Consequences.”) Sundance sees the documentary form as more important than ever in bringing real situations to the attention of audiences. The festival screened 34 feature documentary premieres drawn from some 1,700 submissions. In addition, as part of its special events programming, it presented episodes from promising television documentary series including the Canadian-directed and produced *Rise* which goes to the frontlines of indigenous peoples resistance. One of

the last feature documentaries to be shown, *Trumped: Inside the Greatest Political Upset in History*, was also adapted from material originally made for television, an indication of the increasing crossover between the big and small screen.

Clearly the arts community has reason to be concerned about developments in America and globally. That was manifested on the streets during the festival’s first snowy Saturday when over 8,000 people — more than the entire permanent population of Park City — came out in solidarity with the Women’s March on Washington. Redford expressed the apprehension in the air when he told the press conference that “it looks like a lot of things are going to be taken away, or try to be taken away from us.” That includes U.S. government support for the arts. But he also took heart from the democratic resistance that is galvanizing people to rise up, “to go against whatever choice is made to cut things away that affects people. They’re going to rebel against that. A movement will be created and I think that will be very healthy.”

The trailer that played before every film screening (878 in total, not counting those for press and industry) was both timely and evocative. A young woman of colour lights a lamp with a match that drops to the floor but the flame does not go out. Instead it sparks a thread of light which she follows outside in a blazing zigzag trajectory illuminating the dark woods. As a metaphor for cinematic creation shining a light in the darkness, it could not have been more apt.

That energizing empowering spirit resonated through the festival. While funding for independent film has always been a challenge, in addition to established sources like HBO, the emergence of new digital



SUNDANCE OPENING — Robert Redford, Sydney Freeland, and David Lowery at the Sundance opening press conference Jan. 19.

platforms with a global reach — Netflix, Amazon, YouTube among them — was much in evidence. This year Sundance also presented 20 documentary and narrative virtual reality works, an indication of growing interest in new forms of cinematic expression.

Significantly, the intersection of nature and art, a founding inspiration of Sundance, was given a major renewed impetus with the festival’s “New Climate” program. Headlining its list of impressive film titles was *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*, which premiered to a standing ovation from the opening night audience of 1,300 at the Eccles Theatre. Featuring the tireless work of former vice-president Al Gore on climate change issues, it comes a decade after the Oscar-winning *An Inconvenient Truth* generated both heat and light, attracting the ire of deniers including Donald Trump. Coming on the eve of Trump’s inauguration, one could not help but recall that Gore was the only other presidential candidate in the past century and a half to lose the election while winning the popular vote.

What struck me, however, was how upbeat Gore’s message was about both the fight against climate change and what he sees as a “sustainability revolution” in renewable energy solutions. Gore did not want to elaborate on his post-election meeting with Trump, a brief clip of which appears toward the end of the movie. But as he reassured the Sundance audience: “No one person can stop this. It’s too big now. We are shifting, and we are going to win.” It was a theme he reiterated during a subsequent “Power of Story: The New Climate” panel that included Canada’s David Suzuki.

An Inconvenient Sequel offers both overwhelming evidence of massive changes taking place, such as on Greenland’s ice sheet, and a behind-the-scenes insight into the political obstacles to be overcome at home and abroad. For example, Miami, one of the coastal cities most at risk from sea-level rise, is already experiencing serious street flooding yet the “sunshine state” has put up barriers to solar power. There’s a realization that “in order to address the climate crisis we are going to have to spend some time

dealing with the democracy crisis.” The North-South divide also looms large. Gore meets with Pope Francis who worries that “the greatest effects of the climate crisis will be visited on the poorest people.” Yet in a country like India, where millions still lack electricity, many more coal-fired plants will be built unless there are affordable low-carbon alternatives. Gore’s team was active during the tough negotiations at the Paris climate conference, where India was a holdout until a clean-energy technology transfer breakthrough helped bring it inside the historic December 2015 global agreement that Trump has threatened to abandon.

That would be a serious setback, of course. But, watching Gore leading climate leadership training sessions around the world, one gets the sense that this really is an unstoppable movement. And local examples of switching from fossil fuels to renewables are cropping up all over. That includes the most conservative part of Texas where Gore pays a visit to a town that has gone 100 per cent renewable for what it sees as common-sense reasons. He ends the film citing the American poet Wallace Stevens: “After the last no comes a yes, and on that yes the future of the world depends.”

That defiant optimism was displayed at the “Power of Story” panel several days later (livestreamed and available to watch online at <http://www.sundance.org/live>). Introduced by Robert Redford and his filmmaker son Jamie, it included Canadian-born Jeff Skoll of Participant Media, which was instrumental in backing *An Inconvenient Truth*. The role of independent film continues to be critical in getting the climate crisis story into the public sphere. Responding to the anxiety over Trump, Gore was encouraged that “we are seeing the beginning of the biggest outpouring of citizen activism since the Vietnam War.”

Another panel member, Heather Rae, a Native American filmmaker and former head of the Sundance Institute’s Native Program, spoke passionately about the role of indigenous peoples at the forefront of climate



flew to Utah for the festival reminded me just how deeply the polarization inflamed by Trump has affected us all. Trump’s hostility to the media, the arts, and the truth in general, was obviously going to become an irresistible target and talking point.

The press conference launching the festival’s 188 feature and short films selections — the great majority world premieres chosen out of nearly 14,000 submissions

Must-see TV shows power of Divine Mercy

By Gerald Schmitz

The murders of men at prayer in the Quebec City mosque showed that Canada is not immune from crimes of hate. In the wake of such events it’s good to be reminded that the Christian answer to hate calls for mercy,

Knights of Columbus that “highlight the transformative power of mercy in our contemporary world.”

The first of these, *The Face of Mercy*, will be broadcast Sunday night, Feb. 12, on Salt + Light Television (check your local listings).

If the hour-long documentary can be summed up in a phrase, it is that the mission of the church is mercy and that only divine mercy and forgiveness can heal our wounded humanity.

Pope Francis, who proclaimed the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2015, is continuing the legacy of Saint Pope John Paul II and his 1980 encyclical *Rich in Mercy*. The experience of the Polish church in enduring the horrors of the 20th century produced

a deep spirituality that appealed to God’s divine mercy as the antidote to these moral catastrophes.

