



## Farewell to Cohen

For the second time in Saskatoon, a Jewish rabbi and a Catholic bishop got together for a public conversation about themes of



faith, doubt and religious imagery in the work of Leonard Cohen.  
— page 3

## Milestone anniversary

A celebration of family took place in Ottawa recently when World Wide Marriage Encounter presented Margaret and Nelson Evoy with the Longest Married Couple in Canada award.  
— page 4

## Jesus exhibit

The Israel Museum has mounted the first exhibit devoted to exploring Jewish artists' complex relationship with Christian symbols. These artists' works comment on Christianity via its own symbols, but they don't emerge from a Christian faith.  
— page 7

## Oscar reflections

"Hollywood royalty loathes the vulgarian in the White House," writes Gerald Schmitz. "At awards shows from the Golden Globes on, many have taken shots at the new president from the podium, unafraid of his angry tweets. Expect more this Sunday. Trump can fume all he wants but this is one global reality TV show he can't win."  
— page 9

## Lenten campaign

Citizens for Public Justice has officially launched Give it up for the Earth!, a faith in action climate justice campaign for Lent.  
— page 12

## Words matter

We have open debates about immigration and accommodation, writes Dennis Gruending, but there's no justification for any politician, journalist or private citizen to peddle hatred, fear and conspiracy theories about our new neighbours. Words "can unite and heal us as much as they can harm us."  
— page 13

# Theologian urges closer ties with Orthodox

By Jonathan Luxmoore

OXFORD, England (CNS) — A prominent Catholic ecumenist has urged a better understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church.

"Those suspicious of the Russian Orthodox stance should go and see what's happening," said Barbara Hallensleben, a consultant

with the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

"Of course, nationalist and ideological tendencies are always at work. But a lot of people in Russia are promoting Christianity — and by creating relations, we can strengthen church life and proclaim the faith with them," said Hallensleben, who hosted

anniversary commemorations of Pope Francis' 2016 meeting with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill.

The Feb. 12 anniversary symposium at Switzerland's University of Fribourg included participation by Cardinal Kurt Koch, head of the Christian unity council, and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, the Russian Orthodox church's foreign relations director.

In a Feb. 13 Catholic News Service interview, Hallensleben said Pope Francis' encounter with Kirill of Moscow in Cuba had initiated "new common paths."

"The pope said unity means moving together, not just holding talks — and what's amazing is how the style of ecumenism has already changed," said Hallensleben, who co-directs Fribourg's Ecumenical Institute and sits on the International Theological Commission. "We're exchanging pilgrimages to see how we each live the Christian faith and engaging in a much more extensive cultural ecumenism, as well as working together on the great challenges facing today's world," she said.

Ties between the Vatican and Moscow Patriarchate are widely believed to have improved since the Cuba meeting, but are still marred by intra-Orthodox rivalries and the alleged government

links of the Russian church.

Speaking at the Fribourg symposium, Koch said the pope's joint declaration with Kirill had marked "a historic step" in inter-church ties, but had also "excited diverse criticisms" from Catholics opposed to an "over-moral vision of ecumenism" and from Orthodox "hostile to any rapprochement with Catholics."

Hilarion said the declaration had been a "visible expression of trust and mutual understanding," but had also necessitated overcoming "serious obstacles and superstitions."

Hallensleben told CNS that speakers at the symposium had listed "very concrete bilateral projects" launched in the past year, including theological debates, joint concerts, exhibitions and student exchanges, as well as a joint April 2016 delegation to Syria and Lebanon to aid persecuted Christians.

"Both churches have problems with certain circles who disagree with what's being done," said Hallensleben. "But the Russian church has its independence and is now our partner. The idea of coming closer isn't just the personal option of two church heads — it means getting through to local church people beyond their hierarchies."



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

**POPE MEETS METROPOLITAN HILARION** — Pope Francis greets Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of external relations for the Russian Orthodox Church, during a private meeting in 2016 at the Vatican. A prominent Catholic ecumenist has urged a better understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church.

# Refugees from U.S. look to Canada for asylum

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Canada can expect to see more asylum seekers crossing its 9,000 km, mostly unguarded, border with the United States as enforcement toughens at the U.S.-Mexican border and President Donald Trump continues to issue execu-

tive orders to restrain refugee arrivals, Catholic refugee advocates have told The Catholic Register.

"It appears things will get worse for refugees (in the U.S.)," said Scalabrinian priest Rev. Vincenzo Rosato. "The whole situation is creating a lot of uncertainty." (See related story, this page.)

The Scalabrini order is dedicat-

ed to serving migrants and refugees worldwide and runs safe houses for refugees along several borders, including the U.S.-Mexican border. The forces that have driven about 300 refugee claimants to cross into Manitoba from Minnesota and North Dakota since last April, including more than 40 who have

arrived in Emerson, Man., in just two weeks, may mean that the Scalabrinis have to set up similar safe houses near the Canada-U.S. border, Rosato said.

"This could become a real exodus and a new phenomenon,"

— REFUGEES, page 7

# Working with refugees 'a gift and privilege'

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The stream of asylum seekers crossing the U.S. border on foot into Canada at Emerson, Man., is not expected to stop any time soon and will, in fact, only grow as spring approaches, say officials in both the U.S. and Canada.

So far in 2017, 69 people have trekked for as long as six hours over farm fields and via secluded roads to reach Canada, many in dangerously cold temperatures, some with children and babies. Some have lost fingers and toes to the cold.

They are picked up by RCMP, questioned and then taken to the

Canada Border Services Agency in Emerson where they are processed, fingerprinted and photographed and then cleared to go. Their next stop is likely the community hall in Emerson.

The Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, based in Winnipeg, has been shuttling refugee claimants to Winnipeg where they find them shelter and provide them with counselling and paralegal help to file their refugee claim. The council is asking the public for financial donations to help the asylum seekers. The Winnipeg Foundation has pledged \$33,000 in emergency

— CHURCHES, page 4



CNS/David Maung

**MORE UNCERTAINTY FOR REFUGEES** — A man reacts as he watches his mother and sisters approach during a massive reunion called "Abrazos, No Muros" (Hugs, Not Walls) Jan. 28. Canadian refugee advocates expect to see a slight increase in border crossings from the U.S. as it toughens its immigration enforcement.



# New technologies challenge traditional ethics

DALLAS (CNS) — The head of the Pontifical Council for Life urged the U.S. bishops to stress the human dimension that is under threat of being ignored in the continued search for technological progress.

“New technologies, by reason of the satisfaction they bring, their complexity, and their great efficiency have become the touchstone by which today’s ethical challenges are judged,” said Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia Feb. 6 in Dallas, where the bishops were gathered for their 26th workshop on bioethical issues.

“The promise of a longer life, and even of immortality is the most convincing argument that technological society can offer,” Paglia said, adding the rhetorical question, “Why should we turn down the possibility of overcoming all limits that technology offers?”

Paglia cited 20th-century philosopher Hans Jonas, who fled Germany shortly after the Nazis took power in 1933, whose writings “influenced the development of our awareness today that we are stewards of creation.” Jonas saw situations “where clearly our decisions must be based on much more than mechanistic technological and economic analysis,” he

said.

The text of Paglia’s remarks were made available on the Vatican Radio website.

“As we respond to what for too long we have called ‘challenges,’ we must remember that we are not being called to a conflict but rather to a rebuilding, a reconstruction of what it means to be human,” Paglia said. “Our first task is not to identify enemies but rather to find companions on the journey, persons with whom we can share our path.”

The archbishop added, “Even more deeply, we must understand — and understand doesn’t always mean agree with — the wrenching contradictions in which modern man lives.”

The archbishop delivered the keynote on the first evening of the Feb. 6 - 7 workshop, presented by the Philadelphia-based National Catholic Bioethics Centre. The Knights of Columbus provides a grant for the workshop, which this year had as its theme “Healing Persons in a Wounded Culture.” About 200 bishops were in attendance.

Paglia cited Pope Francis’ remarks in 2013 likening the church to “a field hospital after battle.”

“It is useless, the archbishop said, “to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to treat his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Treat the wounds, heal the wounds. . . . And you have to start from the ground up.”

“In an age marked by too much technology, avarice, power and materialism, the word ‘accompany’ makes us think of companionship, sharing and the path we tread together,” Paglia said. “For sure we are to establish effective accompaniment for life at every one of its stages. For sure we have to stand against whatever weakens or still worse destroys life or threatens its dignity.”

He pointed to three particular dangers.

One was how, in the future, “health care will be one of the central elements of western

economies by reason of the development of efficient preventive medicine protocols in addition to the traditional combat against specific diseases and assistance in recovery. This approach will be expensive and not widely available.

Another was advances in reproductive technology. “We will soon be able to manage all the variables connected with human reproduction, variables that until now have been left to ‘nature’ or ‘chance,’ ” he said, wondering aloud about its effect on the “binding affective relationship known as marriage when we can manage the entire process all by ourselves.”

A third danger he cited was the investments in software, neuroscience and artificial intelligence. “Does it still make sense to speak about a basic ‘human nature’ and, if so, how do we do it in a way that is not merely defensive in a world

where everyone else believes in technology?” Paglia asked.

“Already many think that we have to ‘perfect’ humankind by eliminating individuals who evidence too many things wrong or unsupportable weakness: the handicapped, the elderly, the incurable. Does this mean that the more advanced our technology becomes, the higher we raise the barrier to acceptability and those who are tolerated today will become expendable tomorrow? I hope not.”

He told the bishops, “We have to consider whether the intellectual categories that we as shepherds of souls and preachers of the Gospel use in our life and mission are adequate to address situations that arise in a world that . . . on a practical level thinks with machines that can be held in the hand and that are incapable of leading us to any reality beyond ourselves.”

## Even in dark times, never lose hope in God’s love: pope

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians must never lose hope and should remind themselves that God loves them even at their worst, Pope Francis said.

God’s love provides “security” both in difficult moments and

even when “I have done something terrible and evil,” the pope said Feb. 15 during his weekly general audience.

“No one can take this security from us. We must repeat it like a prayer: God loves me. I am sure that God loves me!” he said.

Among the thousands of pilgrims present at the Paul VI audience hall were numerous student groups from Europe, including several children’s choirs from Italy and Spain.

When greeting the Italian-speaking pilgrims, the pope was interrupted by each choir who broke out in song to greet him.

Despite several applauses, one choir continued singing to the amusement of Pope Francis. He laughed heartily while praising them for their persistence in finishing the entire song.

“When you want something, that’s how you do it. That’s what we should do with prayer; when asking something from the Lord: insist, insist, insist. That is a beautiful example, a beautiful example of prayer,” the pope said off-the-cuff, following his praise of the determined choir group.

Continuing a series of talks on Christian hope, the pope reflected on a passage from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans in which the apostle says Christians “should boast in hope of the glory of God.”

“Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope,” St. Paul writes.

The pope said boasting is “surprising” since from a young age,

— CHRISTIANS, page 15



CNS/Paulo Carrico, EPA

**SISTER LUCIA** — Sister Lucia dos Santos, one of the three children who saw Our Lady of Fatima in 1917, is pictured in a 2000 photo. Bishop Virgilio Antunes of Coimbra, Portugal, formally closed the local phase of investigation into her life and holiness Feb. 13 in the Carmelite convent of St. Teresa in Coimbra, where she resided until her death in 2005 at the age of 97.



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

**PAPAL COUNCIL MEETS** — Pope Francis leads the 18th meeting of his Council of Cardinals at the Vatican Feb. 13. The cardinals issued a statement Feb. 13 assuring the pope of their “full support for his person and his magisterium.”

## Pope, cardinals discuss church tribunals

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis and members of the international Council of Cardinals advising him on church governance discussed the functions of the Vatican tribunals that handle marriage, appeals and indulgences.

Meeting with Pope Francis Feb. 13 - 15, the Council of Cardinals also continued its discussion of the process of selecting bishops and received updates on economic and communication reform initiatives.

Paloma Garcia Ovejero, vice director of the Vatican press office, told reporters the tribunals studied by the council included: the Apostolic Penitentiary, a church court that deals with indulgences; the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature, the Catholic Church’s highest appeals court; and the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, the Vatican court that deals mainly with marriage cases.

Continuing their examination of individual offices, the cardinals also looked at the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the Congregation for Eastern Churches and the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue.

Garcia Ovejero also read the statement that the cardinals issued Feb. 13 assuring the pope of their “full support for his person and his magisterium.”

At a separate meeting with the press Feb. 15, German Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising, a council member, said that while the council “didn’t want to make it a great thing,” the cardinals saw the need to express their support for the pope.

“I think it was the time to repeat from our group (that) we are supporting the pope, we are going together with him,” Marx said.

“We have discussions in the church, normal discussions, tensions; it will (always be) like this. But in a time like this, it is also

clear for us as Catholics that loyalty to the pope is substantial for the Catholic faith and for Catholic believers.”

Although the statement said the cardinals’ support was offered “in relation to recent events,” no specific events were mentioned.

The statement came just a few days after a fake version of the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, was emailed to Vatican officials and a week after posters were put up around Rome questioning the pope’s mercy in dealing with the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and other groups over which the pope had placed special delegates.

“I will not add to it,” Marx said when asked regarding the recent events. “We reflected (on) the sentence and so I will leave it at that. We had the text and we said that’s enough. And I say today, it’s enough,” he told journalists.

The Council of Cardinals will meet again April 24 - 26.



# Archbishop, rabbi bid farewell to Leonard Cohen

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — For the second time in Saskatoon, a Jewish rabbi and a Catholic bishop got together for a public conversation about themes of faith, doubt and religious imagery in the work of Leonard Cohen.

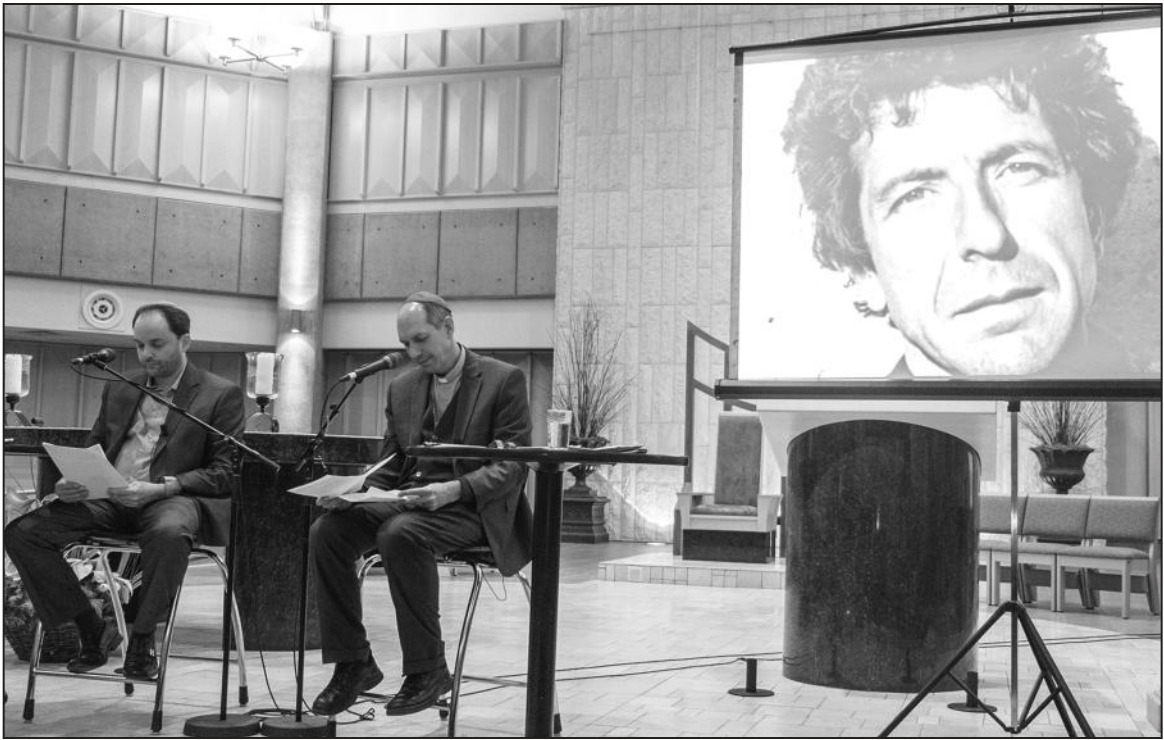
Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky of Saskatoon’s Congregation Agudas Israel and Archbishop Donald Bolen of the Archdiocese of Regina bid farewell to the late Canadian poet, singer and musician Feb. 13 at an event held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Dubbed “A Holy and a Broken Hallelujah,” the gathering was a followup to an earlier event held at the local synagogue in December 2015, when Bolen was still bishop of Saskatoon.

The two friends examined six of Cohen’s songs, including three from his final album, *You Want It Darker*, released just weeks before his death Nov. 7, 2016.

“The songs on that CD seemed to beckon for another evening and another conversation, with a little bit of a tone of farewell,” said Bolen.

“I really feel humbled to be in this holy place, with this beautiful crowd and this beautiful spirit of fellowship,” said Jodorkovsky. “I am very thankful to my friend Archbishop Don Bolen for his challenges — he has been challenging me permanently to read and to study, and this has been a



Tim Yaworski

**COHEN EVENT — Saskatoon Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky and Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen (from left) discussed Jewish and Christian imagery in the work of the late Leonard Cohen in a session entitled “A Holy and a Broken Hallelujah,” presented Feb. 13 in Saskatoon.**

very enriching process.”

Along the way, the two have deepened their friendship, while also “finding opportunities to build bridges between our two traditions — and Leonard Cohen is wonderful in that sense,” Jodorkovsky added.

Excerpts from each of the songs — “You Want It Darker,” “Steer Your Way,” “Hallelujah,” “Show Me the Place,” “Come Healing,” “Treaty/Treaty Reprise” — were played through-

out the evening, with the rabbi and the archbishop taking turns presenting reflections and insights before turning to each other with questions.

Themes of brokenness and healing, darkness and light, faith and doubt were explored, as the two delved into the samples of Cohen’s large body of work, acknowledging the complexity of the man and the artist, who was a faithful Jew and a spiritual seeker who was fascinated by Jesus and

often used Christian imagery in his poetry and lyrics.

For instance, Jodorkovsky traced the explicit Jewish context in Cohen’s title song “You Want it Darker,” which quotes the Kaddish (the Jewish prayer of mourning), and includes the refrain *Hineni, Hineni* — “here I am Lord” — echoing the responses of Abraham, Isaac and Samuel in the Scriptures. The song also includes the haunting voice of Jewish cantor Gideon Zelermyer

of Montreal’s Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue.

“The beginning (of the song), maybe the first 10 seconds, is very similar to our High Holy Days liturgy, I find it very similar to what we call Kol Nidrei, which is the first prayer on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement,” said Jodorkovsky.

In the song, Cohen expresses doubt about how God operates in the world, examining the darkness and brokenness of existence, wrestling with the painful realities of violence and suffering — themes that are not new for this poet, said the rabbi. “He is raising the question . . . who is responsible for this? Is it God’s (responsibility) or is it ours?”

Pointing to the lines: “Magnified, sanctified / Be thy holy name / Vilified, crucified / In the human frame / A million candles burning / For the love that never came,” Jodorkovsky noted that for a Jew the reference to millions of candles burning immediately brings to mind the Holocaust, and the problem of where God was in that suffering.

“You Want It Darker” is a song of complaint, Jodorkovsky added. “To me, he is in the last stage of his life, and he is still asking the questions that he has asked himself for his entire life, but with more wisdom and maybe even with what the Jews call *chutzpah* . . . (daring) to challenge God.”

— COHEN, page 5

# Doctors are fighting a ‘crazy’ battle for conscience rights

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — It’s not surprising patients fall in love with Dr. Ramona Coelho. Not just because she’s a young, pretty doctor who smiles easily, laughs frequently and focuses her attention completely on whoever is talking to her.

Her patients in London, Ont., know that she’s a doctor who is in it for something more than the status, money or security attached to most medical practices.

“I love my work,” Coelho confesses. “I love being a doctor. I love helping people and being with them — trying to find solutions for them.”

Her practice is heavily slanted to marginalized patients. Her waiting room is full of refugees, ex-cons, the poor. Many of her patients are on permanent disability.

All that is at risk as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario mounts an ever more prickly defence of its “Professional Obligations and Human Rights Policy.” The policy is currently before the courts. It would force Ontario doctors to refer for abortions and for assisted suicide.

Coelho won’t do either and her patients know it. In 10 years of practice, her ethical limits have never been a problem. She’s never had an argument with a patient and no patient has complained.

In fact, an extraordinary num-

ber of her patients say they love her. Her average rating on [ratemds.com](#) is 4.5 out of five.

“Dr. Coelho has been our doctor for several years and we love her!” wrote a patient who rated her five out of five in every category except punctuality (four out of five).

“Dr. Coelho makes you feel so comfortable and it’s so nice to have a doctor care about her patients, you do not feel like a number with her,” wrote another.

Coelho convenes meetings of the London Catholic Doctor’s Guild and has spoken up in defence of conscience rights for doctors on a number of occasions. She knows she’s an easy target for anybody who might want to use the CPSO policy to drive Catholic doctors out of the profession.

“Still, on some level, I’m hoping this is just a crazy misunderstanding,” Coelho told *The Catholic Register*.