A notable influence was the Polish nun and mystic Sister Maria Faustina of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, called an “Apostle of Divine Mercy,” canonized by John Paul II in the year 2000.

The film also brings home the Christian call to mercy through the compelling testimonies of people — victims of terrible crimes — who have received the healing power of God’s merciful love. Other examples of transformative grace include a gangster who became a priest and a former sports star who forsake fame to bring the gospel message to the homeless and those on the margins of society. “Blessed are the merciful” is a beatitude that calls to us all.

The Face of Mercy
<https://faceofmercyfilm.com/>
Salt + Light Television
9 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 12

forgiveness and love. So I welcomed a recent email that began: “In a world oversaturated with anger, entitlement and judgment, ‘mercy’ is a countercultural, revolutionary belief and way of life.” Its message was about several new documentaries from the

Travel, and taking the lid off the bucket list

By Edna Froese

Perpetually lagging behind on the movie scene, I hadn't watched *The Bucket List* (2007) until its popularity was well established and its title had become common parlance. Everyone, it seemed, had begun talking about their bucket lists. And are still talking about their bucket lists, eight years later. Oddly enough, although the movie's two protagonists do include on their lists items like "help a complete stranger for the good," what seems to have taken root in collective memory is the desire to travel, to experience the unusual, the exotic, the expensive.

These days a bucket list typically means a list of places to visit before death ends all bodily travel: "Oh, I finally got to see Buckingham Palace — that's been on my bucket list for years"; "I really want to hike the Pacific Trail before I get too old and rickety to be able to manage"; "I've always wanted to see Aztec ruins and next year we're going." Often included in such lists are expensive adventures such as hang-gliding or sky-diving, which could, I suppose, be considered a form of travel as well. It's enough to make one wonder whether some travel agency commissioned the original film.

Recently I happened upon Robin Esrock's *The Great Canadian Bucket List* website. Its opening pictorial preview of "Canada's ultimate activities and destinations" suggests the following: "hike to an Arctic waterfall, cross the Northwest Passage, encounter polar bears in

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Edna Froese

TRAVEL AND BUCKET LISTS — The Cathedral of Vassily the Blessed (St. Basil's Cathedral) on Red Square, Moscow, is now a museum.

the wild, float in our own dead sea, spend a night in an ice hotel, walk the seabed at Hopewell Rocks, cycle across Prince Edward Island, hike in the far North, go heli-skiing, sail in Haida Gwaii, heli-yoga in the Rockies, . . . " I would rejoice over the emphasis on physical fitness were it not that such a list seems to encourage that whiff of one-upmanship I've occasionally sensed in coffee-row swapping of travel stories.

Even before reading Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything*, I had been uneasy about the environmental footprint of extensive tourist travel. Now I couldn't help but begin to look harder at the assumptions underneath the entire concept of the bucket list. The aforementioned suggestions on *The Great Canadian Bucket List* all depend on a certain attitude —

what Klein calls "extractivism": the earth and the fullness thereof exists solely for our pleasure and our consumption. Hence, none of what typically appears on bucket lists calls for anything other than temporary engagement. No bucket list mentioned in my hearing includes something like "I want to live, on minimal income, for several years in the *favelas* of Brazil." Most often bucket lists are buffet lines of places and events, meant to be sampled with gusto, captured in photos, and then left for the next location.

To speak honestly here, my position is not objective; my observations are thoroughly mixed with desire and guilt. While my husband and I submitted no exotic travel agenda to our financial adviser before our retire-

ment, there was a half-acknowledged hope that at least one major trip overseas might be possible. It was becoming entirely too awkward to function conversationally in a mostly middle-class environment without being able to share travel stories. I often felt provincial, resentful even, when asked, "you've never been to . . . ?" especially when the followup sentence began, "Oh, you should . . ."

Such is the flavour of our culture. What was once the painful necessity of refugees (my parents among them) has become a necessary reverse pilgrimage for their descendants. What was once the privilege of the very rich has become *de rigueur* for anyone at all who aspires to a good life: holidays in Mexico or Hawaii, cruises to Pacific Islands, tours to the Middle

East or the Far East. The traffic through airports the world over has become heavy and constant.

My reaction to this powerful cultural expectation to sample all the pleasures and sights of a magnificent world is about as confused as our recent experience of our own pilgrimage to Russia and Ukraine, the land where my parents and my husband's father were born. In the midst of our amazement at being in astonishing places we'd never imagined we would see was a nagging discomfort at being tourists, consumers of experiences, gawkers at the locals, stumblers through markets and museums where we did not speak the language or know the history, throwers-away of innumerable plastic water bottles and Styrofoam food containers, takers of thousands of pictures without knowing real contexts, beneficiaries of those who earned their wages catering to tourist "needs."

We understood, of course, that our participation in the entire tourist enterprise brought welcome currency into struggling economies, and that travel, of whatever sort, offers valuable education. At the same time, we couldn't ignore troubling questions about appropriate stewardship of the earth and its resources, about the need for an understanding of others more nuanced than what could be offered by tour leader monologues or quick tour bus stops in tiny villages with subsistence living conditions.

To date, I have made no bucket list. I don't know how to wrestle the bucket out of the hands of the sellers of experiences and destinations, and I lack the moral courage to write down those purposes that I wish I could make my own. Such as advocating for social justice, mending neglected relationships, or learning how to walk alongside the poor, wherever they may live.

We are called to live our lives as a blessing to others, and to the world



Everyday Theology

Louise McEwan

It was no surprise that *Time* magazine selected Donald Trump as 2016 person of the year.

The magazine's annual pick recognizes someone who has most influenced events, for better or for worse, and like it or not, Trump's influence was extraordinary.

With the exception of a select few, we won't see ourselves gracing the cover of *Time*. We won't be garnering person of the year honours. We do, however, leave a legacy. We touch the lives of others. We exert influence on someone, somewhere at sometime.

Trail, B.C., resident Louise McEwan is a freelance writer, religion columnist and catechist. She blogs at www.faithcolouredglasses.blogspot.ca

"All the world's a stage," wrote Shakespeare. "And all the men and women merely players/ They have their exits and entrances/ And one man in his time plays many parts."

While Shakespeare was reflecting on the stages of life from infancy to old age, the manner in which we play our parts over time will determine our legacy.