When Coelho graduated from McGill’s medical school, doctors at the McGill University Health Network took her on as a resident knowing and respecting her ethical convictions about abortion (euthanasia was not then legal). The professors and doctors worked out a protocol in case Coelho might be asked to refer.

“We had a system so we could accommodate. I didn’t have to do anything against my conscience,” said Coelho. “It was very respectful.”

As a young doctor, Coelho was asked to teach medical stu-

dents about family medicine and was even encouraged to apply for a faculty position before she and her urologist husband made the move to London.

Somehow that accommodating, respectful and practical spirit began to evaporate after Coelho and her family moved to Ontario. As the College of Physicians and Surgeons began to review its human rights policy, it became clear that accommodating doctors who object to abortion or won’t prescribe chemical birth control was not on the agenda. Even though 90 per cent of people who responded to the college’s draft policy online wanted conscience protections for doctors, in 2015 the college voted 21-3 for a policy which placed a “duty to refer” over the conscience rights of doctors.

“What they’re saying is that if we don’t agree with their ethics we don’t belong in family medicine,” said Coelho. “What they’re trying to do is to create a monoculture of people who all think the same way.”

The Coalition for HealthCARE and Conscience, representing



Photo courtesy of Dr. Ramona Coelho

**CONSCIENCE RIGHTS — Dr. Ramona Coelho, front and centre, with her family. The London, Ont.-based doctor is fighting for the conscience rights of doctors as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario is trying to force doctors to refer for abortions and assisted suicide.**

more than 5,000 doctors and over 100 health care institutions across Canada, is trying to persuade the Ontario legislature to write conscience protections into a bill currently before Queen’s Park that would bring several Ontario laws into line with federal legislation that legalized voluntary euthanasia last year.

Coelho just wants to see a solution, preferably a new human rights policy from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, that respects her constitutional right to freedom of conscience.

“All of a sudden, I don’t have the protections, constitutional protection,” she said. “It just strikes me as crazy.”

Coelho has never stood in the way of her patients accessing abortion services or the pill. There’s no shortage of walk-in clinics. People can self-refer for abortion and contraception. It’s likely the province will soon have a system in place that will allow

— DOCTOR page 8



# Marriage Encounter honours couple married 78 years

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Five generations of family braved a snowstorm Feb. 12 to celebrate Margaret and Nelson Evoy's 78 years of fruitful and happy marriage.

At the celebration, World Wide Marriage Encounter (WWME) representatives Merv and Jessica Sullivan presented the Evoys with the Longest Married Couple in Canada award. The worldwide apostolate created the award four years ago to highlight the importance of marriage.

Last October, WWME launched the search for the 2017 winner, seeking nominations from across the country. One of the Evoys' daughters, Suzanne Sheppard, put in her parents' names.

"Marriage is not only a blessing to each other, but a blessing to the community," said Merv Sullivan before presenting the framed award certificate. "You have blessed our community so amazingly just by the love you have for each other."

The Evoys had six children, one of whom died at age five months. They have 13 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren. Many of the extended family gathered for the celebration in a party room of the retirement residence where the Evoys have lived for the past seven years. The couple remain active members of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Kanata, and still attend services from time to time.

A choir of great-grandchildren



CCN/D. Gyapong

**FAMILY CELEBRATION** — The Evoys' extended family pose for a group photograph after Margaret and Nelson Evoy received Worldwide Marriage Encounter's Longest Married Couple in Canada Award Feb. 12 in Ottawa. The Evoys have been married 78 years.

sang "I can't help falling in love with you," to the couple after everyone enjoyed lunch. Sheppard said the family commonly organizes a talent show when they get together.

"It's the most wonderful feeling," said Margaret Evoy, 98, in an interview. "We're blessed to receive this award."

"This is something we never expected," said Nelson Evoy, 99.

The couple met at an Ottawa skating rink when she was 13 and he was 14, and immediately de-

veloped a "crush" on each other. After dating for five years, they married at St. Luke's Anglican Church on Oct. 22, 1938.

Both of them credit the role of God and the church in their long and happy marriage.

"I was never a Bible-thumper," Nelson said. "But the church was part of our lives. We brought up our children to be Christian, to be thoughtful and thankful for having the Lord with us."

"I don't know how we are able to get through any of it without

him," he said.

The couple shared some advice on how to have a long-lasting, happy marriage.

"We never argue," said Nelson. "If we had something to purchase, we always did it as a pair, thinking it over without jumping into it."

"We enjoyed being together," Margaret said. "I feel very blessed to have a good husband. He was a good father and a good husband."

"I think we have to show each

other pretty well daily how much you care and try to always speak it," Margaret said.

"You have to do things together," Nelson said. "You don't go out and do things on your own and then come back and tell your wife. This is the most frugal lady you can imagine, thank God!"

Nelson said their life together "doesn't seem that long."

The Sullivans presented the WWME award on behalf of the Canadian Ecclesial Leadership Team: Ana Lilian Ayala and her husband Ernesto Ayala, based in the Vancouver diocese, and Rev. Michael Basque.

"Most couples come to marriage with a lot of expectations," said Ana Lilian Ayala in an interview. "Sometimes those expectations are not shared."

If they are kept to oneself, they can create barriers to communication, she said. Through sponsoring Marriage Encounter weekends, couples can learn concepts such as "listening with your heart," and "love is a decision," Ayala said. In the 60-80 weekends WWME runs across Canada in a year, couples learn techniques to express their feelings and gain empathy.

WWME began in the United States as a Catholic movement almost 50 years ago, though it is open to people of other denominations. It's now active in 90 countries. Not only does it promote marriage, but also vocations to the priesthood. The contest is open to any couple, even atheists, who have an enduring marriage.

## Churches continue sponsoring government-assisted refugees

Continued from page 1

funding to help the refugee claimants.

The council's Welcome Place receives federal funding to help government-assisted refugees, as opposed to the recent wave of asylum seekers who have yet to prove before the Immigration and Refugee Board that they're persons in need of Canada's protection.

According to U.S. immigration officials, people crossing on foot is nothing new, but the recent wave is due to statements made by the new government in Washington, considered by many to be anti-immigration, and the recently proposed travel ban on people coming to the U.S. from seven predominantly Muslim countries. There are fears U.S. immigration officials could suddenly start arresting anyone who is undocumented.

It is believed many of the asylum seekers are coming from Minneapolis, a seven-hour drive from Emerson, and home to 200,000 ethnic Somalis, the largest Somali community in the U.S. Most of the refugee claimants crossing into Canada at Emerson are Somali, according to the Canadian Border Services Agency. They pay for transport to get somewhere close to the border and then set off into the night.

In the meantime, churches in Manitoba continue the process of sponsoring government-assisted refugees seeking to escape coun-

tries besieged by famine or war. The effort requires a small army of volunteers and financial resources to support a refugee family for at least one year.

In the fall of 2015 three churches in Dauphin — Dauphin First United Church, the First Baptist Church and St. Viator's Roman Catholic Church — started working together to sponsor refugee families, and one year ago they welcomed three families from Syria to Dauphin, 15 people altogether.

In Winnipeg the churches of St. John Brebeuf and St. Paul the Apostle welcomed a Syrian family of five in November. On Feb. 5 St. Paul the Apostle hosted a Meet and Greet for the family and parishioners.

"It was an amazing experience for both the family and the community," said pastor of St. Paul the Apostle, Rev. Eric Giddins. "Bilal (the husband and father) spoke to the community in English. The family has only been here two months and knew very little English upon arrival. He spoke clearly and graciously about how happy he and his family are to be in Winnipeg to begin their new life. He stated that the family is so grateful for our hospitality, sponsorship, support, and encouragement. This experience has been very meaningful and profound for our parish."

Tom Bailey-Robertson, pastoral associate at St. John Brebeuf, said the settlement experience "has

been wonderful. There's a group of about a dozen volunteers who are involved with the day-to-day happenings, and another 50 members or so who pitch in. The community's response has been tremendous. My office is packed with donations and not a week goes by without a message about an item someone wants to donate. Sponsors are responsible for everything: housing, furniture, moving, setting up finances, medical appointments, finding a school for the kids, getting the parents into English classes. However, it's easy to help because this family is so gracious. They are eager to be independent and it's very rewarding to be around them."

Angela Tessier, a volunteer with the St. Paul the Apostle-Brebeuf group, said, "It is a gift and privilege to walk the journey with them. We can only be impressed with their tenacity, courage and resiliency. While there have been challenges, primarily language, there have been moments of sheer joy like the sight of the children hurtling down a hill on a toboggan for the first time, and the smile on the daughter's face when she arrives in from school, exhausted but thrilled that she can go to school. There were also moments of brilliant coincidences, where perhaps God chose to be anonymous, when a translator just appeared when needed or when a childcare space came open or someone knew someone who was able to help out."



**REFUGEES** — The father, mother and two of three children of a recently arrived Syrian family stand with a welcoming parishioner (right) from the co-sponsoring churches of St. Paul the Apostle and St. John Brebeuf in Winnipeg.



# Aid workers battle crisis conditions in Syria, Lebanon

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Humanitarian aid workers in Syria and Lebanon are exhausted, said H  l  ne Tremblay-Boyko.

It’s not the kind of exhaustion a person feels at the end of a long day. This is the kind of exhaustion where the aid workers are working in the same desperate conditions as the people they serve.

“We do not know here (in Canada) what is going on there,” said Tremblay-Boyko, vice-president of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace national council (D&P). “They need peace. They need to be able to start rebuilding their lives. We need to do everything we can to enable a peace accord.”

From Jan. 29 to Feb. 9,

Tremblay-Boyko was part of a joint delegation by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and D&P.

When a temporary ceasefire in the Syrian city of Aleppo was announced late December, D&P jumped at the opportunity to organize a trip to Syria and Lebanon to meet with their local humanitarian partners.

“Our purpose was to show our interest and love for them, to meet with church leaders and also to meet with some of the organizations that are helping those people that are affected by the wars,” said Tremblay-Boyko.

It was a whirlwind delegation led by two Canadian bishops: Bishop Raymond Poisson of Joliette, Que., and Ukrainian-Greek Catholic Eparch Ken Nowakowski of New Westminster, B.C.

They were joined by Tremblay-Boyko, Gilio Brunelli, D&P international programs director, and Kyle Ferguson, ecclesial and inter-faith relations adviser for the Canadian bishops’ conference.

The Canadian delegates met with Canadian ambassadors to Syria and Lebanon, the apostolic nuncio to both countries and the Eastern Catholic patriarchs. They also met with Caritas partners from Lebanon, Syria and M.O.N.A. who work to feed, clothe and care for the most vulnerable people affected by the conflict.

“Right now, there is a huge humanitarian crisis,” said Tremblay-Boyko. “People are in dire need of basics. They don’t have food security. Many of them who escaped with just the clothes on their back, they have nothing and so they need everything.”

A heavy snowstorm hit the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon just days before the Canadian delegates arrived. Caritas workers have been working around the clock to provide warm clothes and heating systems to Syrian refugees who have settled in empty cinderblock homes with rectangular holes in the walls where windows and doors should be.

Fuel shortages and crumbling state infrastructure has led to systematic power outages throughout the day. Most days, Tremblay-Boyko said the region would have electricity for three hours, then two hours without.

“They also don’t have any central heating, so they have to have little electric space heaters,” she said. “Most of the buildings are stone . . . and these are the actual offices of some of the civil

organizations that are working with them.”

Tremblay-Boyko said that there is a great need for psychosocial support, not only for the people displaced by the Syrian Civil War, but also for the humanitarian aid workers. After six years serving in the middle of the conflict, aid workers are burning out.

“They feel that they are in a dark tunnel and they cannot see a light at the end,” she said. “We would talk for a long while and they would talk about their needs. . . . They just shake their heads and go, ‘We don’t know.’ They’re so exhausted from six years of conflict.”

Development and Peace, also known as Caritas Canada, is working with the Canadian bishops to launch an appeal within the month to send support to its Caritas partners in the Middle East.

## Cohen was getting ready for death

Continued from page 3

Jodorkovsky described Cohen as a “post-pessimist,” quoting Cohen’s words to an interviewer: “I don’t think of myself as a pessimist. A pessimist is someone who is waiting for it to rain, and I feel soaked to the skin.”

Cohen sees brokenness and darkness as realities in the world, Jodorkovsky said, adding that the poet then responds to that reality with “*Hineni* — I am ready to serve.”

“The positive message that he brings is that the world is dark, there are problems inherent in the world — but still our role here is to find the light in the darkness.”

The rabbi also raised the role of doubt in religion and faith. “When we see religious people who have all the answers, and they know exactly what God wants from them, and they feel so confident that they know how God operates . . . I think those people are dangerous. I think healthy religion is something that includes doubt,” he said, before also asking Bolen about doubt in the Christian tradition.

While some kinds of doubt can be crippling, Bolen acknowledged that doubt is part of searching for answers. “It keeps us restless and keeps us yearning for the face of God and to find the presence of God in human life.”

Later in the program, Jodorkovsky also explored Cohen’s masterpiece, “Hallelujah” — including its references to King David and the connection between the holy and the broken in Jewish thought — and the prayerful song, “Come Healing.”

Bolen explored the lyrics of “Steer Your Way,” another song on Cohen’s final album, which he described as an examination of conscience by someone looking back on their own life, as well as on our whole “restless culture.” Cohen addresses how as individuals and as a society there is a contrast between our professed values and what we actually do, said the bishop.

“We are being called to task,” Bolen said, pointing to lines that particularly resonate as a chal-

lenge for Christians: “As he died to make men holy, let us die to make things cheap./ And say the *Mea Culpa*, which you probably forgot / Year by year/ Month by month/ Day by day/ Thought by thought.”

Describing it as a lenten space, Bolen expressed appreciation for the song. “I love that he is getting ready for his own death and sees that as an opportunity to speak a word of honesty about his own life and a word to our larger culture, a challenging word,” said the bishop.

The Christian imagery in “Show Me the Place” — as well as in many other Cohen songs, such as “The Window” — is profound, Bolen said.

The bishop described how he asked a friend to look through all of Cohen’s works and make note of references to Jesus. “Somewhere between 15 and 20 per cent of his songs have a direct or indirect reference to Jesus, which is fairly astonishing,” Bolen said.

Bolen noted that Cohen has written “some of the most haunting lines of poetry about incarnation and Paschal Mystery in our entire long tradition, but has done so as someone who is not part of it.”

Another song on the final CD, “It Seemed the Better Way,” seems to express disillusionment with Jesus and Christianity, Bolen added. “Perhaps he wanted to make sure that no one would make assumptions about an anonymous Christianity after he was no longer living, who knows? We do know Leonard was an observant Jew. His rabbi said ‘he was a devoted Jew, learned, deep, troubled, a genius, he had candles lit every Shabbat.’”

At the same time, Cohen had an abiding interest in Jesus and the Christian story, Bolen said, quoting Cohen’s 1988 words: “I’m very fond of Jesus Christ. He may be the most beautiful guy who walked the face of this earth. Any guy who says ‘Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the meek’ has got to be a figure of unparalleled generosity and insight and madness . . . a man who declared himself to stand among the thieves, the prostitutes and the homeless.

His position cannot be comprehended. It is an inhuman generosity — a generosity that would overthrow the world if it was embraced, because nothing would weather that compassion. I’m not trying to alter the Jewish view of Jesus Christ, but to me, in spite of what I know about the history of legal Christianity, the figure of the man has touched me.”

In response to Bolen’s questions about Cohen’s interest in Christianity, Jodorkovsky said “he loves the idea of Jesus,” suggesting that the figure of Jesus embodies the combination of brokenness and holiness that Cohen explores in so much of his work.

The presentation ended with the faith leaders praying a traditional Jewish memorial prayer for Cohen, with Jodorkovsky first praying in Hebrew, followed by Bolen in English.



Development and Peace

**HUMANITARIAN WORK** — H  l  ne Tremblay-Boyko with two Syrian refugees, Ghada and Iblissam, at the Caritas Lebanon Medical Centre in Rayfoun (one of 10 throughout Lebanon), which provides medical services to refugees.

## National poverty consultation welcomed

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) welcomed the launch Feb. 13 of a national consultation as one of the first steps in developing a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Families, Children and Social Development Minister Jean-Yves Duclos announced the consultation at a news conference Feb. 13. Duclos also called for nominations for a ministerial advisory committee on poverty.

“I’m looking very much forward to receiving feedback from all these Canadians, especially from those who have knowledge, whether direct or indirect, of poverty,” Duclos said. “Their point of view will be invaluable.”

A news release from Duclos’ ministry gave more details on how Canadians will have their say in the nationwide consultation that will wrap up in June.

One way will be through a “Poverty Reduction Strategy engagement website, including discussion forums and online town halls,” said a release. “The online engagement will be complemented by roundtables with

provincial, territorial and municipal governments; indigenous organizations; businesses; community organizations; academic experts and Canadians who have experienced poverty.”

“The Government of Canada will also work with indigenous organizations to ensure the participation of First Nations, Inuit, and M  tis in the consultations,” it said. “The input and feedback collected will provide valuable information which will help shape the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy.”

“We are very happy to see the launch of the consultations, and we hope that the process allows for strong engagement by the public,” said CPJ’s socio-economic policy analyst Darlene O’Leary in a news release.

“We have been calling on the minister to ensure that the consultations engage widely with a range of stakeholders, most importantly people with a lived experience of poverty.”

“It’s important, as well, that the process plans to engage with indigenous organizations, which is something the Dignity for All campaign has emphasized.”

CPJ has co-led the Dignity for

All anti-poverty campaign with Canada Without Poverty since 2009. The campaign has drawn the support of 600 local and national organizations and more than 10,000 individuals.

Dignity for All’s National Anti-Poverty Plan for Canada recommends the government address income security, housing, health, food security, employment and early childhood education and care.

Duclos also called attention to the Tackling Poverty Together research project that is examining case studies in poverty alleviation across Canada.

“The Tackling Poverty Together Project, which was announced in September 2016, is building case studies across Canada from six Canadian communities affected by poverty and working hard together to alleviate it,” Duclos said. “The study is currently underway in Saint John, N.B., in part thanks to the strong and hard work of my colleague, Wayne Long, and will soon reach out to the Regent Park neighbourhood in Toronto as well as to Winnipeg, Trois-Rivi  res in Quebec, Tisdale in Saskatchewan and Yellowknife.”



# JOY program continues to 'stretch' participants

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Participants in a diocesan Justice and Outreach Year explored the issue of health and elder care during their monthly gathering in February, centred on a visit to Samaritan Place, a Catholic long-term care facility in Saskatoon's Stonebridge neighbourhood.

The visit to Samaritan Place brought forth a range of insights, challenges and reactions from the 15 program participants, reports Kate O'Gorman, co-ordinator of the Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation program.

"One of the principals and strengths of the JOY program is that we, as a community of people with a deep desire to be of service, avail ourselves to the possibility of being stretched," she says, noting that participants often have different experiences when exploring the various social justice themes that are part of the 10-month diocesan program.

"Some issues sit more comfortably for one person, while that same topic may prove to be a challenge for someone else. There is a fluidity to this tension; it rises and falls for each of us on any given weekend and to varying degrees," O'Gorman describes. "As a lay community committed to being formed as servant leaders, we support and carry one another through these growing pains."

Some participants were familiar with long-term care facilities such as Samaritan Place, whether through a JOY community placement (a feature of the formation program) or other volunteer experiences, or because they have personally journeyed with a loved one through long-term care. "Some of us were quite comfortable working and visiting with people who wrestle with dementia, limited mobility and declining health. Others felt the tension of being confronted with infirmity and with what may be considered a loss of control," notes O'Gorman.

"It was in this very human response of conflicting emotions that we were greeted by members of Samaritan's leadership team and invited to enter an initial process of prayer and reflection," she says.

"We were directed through an exploration of the parable of the Good Samaritan in a way that oriented our minds and spirits to consider who our neighbour might be and how we might be called to respond to need with compassion."

This is the philosophy and vision that Samaritan Place operates from — that each resident is an individual of value and dignity, worthy of a home where they can receive compassionate assistance and friendship in maintaining a full and abundant life, adds O'Gorman. "As participants of the JOY program, as followers of Christ, and as members of this humanity, we explored how we are called to participate in that offering of friendship."

JOY participants were invited to meet and sit with residents of Samaritan Place. "We met people who were full of early morning energy and were ready for a day of activity. We sat with others who were slowly nursing a cup of coffee and fighting the urge to fall back asleep — clearly not morning people," describes O'Gorman.

"We had lively conversations with people who were curious about who we were and we sat with those who preferred to be in silence. Some residents enjoyed a good laugh with us while others were having a difficult morning and preferred not to entertain company that day. We encountered people who were struggling with confusion and anxiety and we witnessed the tenderness of staff who patiently answered questions and gently tried to assuage any fear. We discovered what it was like to extend friend-



Kate O'Gorman

**JOY — JOY participants Sister Marie-Noelle Rondot, SMS, and Denise DeBrou meet with residents at Samaritan Place.**

ship to someone who perhaps couldn't reciprocate in any obvious way and we were invited to search for the beauty and meaning in simply being present without expectation or validation."

The temptation of any service-focused initiative is to busy ourselves with the work of "doing," notes O'Gorman. "We tend to 'default' into helping others by tidying things up, organizing schedules, performing tasks that might otherwise go undone — and while this is certainly a necessary aspect of service to some degree, the more challenging and often the most needed element is to simply be present," she says.