Time editor Nancy Gibbs has said that occasionally *Time* chooses someone who is "unassailably worthy. Normally that is not the case." Since the inception of person of the year in 1927, the selections are a mixed bag of the illustrious and the infamous. The recipients represent the broad spectrum of human traits from the laudable to the deplorable. For better or for worse, all have left

their mark on human society, as you can see from my arbitrary list.

Some more recent recipients include: Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos (1999), Bill and Melinda Gates and Bono (2005), Putin (2007), and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg (2010). Looking back further in history the following caught my attention: Charles Lindbergh (1927), Walter Chrysler (1928), Mahatma Gandhi (1930), Wallis Simpson (1936), Adolf Hitler (1938), Josef Stalin (1939, 1942), Queen Elizabeth (1952) and Richard Nixon (1971). (Every sitting United States president has been named person of the year.) Three Roman Catholic popes got the nod: Pope John XXIII (1962), Pope John Paul II (1994), and Pope Francis (2013).

The reader can decide if any of my arbitrary examples deserve to be called unassailably worthy. Even Popes John XXIII and John Paul II, whom Pope Francis elevated to sainthood in 2014, were flawed individuals, and had their detractors.

We might reasonably conclude that saints led impeccable lives during their time on earth. We

would be mistaken for saints, as Francis said, were "not born perfect." They just tried harder than the rest of us to live holy lives, to be unassailably worthy in the sight of God.

In 2006, "You" were the person of the year. That year the cover featured a blank computer screen made of reflective material. Readers could look at their reflection in the screen and envision themselves as person of the year.

The 2006 choice linked the shaping of human destiny to the actions of ordinary people engaging with the World Wide Web. You and me, the choice proclaimed, were changing the world through online collaboration and community building.

Social media has exploded since 2006. It has a profound influence on attitudes and behaviour. It can magnify the best and the worst of our shared human traits, and influence our actions in a heartbeat. Social media provides us with a platform for influencing others, for better or for worse, within our immediate circle and beyond. We can blog, tweet, post, comment, criticize, laud, organize and spew "alternative facts"

(a.k.a. lies) to our hearts' content in an environment that frequently lacks accountability.

The 2006 choice for person of the year was both controversial and gimmicky. It was a clever marketing ploy that reverberated in people's imaginations for years. As recently as a few years ago, people were still listing themselves as 2006 person of the year on their twitter bios.

Yet, there is a distinctly serious and personal aspect to "You" person of the year. All of us are called to unassailable worthiness. We are called to be saints, to live our life as blessing to others and for the world.

I am reminded of the Carole King song "Legacy," which challenges us to be a driving force for the good. The song asks of us, "Don't you want to leave a better world than you find?"

We may not get the nod from *Time* magazine. But each of us leaves a legacy. Regardless the size of the stage — international or intimate — we play a part in the unfolding of human society, for better or for worse. "It's your legacy. Baby whatcha gonna do about it?"

Inmates deserve the basic right of communication

By Peter Oliver

If you have spent any time trying to support “Joe Inmate” in a Saskatchewan provincial prison, you know you can’t give him a ring to see how things are going. If Joe wants to talk to you, he has to make the call. What you may not know is that Joe’s family has to pay a Texas-based phone company every time Joe decides to make that call.

The private company Joe will use is aptly named Telmate. Its one of a myriad of companies with names like Securus Technologies, Pay Tel and Value-Added Communications. These companies have been capitalizing on soaring prison populations in the U.S. and, in the last decade or so, have started to turn a profit in Canada. The Telmate system is now operating in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

One of the most frustrating things about the system is determining how much it costs to make a call. The basic cost is about \$1.35 for a local 20-minute call and \$7 for a 22-minute long distance call. But there are hidden costs and unexpected catches. In order to make a call, someone has to put money into the Telmate system. There are a couple of ways of doing this. I can put

money into the inmate’s account, or I can link the money to my phone number. Both approaches have additional fees.

In order to put money into an inmate’s account, I will need to know the inmate’s CMIS number. Chances are I won’t have that handy, so let’s go with linking the money to my phone number. Here’s how the system website delineates the fees for this option:

“This deposit will be subject to an additional \$2 plus 15 per cent in local, county, state and federal surcharges and regulatory assessments.” For example, a \$20 deposit would be assessed an additional \$5, making the total payment \$25. Still, I’m concerned about Joe and want to stay in touch, so I put money in the system.

With that done I can send Joe

a letter to let him know he can call me (add \$1 for a stamp). Joe is overjoyed when he gets my letter and at his first chance he gives me a call. Unfortunately, I’m on the line and my answering machine picks up. There goes \$1.35 because local calls are charged a flat rate and the service fee applies even if he just gets my answering machine. With limited access to the phone, Joe likely won’t get another shot at a call until tomorrow but, Joe is determined to make the best of it, so he gives it another try on the following day.

By some good fortune I happen to pick up when Joe calls. On this call we work out a schedule so we don’t blow any more money on missed calls. Things go along fairly smoothly until Joe tries to make the most of a call. His wife can’t afford to put money into the system so he asks if I can give her a ring so he can find out how his daughter is doing in the hospital. Like many homes where income is less of a problem, I have a cellphone and landline, so I say, “sure just hang on.” I give Joe’s wife a call, ask how their daughter is doing and get back on the phone to let Joe know what I have found out.

Here’s where things get interesting. The system is designed to block three-way calls and has picked up the sound of my landline when I called Joe’s wife. When I return to my cell to give Joe the information about his daughter, the line is dead. Joe doesn’t call again — ever. At first I don’t know why. Then I learn that the system has permanently blocked my number because it mistakenly interpreted my call to Joe’s wife as a three-way call. I begin a grievance process about the situation. It takes *three*

months to resolve the issue and, even though I have not done anything wrong, I am sternly warned not to do it again.

Perhaps this situation sounds a bit unlikely, but this is exactly what happened to a colleague. My friend persisted with the situation until it was resolved. Many other people simply give up. They resolve the situation by getting a new phone number and putting more money into the system. I’m not sure what happens to the cash linked to the first phone number, but I know they can’t get it back without a lot of red tape.