"When we refrain from performing a function we open ourselves to real encounter without distraction. This is often an occasion for tension and discomfort because it asks us to meet someone's fragility with our own vulnerability and we begin to discover how we are all frail. Yet it is precisely within this space of mutual self-giving that both parties begin to participate in the transformative power of Jesus' healing ministry. Service is both

given and received."

A recognition that authentic service requires an acknowledgment of one's own limitations is unfolding as participants continue to journey through the JOY program, says O'Gorman.

"It is much more comfortable to ignore the elderly and infirm because it permits us to ignore our own fragility — our own temporality. To be of service is to set aside our own defensive sense of separateness and open ourselves to the healing gift of friendship. We are being stretched, indeed," she says. "And yet, we carry and support one another through this ongoing process of outreach growth and justice formation."

## Prison phone system user fees exorbitant

By Peter Oliver

SASKATOON — The Just Youth Group from St. Thomas More College took a lead in raising awareness about the phone systems in Saskatchewan prisons. The Feb. 8 event was aptly titled "Disconnected." It featured a phone monopoly awareness activity and presentations by a five-member panel, followed by appetizers and conversation.

Jason Mercredi, executive director of Aids Saskatoon, led the phone monopoly game with the approximately 40 students and faculty who came to the event. The participants were divided into groups representing incarcerated individuals and community supports, like social workers and family members. Limited resources quickly disappeared as participants navigated the complexities of the phone system, paying the exorbitant user fees charged by Telmate.

The panel began with a first voice speaker. Brad Christianson, a member of STR8 UP, spoke candidly about his experience of prison. "It's a violent place," remarked Christianson, as he illustrated how the Telmate phone system escalates tensions inside the jail.

Over the past year, Sarah Buhler, associate professor at the College of Law, and law students, have been researching the impacts of the phone system. Her presentation focused on the larger systemic issues connected with the implementation of a for-profit system in correctional facilities. Buhler noted that these systems are among the most profitable corporate engagements in the U.S. and that, with the election of Donald Trump, efforts to cap user fees in U.S. prisons have been abandoned.

Stan Tu'Inukuafu, a volunteer case worker with incarcerated STR8 UP members, illustrated the baffling realities associated with the phone system. Tu'Inukuafu was accused of violating the rules and barred from receiving calls.

Attempts to resolve the issue went unheard until he engaged a lawyer and, even though his phone records clearly indicated he had not misused the system, he remains on probation.

The fourth presenter was Tenille Campbell who narrated her experiences of the Telmate system. Campbell, an indigenous PhD student, identified herself as a person of privilege. As she related the details of her encounter with corrections and the Telmate system, she explained, "No one in my family had ever been in prison so I didn't know how it worked."

She started to try to make sense of the system when her brother got picked up earlier this year. Knowing "he is blind without his glasses," she started contacting the jail. The problem seemed simple — he just needed his glasses — but finding some way of getting them to him was nearly impossible. "If you don't know anything about the system, you don't realize you can't just call in." It took five days to get the issue sorted out.

As the presentation wrapped up, educational materials and postcards advocating changes to the system were provided to participants. The materials helped to contextualize the realities of the system. For example, they spell out the costs of the system compared to an inmate's resources. "Calls are very expensive when compared to an inmate's daily wage, which generally ranges from \$1, \$3 or \$5 per day depending on their placement and job duties."

The materials go on to say, "Depending on the inmate's daily wage, the cost of one telephone call can range between 27 per cent of an inmate's daily income to 750 per cent of an inmate's daily income."

The event was well received and many participants continued the conversation as they enjoyed the hospitality provided by the caterer at St. Thomas More College.

## PRAIRIE MESSENGER PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

### KAPOOR, SELNES, & KLIMM

Barristers & Solicitors

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

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

### WEBER & GASPER

Barristers & Solicitors

Russel Weber (B.A., LL.B.)

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

Phone: 306-682-5038

Fax: 306-682-5538

E-mail:

weber.gasper@sasktel.net

### Assante

WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Assante Financial  
Management Ltd.

Peter Martens, FICB 301 - 500 Spadina Crescent East  
Financial Advisor Saskatoon, SK S7K 4H9

T: (306) 665-3244  
Cara Martens, CFP 1-800-465-2100  
Financial Advisor E: pmartens@assante.com

### VOLUNTEER INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE

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

McKERCHER LLP BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

### SASKATOON:

(306) 653-2000

L.J.(Dick) Batten, QC

Michel G. Thibault

David M.A. Stack, QC

Curtis J. Onishenko

Galen R. Richardson

### REGINA:

306.565.6500

David E. Thera, QC

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



McKERCHER LLP

mckercher.ca

### MOURNING GLORY

FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES

John Schachtel

1201 - 8th St. East

Saskatoon, Sask.

(306) 978-5200

### Schuler-Lefebvre Funeral Chapel

*"Dedicated to those WE SERVE"*

Ph: 306-682-4114 Humboldt, Sask.

### MALINOSKI & DANYLUK FUNERAL HOME

HWY 5 EAST HUMBOLDT

Humboldt's only 100%

locally owned and operated.

PH : 306-682-1622

### Satisfaction Hearing Systems Ltd.

Hearing Aid Sales, Service & Repair

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

### Emerald Tree ACCOUNTING SERVICES

Specializing in parishes and parishes with schools.  
Mira Salter ~ mira@emeraldtree.ca

Bookkeeping,  
Charity Returns,  
GST Filing,  
FRAME Reports

### RAYNER AGENCIES LTD.

www.rayneragencies.ca Est. 1948

General Insurance Broker  
Motor Licences & Notary Public

1000 Central Avenue, Saskatoon

Phone: 306-373-0663

Shawn Wasylenko Norbert Wasylenko

### MAURICE SOULODRE Architect Ltd.

Maurice Soulodre, B.A., B.Ed., M.Arch., SAA, MRAIC  
1815C Lorne Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7H 1Y5

Tel: (306) 955-0333 Fax: (306) 955-0549

E-mail: soularch@sasktel.net



# Israeli artists and the complex relationship with Jesus

By Noga Tarnopolsky

JERUSALEM (RNS) — At the centre of the Israel Museum’s blockbuster exhibit “Behold the Man: Jesus in Israeli Art” is a life-size photograph of a woman draped in black caressing the head of a small baby asleep on her lap.

Micha Kirshner’s 1988 image “Aisha El-Kord, Khan Younis Refugee Camp” may evoke the politics of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it just as powerfully conjures the *Pietà*, or the Roman Catholic tradition of painting and sculpture in which the Virgin Mary holds the dead body of Jesus on her lap or in her arms.

“That’s the genius of the Catholic Church,” Kirshner marvelled recently, “in adopting universal symbols like a mother cradling a suffering child and making them its own.”

Tarnopolsky is a correspondent living in Jerusalem.

But while the photo may be a reference to the pictorial Christian tradition, Kirshner himself is Jewish.

Capturing that image was “a spontaneous decision,” he said, arising from his desire to convey the struggles of a mother in a Palestinian refugee camp and perhaps of his own personal history (Kirshner was born in an Italian refugee camp as his parents awaited permission to travel to Israel back in 1947).

“People see in it the Palestinian *pietà*,” he said. “I imagine there is a Jewish *pietà*, a Buddhist *pietà*, and if Michaelangelo is who I think he is, it wouldn’t have bothered him that non-Christians saw themselves in his *pietà*.”

Kirshner’s photo and the 150 other works alongside it represent what may be the first exhibit devoted to exploring Jewish artists’ complex relationship with Christian symbols. But while these artists’ works comment on Christianity via its own symbols, they don’t emerge from a



Image courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem

ISRAELI ARTIST — Adi Nes’ untitled chromogenic print of Israeli soldiers is suggestive of Michelangelo’s Last Supper.

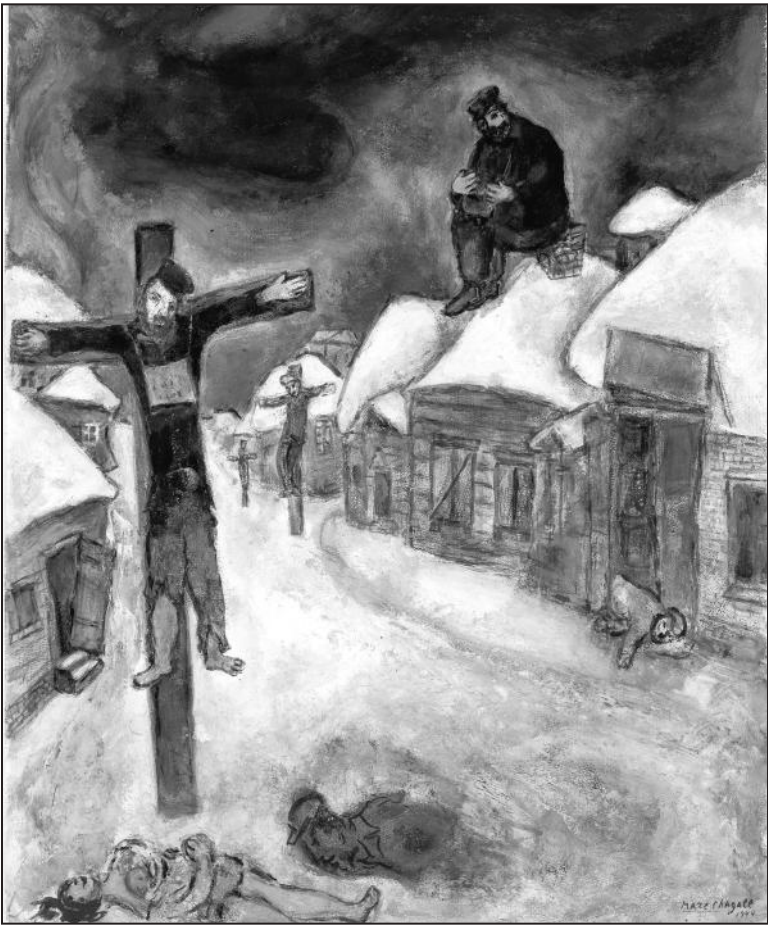


Image courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem

THE CRUCIFIED — Marc Chagall, born Russia, active Russia, France and the U.S., 1887-1985. “The Crucified,” 1944. Gouache and graphite on paper.

Christian faith. Instead, the artists insist they are appropriating universal symbols from the world’s largest faith and its charismatic icon, Jesus.

The exhibit opens with a few examples of 19th-century depictions of Jesus by European Jewish artists. Without exception these works were meant for gentile eyes and they plead for the humanity of Europe’s beleaguered Jews.

Marc Chagall’s “Yellow Crucifixion,” painted at the height of the Second World War, is a case in point. Jesus hovers in an uncertain sky bathed in yellow light — possibly a reference to the yellow Stars of David that Jews were forced to wear under Nazi rule — next to a Torah, in bright green.

Left unanswered is whether Christians who saw this and other images more felt humanity’s tug at the reminder that Jesus was a Jew, or whether they felt affronted by the suggestion.

“I found it significant to note how much Jewish artists think with Jesus,” notes Marcie Lenk, the director of Christian leadership programs at Jerusalem’s Shalom Hartman Institute. “Particularly in Israel, Christianity is often felt by Jews to be very far away and even insignificant. Yet what this exhibit shows is how deeply affected we are by some of the profound ideas and symbols of Christianity. We see here how relevant these symbols and these ideas are for Jewish artists.”

The show, curated by Amitai Mendelsohn, the head of the museum’s department of Israeli art, makes a powerful argument for Israeli artists as a native part of the canon of western art. But it also subverts the idea that Christian art is a tool of religious devotion.

As Mendelsohn pointed out, allusions to Jesus in this show are unlikely to spring from a religious impulse, and, in fact, they may not even relate to Christianity.

To the contrary, he added; if Christian symbols are central to western art, they are by necessity also central to Israeli art.

“The question is complex because Jesus was a Jew,” Mendelsohn said. “A Jew from here. The symbol of Christianity is not Apollo or Zeus or any gods distant to Judaism, but a Jew.”

But, he conceded, the gaze of a

Jew or of an Israeli on the figure of Jesus is different. For one, religious Jews, and many other Israelis, still associate Christianity with anti-Semitism. “They have a fear of paganism or of cruelty,” he said. Yet the Israeli gaze upon Jesus is intriguing.

“Today it’s not the gaze of fear like you saw in the past, when there was anti-Semitism,” he said. “The idea of the exhibit is to arouse curiosity. If a Christian deals with Christianity, it’s no big deal. But when a Jew does, it’s fascinating.”

The exhibit, on view until April 22, closes on what appears to be an incongruous note. A video of a nude woman floating in bluish-green waters is seen from below. The woman perches on a floating watermelon the shape of a heavily

pregnant belly, her arms stretched out like Jesus on the cross, her toes painted Dior red.

The entrancing work by Sigalit Landau is titled “Standing on a Watermelon in the Dead Sea.”

Landau considers the subject of the suffering artist, specifically the suffering female artist, “the image of the artist in the 20th century.”

She is also powerfully influenced by motherhood and the Judean desert — both of which come together in the figure of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

“I’m almost crucified on the watermelon,” she said of the video self-portrait, made when she was 35 years old. “It is clear I am Maria. If women are mothers and men are the Son of God, it becomes very obvious that this is a story about men.”

## Refugees do not feel safe

Continued from page 1

he said. “If we have to provide for the immediate needs, I think we would be ready.”

Down at the U.S.-Mexican border, migrants have begun talking about the Canadian option, said Joanna Williams, director of education and advocacy for the Jesuit-sponsored Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Arizona.

“I can’t say that we have first-hand experience with people actually making that decision,” she said. “I would understand if they did.”

Refugees at the U.S.-Mexican border are aware of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s statements of welcome for refugees, said Williams.

“To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada” Trudeau tweeted Jan. 28, just after a series of executive orders suspended all refugee arrivals in the U.S. and banned travel from seven Muslim-majority nations.

Those executive orders have since been challenged in court and held back.

Putting undocumented migrants in jails, setting immigration bonds as high as \$40,000 and other ways of discouraging refugees from making claims in the

U.S. have become more common, including “just turning them away altogether in violation of international law,” said Williams.

But Williams balks at the idea that the U.S. is no longer a safe third country for refugees whose claims might be accepted in Canada.


“Asylum isn’t necessarily accessible in the U.S., but I wouldn’t say that the U.S. is not a safe third country. That would seem a little extreme to us,” she said.

The Jesuit Refugee Service in the U.S. also rejects the idea that America under the Trump administration is unsafe.

“In the aftermath of the executive orders, there has been a huge groundswell of support for refugees,” said JRS North America director of advocacy Giulia McPherson.

JRS Canada director Norbert Piché fully supports the Canadian Council for Refugees’ position that the U.S. is not safe for all refugees. Supported by Amnesty International Canada, the Canadian Council for Refugees has called for Canada to scrap or at least suspend its Safe Third Country agreement with the United States.

“It’s even less safe than it was before,” Piché said. “For reasons that are quite plain to see, refugees don’t feel safe in the States anymore.”





Receive 45 issues per year

NOW AVAILABLE  
e-Edition subscriptions  
visit: [www.pmonline.ca](http://www.pmonline.ca)  
for more information

Mail coupon to: Prairie Messenger, Circulation Dept.  
Box 190, Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0  
Phone: (306) 682-1772 Fax: (306) 682-5285  
email: [pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca](mailto:pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca)

☐ One Year \$37.00  
☐ U.S. \$170.00 ☐ Foreign \$269.00  
Applicable tax included  
☐ New ☐ Renewal



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Visa/MC: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_



# Lion a film that emerges as a celebration of family

By Joseph McAleer

NEW YORK (CNS) — The incredible true story of one orphan’s 20-year odyssey to find his way back home roars to cinematic life in *Lion* (Weinstein).

Lion  
(Weinstein)

Taken from his native India as a boy, Saroo Brierley (Dev Patel) grew to manhood in a loving adoptive family in Australia. But he was haunted by his lost childhood and the beloved mother (Priyanka Bose) he left behind. His 2013 memoir (written with Larry Buttrose), *A Long Way Home*, inspired this poignant and uplifting film, directed by Garth Davis.

The story begins in 1986 as a lively tale of two brothers, five-year-old Saroo (Sunny Pawar) and his older sibling Guddu (Abhishek Bharate). Life is hard in rural India, and they scavenge for items to resell so they can buy

McAleer is a guest reviewer for Catholic News Service.

food for their family. The brothers adore their mother, Kamala, who ekes out a living as a manual labourer, clearing rocks at a nearby quarry.

One night, Saroo follows Guddu to the railway station in search of work. They become separated, and Saroo, wandering into an empty train car, falls asleep.

When Saroo awakens, the train is moving, and he is locked inside. After 1,500 kilometres, the train finally comes to a stop, in the bustling metropolis of Kolkata (then still called Calcutta).

Saroo is terrified by this unknown place teeming with humanity. Unable to remember his family name and home village, he wanders the streets alone, barely escaping abduction.

Months pass before Saroo comes to the attention of the authorities. They advertise his case to locate his parents, but to no avail. So Saroo is put up for adoption, and heads to Australia in the caring embrace of Sue (Nicole Kidman) and John (David Wenham) Brierley.

Fast-forward two decades, and



Weinstein

**INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY — Dev Patel and Rooney Mara star in *Lion*, “A five-hankie weepie that packs an emotional wallop, *Lion* emerges as a celebration of family,” writes Joseph McAleer.**

Saroo (Patel) is now a well-adjusted and ambitious young man, enrolled in hotel management school along with his cute girlfriend, Lucy (Rooney Mara).

He stands in contrast to his stepbrother, Mantosh (Divian Ladwa), whom the Brierleys also adopted from India, shortly after Saroo. Mantosh suffers from

mental illness and can be moody, even violent. The patience and unconditional love offered by his foster parents are inspiring.

Meanwhile, Saroo meets peers who are also of Indian descent, and begins to wonder about his earlier life. Curiosity turns to obsession, and with the help of the Internet, Saroo sets out to retrace his long-ago train journey and pinpoint his native village.

“I have to find my way back home,” he tells Sue, who is supportive of his quest.

A five-hankie weepie that packs an emotional wallop, *Lion* emerges as a celebration of family. It also underscores the joys and merits of adoption, showing that a child can be shared and loved equally by two sets of parents.

In a postscript, *Lion* highlights the disturbing reality that more than 80,000 children go missing in India each year, with most undoubtedly denied the happy ending Saroo enjoyed.

The film is nominated for an Academy Award in the best picture category, and Nicole Kidman is nominated for actress in a supporting role.

## A reminder: terrible events are not everything

An Excerpt from the poem “What Kind of Times Are These” by Adrienne Rich

There’s a place between two stands of trees /  
where the grass grows uphill  
and the old revolutionary road breaks off into shadows  
near a meeting-house abandoned by the persecuted  
who disappeared into those shadows.

I’ve walked there picking mushrooms at the edge of dread, /  
but don’t be fooled  
this isn’t a Russian poem, this is not somewhere else but here,  
our country moving closer to its own truth and dread,  
its own ways of making people disappear.

By Caitlin Ward

So James Dean has moved into my building. Well, not actual James Dean, obviously. Some guy, really. Some guy has moved into my building. But he reminds me of James Dean. He doesn’t actually look like James Dean, but he reminds me of James Dean. James-Dean-in-a-Pea-Coat I call him, because I don’t know his name. My office mate asked if he’s actually that cool, or just thinks he’s that cool. I’m pretty sure he’s really that cool.

I run into him at the back door periodically. He’s usually outside smoking — either a tiny cigarillo or a strangely coloured cigarette. I can’t tell which. It’s a pretty friendly building, so I always say hello to whomever is outside smoking when I go in. And when I say “hi” to James Dean, he always flicks his chin up and says, “hey” in this grav-

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>

ely voice that is far too low to match his face. And I think to myself, “who are you?”

Some of you are thinking, “well why don’t you just ask him?” And to you, I say, don’t take things so literally. Because literally, I don’t want to know who he is. This is far more entertaining. He’s this entity on the periphery of my existence, and I probably don’t register at all on his periphery. If I knew who he was, if he had a real name that I knew — well, then he’d have to be a real person and I couldn’t begin a story with, “So James Dean has moved into my building.”

Why do I tell you this. No good reason. Or perhaps, more accurately, no *real* reason. The point is not in the story itself but in the telling of it. Because it’s kind of weird, and it’s kind of funny, and it’s got nothing to do with all the terrible things.

I didn’t think I would ever lose my stomach for the terrible things. If you’ve read this column with any sort of regularity, you probably know how much of my life is immersed in things that are difficult and sometimes painful. I did graduate work in what is called “the poetry of disfigurement” — how poets write

about trauma. Twisted bodies, broken people. I teach the Shoah, the Rwandan Genocide, the history of Ireland, the death and destruction around the signing of the treaties in Saskatchewan. I assign readings about severed ears in grocery bags and ancient human sacrifices pulled from bogs in Jutland. I stay in communities where the threat of violence is a constant companion and basic needs are not met. I have friends who live in the sorts of places that, if I don’t hear from them for a while, I am genuinely (and realistically) afraid that something has happened to them.

I don’t know quite how I got into this place in my life. I do know I got myself into it. These are things I’ve chosen to study, and chosen to teach. These are communities with whom I have chosen to cultivate relationships. And I feel a little strange laying this out so bluntly — especially the parts in which I talk about the communities I work with and the people I know. I don’t mean to use them as a way to define myself, rather than acknowledge they are independent people and communities who have also chosen to cultivate relationships with me.