This is only one of many, many problems with the system. The system is voice activated and often fails to recognize an inmate’s voice, phones are located in public areas so everyone on a unit can hear what you are talking about (a situation that can become dangerous in prison), access to the phone is restricted by extremely rigid schedules, exorbitant fees make inmates vulnerable to muscling for their phone time — the list goes on.

Sadly the exploitation of inmates’ friends and family is not the most disturbing issue about the Telmate system. The system contributes to the exclusion and isolation of inmates. In most cases, sustaining relationships with family and friends contributes to people getting out of prison and staying out of prison. That is a reality that is well-documented. Systems that disrupt these relationships could lead to increased prison counts. This benefits companies like Telmate, but it definitely does not serve our community well. It means more crime, more money spent on courts, police and prison and, worst of all, more harm.

Stop the insanity!



Peter Oliver

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS — Sustaining relationships with family and friends contributes to people getting out of prison and staying out of prison, writes Peter Oliver. But some systems disrupt these relationships.

Oliver works in chaplaincy and development for The Micah Mission in Saskatoon.

Benedictine prayer counteracts perfectionism

Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



“Perfection belongs to an imaginary world. According to traditional teaching, it is the life-embedded soul, not soaring spirit, that defines humanity.” — Thomas Moore

One reason the psalms still speak to us in the 21st century, and don’t read as some kind of archaic anthropology of faith, is that we are still working out our salvation between heaven and earth. We are still human creatures who are earthbound, incarnated for good reason, and summoned to our soul work. The psalms, with their double awareness of a numinous vision and our muddled versions of it, serve as an antidote to pitfalls on the path such as premature transcendence, spiritual bypass, or high level denial.

An example of this grounded-

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

ness is Psalm 4, the Benedictine night prayer, sung by monks during compline. In the following walk-through, let us see how it serves to counteract tendencies to unhealthy perfectionism, whereby goodness has to be earned under the tyranny of the idealized self. At the end of each day, as “successful” as it might have been, growing persons are painfully aware and yet self-forgiving of the gap between who they are and who they could be.

— When I call, answer me, O God of justice, from anguish you released me, have mercy and hear me!

God is not a projected emblem of a superior “spiritual” self, whereby we surpass limitations on our own steam. God listens to those who have already gotten their souls dirty.

— You rebels, how long will your hearts be closed, will you love what is futile and seek what is false?

We seem to be an experimental species, neither animal nor angel but a strange mixture, so it’s natural to be torn between the two and pursue illusions of the ego, i.e. Edging God Out.

— It is the Lord who grants favours to those whom he loves, the Lord hears me whenever I call him.

Grace takes the place of strategies for happiness, whenever I can surrender those.

— Fear him; do not sin; ponder on your bed and be still. Make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord.

When hopes are dashed against the harsh realities of this world, let us let go and let God.

— “What can bring us happiness?” many say. Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord.

That’s a beautiful way of saying it’s the wrong question. Life and light are never our own.

— You have put into my heart a greater joy than they have from abundance of corn and new wine.

We try to fill a God-shaped void with all the addictions luring us away from true presence.

— I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once, for you alone Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Hope and hopelessness compete; wholeness and woundedness co-exist; love and fear have their tugs; yet we trust . . . that even in self-division, we are held by a much bigger embrace.

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There are all kinds of ways to survive winter

Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



Some time into the second week of January I heard Canada’s senior climatologist, David Phillips, mention on a radio program that we were gaining two minutes of daylight per day. It was the best news I’d heard since the Christmas decorations were put away.

The extra light is noticeable at the end of the day — we’re no longer preparing our evening meal in the dark. It’s in the morning that the light takes longer to catch up. Of all the winter sights that bug me, the low-lying sun sitting sheepishly in the southeast of my office window is the worst. I’d rather have an overcast sky than be reminded that the sun is barely making an effort. If the sun can’t manage to get up, why should I?

Winter is tough. There’s even a Blue Monday (Jan. 16) to remind us just how bad it can be. At this time of year one can pick up almost any magazine that contains an article about embracing winter by taking up a sport! Snowshoeing or skating! On one particularly bitter day I sat in the warmth of the Sheraton Cavalier restaurant cupping my cold hands around a steaming mug of coffee and watching a father and his child skating at the outdoor Meewasin Skating Rink across the street. I felt I should alert the authorities.

It brought to mind the few times I skated outdoors. The first time was when I was in Grade 2 at

Holy Family (now Bishop Filevich) in Saskatoon. I’d been hoping to try skating at the outdoor rink in the schoolyard, but never had the nerve (I was not adventurous, even as a child). When my dad finally brought me over to the rink the sun was higher than it is now and it seemed a perfect day. When I stepped onto the ice I realized I’d waited too long. My blades dug in. The ice had turned to thick slush. I could barely push through the mess and ended up skate-walking across the rink as some kids ran around (sans skates) hitting a ball back and forth. In retrospect, I guess it was the perfect day because I didn’t freeze. It was probably March.

The next time I went outdoor skating was in Grade 3 at St. Augustine in Humboldt. The rink was across the street from my grandmother’s house and I was able to lace up my skates in the comfort of her entrance, as opposed to the poor kids who had to put on their skates in the shack. I remember my blades clacking on the road as I gingerly walked across the street. The ice was hard, milky white and resisted the dull blades of a novice skater. It was cold. I was miserable. How many wobbly rounds of the skating rink does it take to make an honest effort before one can retreat into a warm house?

The next year we moved to

King Crescent. It was before a building boom and the lot behind us was empty. It filled with water in the fall and flash-froze into a glass-like surface. The ice was thick and crystal clear. The weeds beneath looked as though they might undulate as they would in water, but they were frozen in time, every leaf visible right down to the darkness of the earth below. I imagined spinning like Peggy Fleming, my blades cutting spirals into the ice. I have a good imagination.

My skating career didn’t end on that pond. There was a barn-like arena in Humboldt in my youth where I’d go public skating on a Saturday afternoon. The rough wooden floor, dark and soft with age, bore the gouges of decades of people walking through with their skates. Stepping onto the ice meant being swept into a current — throngs of people skating in unison around the rink to Strauss’ “Blue Danube Waltz” played on a scratchy loudspeaker. The air was always fresh and cool, pinkening my cheeks as the afternoon wore on. In spring the roof would leak along the seams, dripping water from a great height and plopping onto the ice, creating perfect rows of menacing small mounds. A couple of falls and the season was over.