I mean to try to tell you that these difficult things are not abstract things from which I emotionally disengage. I talk about these things because I care about them, not because I don’t. And when it gets difficult, which at times it does, I talk to a friend who works in a similar field. We chat about how this work of holding space to know and try to understand these painful things takes a toll. Working for justice, even with all the goodwill in the world and good people there beside you, still feels like throwing

yourself against a brick wall in the hopes the wall will give before you do.

Perhaps, though, it’s less that I have lost my stomach for terrible things, and more that I am not sure if I have anything particularly useful to say about them at the moment. At a certain point, there stops being much to write about except the fact that these difficult things are still happening. I did not want to write another article about that wretched man, or that wretched man’s wretched advisers, or the slow train wreck that is the country to our south. I didn’t want to write one of probably ten thousand op-eds about the apparent new malleability of facts, and try to find a way to say something about it that isn’t referencing Orwell or Nazis. I didn’t want to write something demanding, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING? Because there is no single answer — at least, not an adequate one.

And in this, I realize two things: 1) this is how these terrible things are normalized. It becomes too exhausting to talk about, to tiring to care about, and as a result can become easy to accept. But then 2) this is what it means to be in it for the long haul. This will get tiring. This will be exhausting. This will go on. And it’s important to remember that though *this* has only been going for a few months, the world has been very broken in many ways for a very long time.

So perhaps sometimes, it is necessary to joke about the guy in your building who reminds you of James Dean. Or talk about trees. Because we — or, more accurately, I — need to remember that the terrible things are not everything.

## Doctor fights for rights

Continued from page 3

patients to self-refer for medical aid in dying. Most other provinces are already setting up some form of patient pathfinder system that would allow patients to choose for themselves whether to access palliative care or a medically induced early exit — all without a doctor’s referral.

But it seems the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Ontario simply can’t abide doctors with a different moral compass, said Coelho.

“I’m not sure what this caricature is that they have in their heads of us,” she said. “I don’t know if they think we’re shaming patients or. . . I’m not sure what it is.”

The mother of four would rather be meeting with her mom’s group in her spare time than trying to lobby politicians and get meetings with her regulatory college, but she knows she’s fighting for more than her own practice. She fears the next generation of Catholic medical students will be steered out of family medicine and all its joys and challenges.

“If we change the culture, this will allow for discrimination in getting jobs. This will allow a lot of people — there are tons for doctors who are not comfortable with this — to force them to refer,” she said.

She could avoid the problem, but she won’t walk away from family medicine.

“It’s a very special privilege to have built into your work this kind of beautiful ability to serve daily, over and over again,” she said. “As a family doctor, I get to build relationships with these people over years and build a real, genuine affection and respect. I love my job.”



# Guess who wins when Oscarland meets Trumpland

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



*Hardliners, despite their nationalities, political arguments and wars, regard and understand the world in very much the same way. In order to understand the world, they have no choice but to regard it as an “us and them” mentality, which they use to create a fearful image of “them” and inflict fear in the people of their own countries. . . . Instilling fear in the people is an important tool used to justify extremist and fanatic behaviour by narrow-minded individuals. . . . I hereby express my condemnation of the unjust conditions forced upon some of my compatriots and the citizens of the six other countries trying to legally enter the United States of America and hope that the current situation will not give rise to further divides between nations.*

— Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi, writer-director of the Oscar-nominated *The Salesman*

I had the privilege of meeting Farhadi during the 2012 Berlin film festival where he was serving on the jury. A few weeks later he was in Los Angeles to receive the best foreign-language film Oscar for his acclaimed drama *A Separation*. Sadly he won’t be in the city of stars on Feb. 26 where his latest film, a masterful adaptation of one of America’s greatest plays into an Iranian context, is a contender for the same honour. Trump’s ill-conceived selective Muslim-country ban makes no exemptions for artists. And even if Farhadi could be granted a special exception, he’s made it clear where he stands on principle.

America is no longer an example to the world.

When international relations scholar Joseph Nye coined the term “soft power,” it had nothing to do with being soft. Rather he was thinking of the tremendous power of America’s non-military means of persuasion. Sure the U.S. has a fearsome nuclear arsenal, used twice in 1945 and never since. Sure it can invade smaller weaker countries by choice. But far more influential has been the allure of the American way of life from “coca colonization” to the spread of American ideas and products worldwide. Look at the enormous presence of American media and culture in Canada — all of it imported and embraced without the need to rattle any sabres.

There may be no better example of soft power than Hollywood

given the many-decades-long reach of American movies around the globe. The Academy Awards show this Sunday will have an audience of billions, with many viewers more attracted by the glitzy spectacle than the merits of particular movies, if they have seen them at all. This annual celebration is the Super Bowl of cinema, an ostentatious primetime display of wealth and success. Donald Trump should love it. But it’s likely he won’t this time.

To put it bluntly, Hollywood royalty loathes the vulgarian in the White House. Well over 60 per cent of Californians voted for Hillary, and among the entertainment elite it was probably over 90 per cent. At awards shows from the Golden Globes on, many have taken shots at the new president from the podium, unafraid of his angry tweets. Expect more this Sunday. Trump can fume all he wants but this is one global reality TV show he can’t win.

Looking ahead, here are my assessments for the major categories.

### Best Picture

There are nine nominees of a possible 10, but one overwhelming favourite. With its record-tying 14 nominations, *La La Land* — set in Los Angeles and evocative of Hollywoodland — would seem to be a sure thing and certainly a popular choice. (A box-office hit, already grossing over \$200 million, it’s also being screened in an IMAX version.) Call me a sucker



Lionsgate

**BEST PICTURE CONTENDER** — *La La Land*, with its record-tying 14 nominations (Titanic had 14), is the favourite for the best picture Oscar. Stars Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling are both nominated in the best acting categories.

for nostalgic escapist musical artifice, but it was the 2016 movie that most transported me. The only possible competition is from *Manchester by the Sea* (six nominations) and *Moonlight* (eight nominations). The most questionable title is *Hacksaw Ridge* and the biggest omission Scorsese’s passion project *Silence* (see PM review of Jan. 25).

### Best Female Actor and Supporting Actor

Veteran French actress Isabelle Huppert for *Elle* is the only non-American nominee and she was also great in *Things to Come*. Meryl Streep (*Florence Foster Jenkins*) is a perennial nominee but I doubt she will get another chances to shame Trump as she did at the Golden Globes. Natalie Portman gave a stunning performance as the grieving Jackie Kennedy in Pablo Larraín’s *Jackie*. I’d give it to her. But Emma Stone may have a *La La Land* edge. Missing from the list are Amy Adams for *Arrival* and Annette Bening who was brilliant in *20th Century Women*.

In supporting roles the race is probably among three African-American actors, Viola Davis (*Fences*), Naomie Harris (*Moonlight*), and Octavia Spencer (*Hidden Figures*), though Michelle Williams (*Manchester by the Sea*) may have an outside chance if they split the vote.

### Best Male Actor and Supporting Actor

Casey Affleck (*Manchester by the Sea*) set the bar and deserves a golden statuette but could be upset by Ryan Gosling (*La La Land*) or Denzel Washington (*Fences*). Andrew Garfield, who won’t win for *Hacksaw Ridge*, deserved a nomination for *Silence*. The same could be said of Adam Driver (who also played a Jesuit priest in *Silence*) for his memorable role as the unassuming poet-bus driver named Paterson from Paterson, New Jersey in *Paterson*, Jim Jarmusch’s ode to small-town America. While I didn’t much like *Nocturnal Animals*, for which Michael Shannon has a supporting nod, the un-nominated Jake Gyllenhaal was the best thing in it.

The supporting race should be between Mahershala Ali for *Moonlight* and sentimental favourite Jeff Bridges for *Hell or High Water*.

### Best Director

Damien Chazelle, who took the Directors Guild award, has to be considered the heavy favourite for *La La Land* and, having just turned 32, would be the youngest winner ever. The closest competition might be Kenneth Lonergan for *Manchester by the Sea* or Barry Jenkins for *Moonlight*. Missing from the list are Garth Davis for *Lion* and Martin Scorsese for *Silence*.

### Best Screenplay (Original and Adapted)

For original screenplay the contest will likely come down to Chazelle for *La La Land* and Lonergan for *Manchester by the Sea*, with an edge to Chazelle. Missing is Kelly Reichardt for the overlooked *Certain Women*. For adapted screenplay, I’d bet on either Jenkins for *Moonlight* or August Wilson for *Fences*, also based on an acclaimed play. Missing are Scorsese and Jay Cocks for *Silence*.

### Best Cinematography

This was the only nomination for *Silence* and Rodrigo Prieto would be a deserving recipient. The odds however favour Linus Sandgren for *La La Land*.

### Best Animated Feature

With omissions that include *Finding Dory* and *The Jungle Book*, I give the edge to another Disney/Pixar box-office hit *Zootopia* with its message of diversity and inclusion. My own choice would be the France/Belgium/Japan co-production from the renowned Ghibli Studio, *The Red Turtle*, a wondrous dia-

logue-free fable about a castaway on a tropical island drawn into a mythic circle of life.

### Best Foreign-Language Film

Most of world cinema gets squeezed into this single category chosen from selections submitted by many countries. (Canada’s



Fox

**STUNNING PORTRAYAL** — Natalie Portman gave a stunning performance as the grieving Jackie Kennedy in Pablo Larraín’s *Jackie*, writes Gerald Schmitz. She may be awarded for her portrayal on Sunday with an Academy Award.

was the Xavier Dolan misfire *It’s Only the End of the World*.) Denmark’s *Land of Mine* is excellent but a 2015 film as is *Tanna*, the Australia/Vanuatu production set on a remote Pacific island in the Yakel tribal language. I haven’t seen the latter or Sweden’s *A Man Called Ove*. Germany’s *Toni Erdmann*, a long savagely satirical take on a bizarre father-daughter relationship, has a good chance. Apart from Pedro Almodóvar’s *Juileta* (Spain) and Pablo Larraín’s *Neruda* (Chile), the big omission is France’s submission of *Elle* for which Huppert has a best actress nomination. Its controversial depiction of sexual assault was likely a factor. The aftermath of



A24

**MOONLIGHT** — Mahershala Ali, who won a Screen Actors Guild award for *Moonlight*, is nominated for an Oscar for best actor in a supporting role. The film is also a contender in the best picture category.



# Our most faithful response to difficulty is hope

## Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



Back in 2008, Barack Obama rode a political wave daring people to hope. It was powered in part by his book, *The Audacity of Hope*, which offered people reasons to dare to dream that things could be different. Today, fast-forwarding more than eight years, we find ourselves in a radically changed climate, one where Michelle Obama, in her November 2016 interview with Oprah Winfrey, speaks of the death of hope in the United States.