I haven’t skated in years, though I sometimes wonder if the gentle freshness that rises from the ice would feel the same as it did in my memory.

For now there’s walking. I tried it recently on an unseasonably warm day, the kind the weather reporters rave about but just make driving treacherous. Two inches of loose snow made each step a frustrating chore. I felt like the proverbial drunken sailor. The stiff breeze bit my cheeks and

made me angry. How is it that the wind on a minus-2 day feels colder than it does if it’s minus 10?

It’s February now and winter never gets easier. Still, there are ways to survive — catching up on some absorbing mysteries, the award-nominated films before

Oscar time, a few Netflix series, a treadmill and some vitamin D supplements.

Best of all, though: FaceTiming with my four-and-a-half-month-old granddaughter Anissa. Her tulip-blush cheeks remind me of spring.



Gerard Weber

OUTDOOR FUN — Those who enjoy outdoor winter activities are to be admired, but that does not mean everyone cares to partake.

Emergence of indigenous voices in film impressive

Continued from page 9

action, such as at Standing Rock where protests continue against the Dakota Access Pipeline (since approved by President Trump). “As media makers and storytellers we find ourselves woven into the narrative of resistance,” she said. David Suzuki also stressed the value of the indigenous contribution to what is a global struggle, noting with irony that “the people we tried to stamp out are the ones taking the lead.”

Before that panel closed it was addressed from the floor by David Archambault, tribal chair of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota. The Standing Rock opposition to a pipeline development threatening the Lakota’s traditional land and waters are the subject of two of the first three episodes of *Rise*, the eight-part Canadian-produced documentary series that has begun airing on Viceland, the new tele-

vision channel of Vice Media. Sundance provided a world premiere platform for these episodes — *Apache Stronghold*, *Sacred Water*, *Red Power* — directed by Toronto-based indigenous filmmaker Michelle Latimer and narrated by indigenous host Sarain Carson-Fox.

I was able to interview Ms. Latimer after the Power of Story panel and will have more to say in a future column on indigenous perspectives in film. What deserves highlighting at this point is the truly impressive emergence of indigenous voices, notably those of women and youth, in telling their own stories and bringing them to the screen. Kudos to Sundance for recognizing and supporting this exciting development.

A single column only scratches the surface of Sundance’s rich harvest. So watch for more highlights from its feast of dramatic and documentary features.

JOB SEARCH: BIOETHICIST



THE POSITION: An ethicist, working with and for Catholic faith-based facilities in Saskatchewan, guided by the Health Ethics Guide (2012) and the ethical teaching of the Catholic Community. He/she is also responsible for the standards of ethical practice as set out in common law and common ethics within society. Six key priorities have been identified: support and guidance in ethical decision making; ethics education; ethics consultation / mentorship; ethics committee support; ethics guideline and policy development; and organizational ethics.

This position will be dedicated to the faith-based institutional members of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan in urban and rural Saskatchewan (some travel will be required). The ethicist is based out of St. Paul’s hospital and functions within the context of the Mission Integration team of SPH. The ethicist leads Catholic health care facilities in the ongoing development, implementation, evaluation and integration of an ethics support service. The ethicist may also conduct ethics research.

St. Paul’s Hospital is a tertiary level acute care hospital, owned by Emmanuel Care in the tradition

of the Grey Nuns. SPH operates within a highly interdependent partnership with the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority. The ethicist will participate in this collaborative partnership.

THE PERSON: This position requires:

- Graduate degree in ethics or bioethics.
- Demonstrated experience in clinical ethics (a clinical fellowship is an asset).
- Demonstrable awareness of the health care system, health care ethics issues, Catholic health care ethics and their complexity.
- Strong leadership skills including a demonstrated capacity for effective interpersonal interactions and relationship-building.
- Effective collaborative skills both as a team leader and team member, and the ability to work with individuals at all levels of the organization and with external stakeholders.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Strong teaching skills and experience, including the ability to effectively deliver educational and academic material.
- The ability to take individual initiative.
- Valid drivers license.

For detailed specific information please contact:
Sandra Kary, Executive Director, Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan
1702 – 20th Street West, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, S7M 0Z9
Phone (306) 655-5332 Fax (306) 655-5333 E-mail: sandra@chassk.ca

Resumes will be received in confidence until February 28, 2017.
Remuneration commensurate with education and experience.

When headlines go awry

When St. Benedict wrote his Rule for monks 1,500 years ago, he began with the word “Listen.”

Commentaries have been written about his use of this word — “to listen.” In the context of the Rule, it applies to listening both to God and to the members of one’s community.

In his inaugural encyclical in 1964, *Ecclesiam Suam*, Pope Paul VI stressed the word “dialogue.” The church needs to dialogue with today’s world, he pointed out, and that attitude has replaced the image of the church as a walled fortress.

In the world of blogs and “alternate facts” today, another word comes to mind: “read.” Read what articles really say. Read and understand the whole story.

In his Feb. 3 column in the National Catholic Reporter, Jesuit Father Thomas Reese gives an example of how important it is “to read” more than headlines.

He quotes a headline from a blogger: “Pope Francis Just Issued a Blistering Statement Against Christians Supporting Trump’s Muslim Ban.” The source cited was a Catholic News Service story that ran in the Catholic Herald on Oct. 13, 2016.

Reese notes: “The CNS story clearly states that the pope was speaking to German pilgrims on Oct. 13, 2016, but the blogger blithely ignores the facts for the sake of a good headline. Nowhere in the CNS story is the name Trump or the words ‘executive order.’”

In fact, the story reported an incident that happened before the American election was even held!

In other words, it’s important to know “how to read.” In today’s world of social media and “fake news,” one must be critical.

This week’s Prairie Messenger reports that Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has warned that some bishops are interpreting Pope Francis’ document on marriage and family, *Amoris Laetitia*, in a way that is not in accordance with Catholic doctrine. The report does not name any bishops or bishops conferences that the cardinal may be referring to.

Some bloggers, however, have filled in the blanks. They refer to the German bishops conference, which issued a commentary on *Amoris Laetitia*, as giving approval to adulterers to receive communion.

A quick reading of these headlines may lead one to think that the German church is close to formal dissent and schism. However, a report carried in the English Tablet magazine, gives a fuller — and more complete — context:

“The German bishops’ conference has underlined the importance of respecting individual decisions of conscience with regard to allowing remarried divorcees to receive the sacraments, in their long and eagerly awaited interpretation of Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

“While emphasizing that *Amoris Laetitia* leaves no doubt that the ‘indissolubility of marriage belongs

to the church’s essential deposit of faith,’ it at the same time says that ‘no-one can be condemned for ever, because that is not the logic of the Gospel,’ the bishops recalled.

“They noted that *Amoris Laetitia* particularly emphasizes the importance of avoiding judgments which do not take into account the complexity of the different situations in which people live.

“The bishops pointed to AL 305 which says that if one receives the church’s help and in certain cases also the help of the sacraments, one can live in God’s grace even if one is in an ‘objective situation of sin — which may not subjectively be culpable or fully culpable.’

“At the same time, however, they underlined that all remarried divorcees cannot automatically be readmitted to the sacraments. An individual decision of conscience must be preceded by both a serious examination of conscience and a longer spiritual process accompanied by a priest, the bishops explained, and even then it will not always be possible to allow the individual concerned to receive the sacraments ‘in every case.’”

Do these reports cover the same story? we may ask.

In a world where twitter and Facebook are replacing legitimate newspapers, we are in danger of relying on catchy headlines and false news. It will be important “to read” and “to listen” to the whole story or our “dialogue” with one another will be severely distorted. — PWN

Pastoral reflection by bishops of Saskatchewan on assisted suicide

Dear brother priests, deacons, and Catholic faithful of Saskatchewan,

We have arrived, with sadness and mourning, at a time in our history and our country where physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia are legal and available through our health system. For those among us who minister to people facing chronic and terminal illness, this new context is deeply troubling, and made even more painful because as a society we have not prioritized access to palliative care with effective pain management for all our people.

Our Catholic faith is unwavering in its respect for and protection of human life from conception to natural death.

At the heart of our Christian faith is the conviction that God’s love is revealed most profoundly in the dying and rising of Jesus, and that in our living and dying, we are drawn into this paschal mystery, which opens onto eternal life. We believe that there is a great dignity in being human, and that God, who has authored human life, speaks to us and draws us into communion with himself through our living and through our dying. As St. Paul says, “If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord” (Rom 14:8).

In our Christian lives, we are invited to learn to live for others and for God, dying to self (cf. Rom 12:1); dying, as a stage of living, is always in the context of the redemptive work of God. This more than anything else shapes our approach to the end of life.

Trusting that God is present to and at work in every human life, we are called to minister generously to all who call on us, regardless of their faith, with a bias toward life and our understanding of it as God’s beautiful gift.

We offer these guidelines to

help our parishes to cultivate a healthy and positive attitude toward life, even amidst trials, and to assist our pastoral ministers and caregivers in walking compassionately and faithfully amidst painful and complex end-of-life situations.

Our ministry as Christians is twofold: first, to proclaim the good news and form people in it, and second, to be with God’s people wherever life leads them, especially when they invite us into their journeys.

1. To proclaim the good news and form people in it

In light of our Christian hope, we are asking you to join us in doing formative work in your parishes and communities to change the conversation about dying so that fewer people will feel that ending their lives is an appropriate option. All Christians need to be able to speak about and witness authentically to the spiritual work of living through the painful mystery of dying, for our own sake and for the sake of the world. That witness is especially needed in a context where many have lost sight of the dignity of human life even amidst suffering and dying.

2. To be with God’s people wherever life leads them

We are called into ministry with people as they are, not as we would hope them to be. This has always and ever been the case. In inviting us to share in his mission, the Risen Lord sends us to love his people in the messy and difficult circumstances of human life. We are privileged to be invited into people’s lives; this is holy ground and God precedes us there.

Within the church and outside of it, some people will consider and are considering physician-assisted suicide. For any of us who might accompany one of these people, with respect for the

roles and respective accountabilities we have as family members, caregivers, spiritual care providers, or pastors, there are five considerations which we would ask you to keep at the forefront of your ministry of care.

i) *The generous and unconditional love of God.* Our ministry is a participation in God’s love for His people. We are called to act as witnesses to and bearers of God’s generous love. Our bias is toward abundant life, and we offer sacraments, prayer, visiting, accompaniment in palliative care where possible, and many other kinds of support in the service of loving people as God loves them.

Where people are contemplating decisions we disagree with, depending on your role, you may be able to assist in their discernment, gently and appro-

priately offering another way of seeing, with hope and trust in God.

ii) *The call to walk with the dying.* A normal reaction for caregivers as we witness the pain and suffering of others is our tendency to try to “do” something to fix it, to make it better. But that is not always helpful. Often, the most important thing we can offer is to “be” present and accompany them in their darkest hour of their fears, uncertainties, questions, and pain.

Serious illness can be excruciating, and dying can be a prolonged agony. For some, the darkest moments may lead them to contemplate physician-assisted suicide as an option. As people of faith and hope, this is not something we can support nor is it something we can participate in.

What we can offer as church is our promise to be there, to remain engaged and in relationship, to help create a space where hope can make a home amid lingering fears. Our role is as one who keeps vigil alongside others in times of joy or sorrow, and stands with humble trust between what is known and the mystery of the unknown.

iii) *The freedom and conscience of the person who is dying.* Each of God’s people has been given the gift of freedom, and even while we hope that everyone chooses God freely, we must never infringe on another’s freedom.

In the very rare circumstances where a sacrament or funeral is denied, it is because that rite would be a violation of that per-

— CHURCH, page 15



CNS/Kim Ludbrook, EPA

PATIENT DEATHS PROTESTED IN SOUTH AFRICA — People gather at a Feb. 2 vigil in Johannesburg for the 94 mentally ill patients who died last year due to negligence. South Africa’s Jesuit Institute said it is appalled at government actions that led to the deaths of the patients in Gauteng province, and the bishops’ justice and peace commission called for compensation to affected families.

Euthanasia does not save health care costs

The Editor: It is frightening to hear the statement that millions of dollars will be saved with the implementation of doctor-assisted

suicide or euthanasia. The ill and the elderly will feel they should die to save the country money. Many will be persuaded to choose euthanasia rather than add to health costs.

Society is losing respect for life by valuing cost saving as being better than caring for the sick and fragile until natural death. It is immoral and inhuman to say that the ill should die in order to lower health care costs. We are supposed to care for those in need, not require them to end their life prematurely.

We were given life as a gift without any input from us. We have no right to end that life. Many events in life, including illness,

cause us pain and suffering. There are aids and medications available to help us bear the suffering and pain. The solution is not to put an end to life. We need more palliative care for those with terminal illness. It is tragic that euthanasia is being presented as a solution to saving health care dollars.

Has anyone considered that caring for the ill and elderly provides thousands of jobs? The workers contribute to the economy of our country. Declaring that euthanasia saves dollars does not make sense. Such a statement makes our society colder and harder — not more compassionate. — **Naden Hewko, Macklin, Sask.**

Articles too negative

The Editor: After the election of Donald Trump, it is rather sad to read so many of your articles filled with hatred and disgust.

Obviously, the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) had no input into these articles. Your writers surely know that God often uses flawed people to carry out his agenda. It's up to us to use wisdom and discernment to determine what that agenda could be. — **Ernie Wesolowski, Regina**

Children easily manipulated by fear

Continued from page 1

cide, she told reporters in Rome.

Children such as Catalina, fleeing from poverty and abuse, are the primary target of guerrilla groups as they can be easily manipulated by fear, often enduring physical, sexual and psychological abuse at the hands of their commanders, according to the documentary.

"In the beginning, everything was fine. Eight days later, they gave me a gun that was bigger than me," Catalina told journalists.

After just a few days, Catalina took part in her first battle against government forces. She vividly recalled the arrival of eight helicopters that proceeded to attack her battalion.

"We were 44 young people and adults and by the end of the attack, we were 22. It's a deep pain I carry with me," she said.

Even sparks of normal teenage life, such as falling in love, were immediately extinguished during Catalina's time with the guerrilla group, she said. "Yes, I fell in love. I had a boyfriend and he was killed."

In the documentary, she recalled her final moments with her first love, a boy she knew since she was 13.

A helicopter bombed the area where the two were camped out and they realized government forces were advancing. Her boyfriend told her to run as he provided cover fire.

"He was covering me and I told him, 'Come on, don't leave me alone.' And he said, 'Yes, wait, wait, wait.' And I heard (machine gun fire). When I said, 'Baby, now!' he didn't answer me. They killed him for covering me," she said.

After several years, Catalina escaped and found her way to *Ciudad Don Bosco*, which provides shelter, education and most importantly, a sense of normalcy after a life of violence.

Areiza, who is also a teacher, told journalists that *Ciudad Don Bosco* follows a Salesian pastoral model to help former child soldiers regain the first fundamental element in their recovery: trust.

"It means (providing) empathy, closeness and trust when they arrive so they can feel like they are part of a family," he said.

Therapy and group work also are important for instilling in the young people a sense of hope for the future and convincing them that they can achieve their goals and successfully

reintegrate into society.

Bejarano said that the Salesians and the Catholic Church in Colombia "believe in young people's dreams" and that Catalina and Manuel are just two of the many young people who have regained their hope, joy and dignity.

"We always believed that through our work — the Salesian youth pastoral ministry — we are walking with young people and help strengthen their personality so that they can turn their dreams into reality," he said.

Church never abandons people

Continued from page 14

son's free decision to reject in some measure God's grace, and therefore would not be an honest expression of the church's faith. Even in these instances, the church never abandons people.

Non-sacramental rituals can and should be offered with reverence for freedom and integrity. Ministry also must be offered generously to those who surround the person making the decision: friends and family, caregivers, and health care professionals.

iv) Your action on behalf of the whole church. To be a Christian is to belong to the Body of Christ, one part among many members. When we act, we necessarily impact our brothers and sisters.



M. Weber

Grandkid Therapy

After the morning rain
I drive out to the farm
for my weekly grandkid fix.
Golden waxy lady slippers
huddle in bunches in the ditch,
mallards shoot into the sky
from sparkling sloughs
and a pair of majestic geese
lead their brood across the road.

At the house
we bake mounds of cookies,
play a game of Life
and laugh —
the kind of therapy
money cannot buy.

By Marilyn Paul

www.prairiemessenger.ca

Letters to the editor

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

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

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

We encourage our priests and those working for the church in pastoral care who face difficult pastoral decisions to please contact your bishop for designated resource persons to support your discernment around the pastoral approach to those who have raised the possibility of physician-assisted suicide, or regarding funeral requests for those who have died in this way.

You are on the front lines of the church's pastoral outreach, and we trust that you will strive to respond to situations which may be very complex with a deep pastoral engagement and a desire to show the face of God's mercy. We cannot anticipate all of the circumstances you might face, but we can ensure that you do not face them alone.

We urge you not to make decisions on these situations without consulting those experts in ethics, theology, canon law, and pastoral practice who can help you to make decisions in keeping with your conscience and the wisdom of the broader church.

v) Your own well-being and conscience. These situations may well push us as individuals to the edges of our own comfort and/or capacity. Amidst circumstances that are ethically challenging and

potentially compromising, you also have a duty to yourself: to violate your own conscience would be both damaging and sinful. For whatever reason, if you are not able to enter into a situation, there is no shame in asking for assistance; indeed it is your responsibility to do so.

In this, as in all things, we bring each and every person we serve to the Lord in prayer. We mourn every time a person contemplates or chooses to end his or her own life. We acknowledge and are deeply saddened by the burden placed on those asked to collaborate in ending a life. We place ourselves and our circumstances humbly in God's hands; we commit ourselves to working faithfully to the best of our ability to be artisans of Christ's healing and agents of the hope and love he came to bring.

As we do so, we ask the intercession of Mary, Mother of Jesus, who points us to her son, and shows us how to accompany others by the way she was receptive to Jesus in his living and kept vigil with him in his dying.

Archbishop Donald Bolen
Archbishop Murray Chatlain
Bishop Bryan Bayda
Bishop Albert Th  venot
Very Rev. Kevin McGee

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Vatican seeks scientific data on biodiversity

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican believes scientific facts exist and it wants to hear about them from world-renowned scientists before it offers guidance on or criticism of related political, social or economic policies.

The facts and the practical responses to them are separate

issues, but some Catholics do not understand that or object to it — and there is no lack of evidence for that in Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo's inbox.

The bishop is chancellor of both the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. The two academies are holding a workshop Feb. 27 - March 1 on preserving biodiversity.

In January, the bishop began receiving messages objecting to the invitation the academies extended to Paul R. Ehrlich, president of the Centre for Conservation Biology at Stanford University. The letters of protest highlight Ehrlich's controversial book, *The Population Bomb*, published in 1968, and his advocacy of strong population-control measures, including through abortion.

Ehrlich, a biologist, is not a member of either pontifical academy but has been invited to speak at the workshop because of his studies in the field of conservation biology.

"Naturally, someone can say, 'Oh, look who they have invited to the Vatican,' but the positive side is that he can help us find the truth in the theme we are discussing," Sanchez told Catholic News Service. Ehrlich is one of two people asked to speak about how "consumption preferences, population numbers, technology (and) ecosystem productivity" impact biodiversity.

The Vatican has long acknowledged the fact of

global population growth, has shared concern about increased poverty rates in the fastest-growing regions of the world and accepts the scientific evidence that the growing population has had a negative effect on the environment.

However, in evaluating policies to respond to the scientific fact of population growth and environmental destruction, the Vatican insists on recognition of the sacredness of every human life, respect for human dignity and trust in the human capacity to change and to innovate.

Where some scientists would favour population-control policies, modern popes consistently have argued that the problem is less about the number of people living on the planet and more about human selfishness, the unfair dis-

tribution of resources and a lack of will to find creative solutions.

Before making moral evaluations of policy, the pope and bishops need to know the scientific facts. The Vatican gets those from scholars with scientific expertise, regardless of their religious beliefs or their opinions on the policy implications of the scientific facts.

The object of the upcoming workshop and Ehrlich's speech is not population control, Sanchez said. It is how to respond to the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* to protect the diversity of plants and animals God created.

Objecting to the invitation of a scientist recognized as an expert in his field "is not logical," the bishop said. "Critics are only following the logic of attack. And it's always the same people."

Pope names official to Malta as 'exclusive spokesperson'

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis named Archbishop Angelo Becciu, Vatican substitute secretary of state, as his special delegate and sole spokesperson to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

"Until the end of your mandate, that is until the conclusion of the extraordinary chapter, which will elect the grand master, you will be my exclusive spokesperson in all matters relating to relations between the Apostolic See and the order," the pope wrote in a letter to Becciu Feb. 2.

The special delegate, the pope said, also will work closely with Fra Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein, the chivalric order's temporary head, to carry out "the appropriate renewal of the order's constitution."

Released by the Vatican Feb. 4, the pope's letter to Becciu came after several tense weeks which led to the Jan. 24 resignation of Fra Matthew Festing as grand

master of the order.

The pope's letter made no mention of how Becciu's responsibilities would overlap with those of Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, the current cardinal patron of the order.

The mandate of the pope's special delegate to the order has similar responsibilities to that of the cardinal patron, who officially has "the task of promoting the spiritual interests of the order and its members and relations between the Holy See and the order," according to the order's constitution.

"I delegate to you, therefore, all the necessary powers to decide any issues that may arise concerning the implementation of the mandate entrusted to you," the pope told Becciu.

Echoing his letter to members of the order Jan. 28, the pope said that as his special delegate, Becciu "will take care of all matters relating to the spiritual and moral renewal of the order," particularly its professed members.



CNS/Paul Jeffrey

IRAQI FAMILIES FLEE — Displaced by fighting between the Iraqi army and the Islamic State group, a family leaves a processing centre for displaced families Jan. 27 outside Mosul, Iraq.

Advocates want to welcome refugees

By Dennis Sadowski

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Leaders from six organizations want Americans and President Donald Trump to understand that refugees, especially those from war-torn Middle Eastern countries, are average people with careers, comfortable homes and loving families rather than see them as a monolithic threat to the United States.

Their appeal during a Feb. 1 news conference at *Casa Italiana* at Holy Rosary Church in Washington came as refugees continued to be denied entry into the U.S. nearly a week after Trump ordered a 120-day suspension of the U.S. refugee resettlement program.

Officials of Catholic Charities USA, Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., Catholic Relief Services, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities and the Center for Migration Studies called on Trump to rescind his presidential memorandum implementing the suspension, saying the country

has a moral obligation to welcome people fleeing for their lives.

They called the world's refugee crisis a pro-life issue.

"One of the issues for many of us in this country is that we can't imagine that the refugee is a person like ourselves, that many of the people that are now caught in camps or horrible situations are people like ourselves who woke up one morning and learned that everything they had was destroyed," said Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA.

"We all have to stop objectifying them. These are human beings like you and I," she said, recalling the people in northern Iraq she recently contacted via online video communications.

Other leaders cited the country's long history of welcoming refugees as well as church teaching on welcoming the stranger. They said the U.S. should not relinquish its role as a moral leader in refugee resettlement, especially for those who have been cleared or are awaiting final approval to enter the country. Any delay in their arrival puts them at greater

threat, the leaders said.

"These refugees are victims of the same violence that we are trying to protect ourselves from," said Jill Marie Gerschutz-Bell, senior legislative specialist at Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency. "And yet it is American principles, of course, that we are trying to protect. So a disproportionate security response leaves us wondering: What does it mean to be American? What does it mean to be Catholic?"

Trump's memorandum suspends the entire U.S. refugee resettlement program for 120 days and bans entry of all citizens from seven majority-Muslim countries — Syria, Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia — for 90 days.

The resettlement program's suspension also will affect about 700 employees of Catholic Charities agencies nationwide, with layoffs expected for nearly all of the workers because the stream of refugees has ended, said Markham.

"We absolutely depend on the partnership between public and private funding to support these programs," she explained. "We don't have the resources to carry them without that partnership. Four months carrying 700 employees with no income is not feasible for a charitable organization like Catholic Charities."



CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz

BLACK HISTORY MONTH — A woman and man pray during the annual Black History Month mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York Feb. 5. The mass, sponsored by the Archdiocese of New York's Office of Black Ministry, also was celebrated in observance of the National Day of Prayer for the African-American and African Family.

Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.

— Pema Chödrön