It is perhaps not only in the United States that we find an absence of hope. It is an absence that at first glance seems quite reasonable. Hope, after all, in the ordinary way we understand it, is “an expectation of something based on reasonable evidence of fulfilment.” When we look around and ask, are things getting better, not only locally but globally, it is difficult to find reasons for hope. We simply lack compelling evidence that it is so.

In a world where all things “right-wing” are stridently gaining ground, scientific data is systematically dismissed, alternative facts trump truth, terrorism seems unstoppable, refugees wander unwelcome, and the economic gap between rich and poor grows exponentially greater, we wonder, is hope in the future possible? A

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

sober analysis of the evidence leads us to respond, “No.” We are tempted to forgo hope and accept a more realistic, sober point of view. We do not dare to dream that things could be better and so we settle for the status quo. We disengage and cease to work for change. Acquiescing to the unacceptable, we tolerate the intolerable.

But is that the way it has to be? Perhaps as people of faith we are called to something different. “What are the tools/disciplines of a spirituality for apocalyptic times?” writer Mary C. Grey asks. “The first,” she answers, “is the outrageous pursuit of hope in an era when it is not fashionable.”

The pursuit of hope as people of faith is outrageous simply because it is based not on the everyday evidence around us, but on our belief in God who, having created the heavens and the earth in love, does not abandon that creation. It looks beyond the ephemeral to discover and support the mysterious working of grace in all events.

After all, it had to be outrageous hope that allowed the writer of Lamentations to pen the words, “But this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him” (Lam 3:21ff). We recall that this was written during the exile in Babylon, one of the darkest periods of Israel’s history.

It could only be an outrageous hope that held Julian of Norwich in its grasp as she affirmed, “All shall be well, and all shall be well



CNS/Dominic Ebenbichler, Reuters

**HOPE SUSTAINS US — It will be our outrageous hope that motivates and sustains us, says Sandy Prather. “Pope Francis, in a series of teachings in the opening weeks of 2017, has said, ‘It is hope which open new horizons, makes one capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable. Hope makes one enter the darkness of an uncertain future to walk in the light. The virtue of hope is beautiful; it gives us so much strength to walk in life.’”**

and all manner of things shall be well” even as the Black Death was sweeping across her country in waves that left thousands dead in its wake.

It must have been an outrageous hope that sustained Martin Luther King as he preached his famous “I have a dream” speech amidst the chaos and increasing violence of the civil rights movement.

It will be our outrageous hope that motivates and sustains us as well. Pope Francis, in a series of teachings in the opening weeks of 2017, has said, “It is hope which open new horizons, makes one capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable. Hope makes one enter the darkness of an uncertain future to walk in the light. The virtue of hope is beautiful; it gives us so much strength to walk in life.”

What helps us hold outrageous hope? Letting go of our expectations of success is a first step. Hope as a spiritual discipline cannot be based on our calculations as to whether something will work or not. Vaclav Havel, writer, dissident and Czechoslovakia’s

first president, points out that we work for something not because we believe it will turn out well, but because it makes sense to do it, regardless of how it turns out. We let go of the results simply in order to do the next right thing.

In a world where strategic planning guides every project and assurances of success are demanded before we invest ourselves, such a stance will be outrageous indeed. It takes courage to step into the unknown and it is hard to endure uncertainty. Yet, letting go of results also frees us to step out in the ways our faith calls us and sustains us when we are discouraged. There is a wisdom in remembering Oscar Romero’s insight, “We are architects of a future not our own,” and we are able to take the long view of history.

Philosopher Reinhold Niebuhr has written, “Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope.” When everything around us conspires to convince us that hope is not realistic, our most faithful response is to pro-

fess and live out of an unquenchable and outrageous hope. It has to be a theological hope, grounded not in what we see on the surface around us, but in our sure and certain faith in the God who does not abandon God’s people. Only then can we be practitioners of hope and witnesses in the world. “We have only begun to imagine the fullness of life. How could we tire of hope? So much is in the bud,” poet Denise Levertov writes (adapted, “Candles in Babylon”). Dare we live in fidelity to that vision of hope?

## OJ TV series nominated

Continued from page 9

sexual assault is also central to the narrative of Iranian Asghar Farhadi’s finely wrought *The Salesman*, showing how it afflicts a husband and wife who are rehearsing roles for a staging of Arthur Miller’s play *The Death of a Salesman*. I hope it wins for reasons of both artistic and political integrity.

### Best Documentary (Feature and Short Subject)

It is unusual to have a television series nominated, but *O.J. Made in America* was superlative and could win. The nominations are all strong though *Life, Animated*, about an autistic boy growing up, is somewhat of a surprise. *Fire at Sea* (Italy) about the refugee crisis on the island of Lampedusa was also Italy’s submission in the foreign-language category. In the current climate Academy voters could also make a politically resonant choice of either Raoul Peck’s *I Am Not Your Negro* which draws on the writings of James Baldwin, or Ava

DuVernay’s *13th* (available on Netflix), a powerful history of race, criminalization and incarceration in America. Omissions include multiple award winners like *Tower*, about the 1966 Texas university mass shootings, and *Gleason*, about a former football star suffering from ALS.

In the short film category I want to draw attention to *The White Helmets* (available on Netflix) by director Orlando von Einsiedel, whose feature-length *Virunga* was Oscar nominated in 2015. It’s a riveting intimate look at the several thousand Syrian civil defence workers who are the first responders when regime and Russian war planes rain death from the skies. Many of these humanitarian heroes have been killed. Their courage to carry on keeps hope alive in the midst of terrible suffering.

\*Last month’s Sundance festival premiered a number of outstanding new documentaries, notably one on the Syrian white helmets in Aleppo. More on these in next week’s column.



### Redemptorist Anniversary Bursary for Lay Theologians

To mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Redemptorists by St. Alphonsus Liguori, the Edmonton-Toronto province of the Redemptorists established in 1987 a bursary to be awarded to a lay person engaged in doctoral studies or ready to engage in such studies in the field of moral theology.

The bursary’s capital fund will provide an annual income of up to a maximum of \$20,000 Canadian each year for a period of up to three years. Or the \$20,000 may be apportioned to several recipients for the award year.

For each year of assistance, the candidate will be required to work two years in Canada in the teaching of theology or in a related field, such as clinical bioethics, up to a maximum of five years. The Redemptorists undertake to assist in providing a start to such employment.

The next award will be for the academic year 2017-18, although the award committee may assign awards for the following year (or two) as well. The final date for receiving applications will be May 31, 2017.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN THIS BURSARY IS INVITED TO WRITE FOR AN APPLICATION FORM OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION TO:

**The Redemptorist Anniversary Bursary for Lay Theologians  
c/o Redemptorist Provincial Offices  
426 St. Germain Ave., Toronto, ON M5M 1W7**

Or send an email requesting application papers to:  
[secretary@redemptorists.ca](mailto:secretary@redemptorists.ca)

## OBITUARY

**FOLICK, Sister Adela  
School Sister of Notre Dame**

Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Adela Folick was celebrated by Rev. Pablito Labado, chaplain, on February 8, 2017. Sister Adela died at Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown, Ontario, on February 2, 2017. She was 95 and in her 77th year as a School Sister of Notre Dame. She was born in Denzil, Saskatchewan. Predeceased by her parents Joseph and Regina (Vetter) as well as her sisters, Katherine Deck, Margaret Ridley, Cecile Dylke, Sister Adelaide SSND and her brothers, Michael, Joseph and Len. Lovingly remembered by the members of her religious community, her sisters, Edith Boser, Dora Silbernagel, Bernie Boser, Adella Brophy, Betty Kotowsky and many nieces and nephews. Sister Adela began her teaching career at St. John and St. Joseph Schools in Kitchener. She then moved to Leipzig, Saskatchewan, where she had the added responsibility as principal. After a year at St. George Secondary School in Wilkie, Sister Adela went to Alberta where she was principal at St. Charles, Mearns. In Edmonton she was at St. Agnes, Cartier-McGee, Mount Carmel and St. James Schools where she was librarian and guidance counsellor. In the local parishes she played the organ and directed the choir. On her return to Ontario sister was on staff at St. Benedict Junior High, Cambridge and Notre Dame Academy, Waterdown. In 1973 Sister Adela became involved in pastoral and parish ministry. She served in this capacity in Wilkie and Kerrobert, Saskatchewan, Valleyview, Alberta, Barnsley, England, Owen Sound and Hamilton, Ontario. In each of these parishes she led Bible Study groups which were well attended. When she retired to the Notre Dame Convent, Sister Adela, ever the educator, assisted with the Diocesan Catechetical program for a number of years. With her gentle nature, Sister Adela inspired hope, encouragement and confidence.



# This Lent, take a long and loving look at ourselves



## Liturgy and Life

Deacon Bob Williston

There's an old Catholic lenten song to the tune of "Those Were the Days," from the TV show *All In The Family*. One of the verses goes like this: "Lent went on at least a year. Sacrifice was all you'd hear. Everlasting life was great but man you wanted a beer!" With that tune in my head, another Lent begins!

Our readings for today's liturgy are supposed to set us in the right lenten direction. Would that the "sin of Adam" be simply about eating a forbidden fruit and paying the consequences! The sin of disobedience has more to do with listening to the voice of the serpent and acting on his promises rather than God's. The serpent's promise to Adam and Eve was if they ate the fruit, they would be "like gods." Now there can't be a more noble aspiration than to be like God!

<b>First Sunday in Lent March 5, 2017</b>	<b>Genesis 2:7-9, 16-18, 25; 3:1-7 Psalm 51 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11</b>
---	---

However, the implication here is that the promise of these new powers would mean they could be their own god and could live independent of the God who had created them. This promise was accompanied by a fine-looking piece of mouth-watering fruit! All of this "serpent talk" was designed to distract them from the truth that they were already created in the likeness of their God. But the wise old serpent sows a doubt in their hearts about their true goodness. They had no need to jump through any hoops to improve their lot.

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

This rejection of the empty promises of the serpent later became enshrined in our baptismal promises when we vowed to reject "all his works and all his empty promises." Sadly, the serpent's tongues continue all around us. We often find ourselves comparing our situation with that of others. If only we were talented like so and so, or rich like they are, or advantaged and skilful like another person, or popular like someone else. This gnaws away at our true value and our peace of mind. It puts us into a place where we might be willing to compromise our true self for some plastic promise that never delivers.

Sometimes our secret envy can lead to the double trouble of having an aversion to someone because of their giftedness, and we diminish our own self-worth by some kind of unfair comparison. This is what fuels our own "serpent talk" about and toward others. Good advice comes from the immortal words of Thumper the rabbit in the Disney movie *Bambi*: "Daddy says if you haven't anything nice to say about someone, don't say anything at all!" Conversion away from being a "serpent's tongue" might begin with an examination of conscience and an awareness of the power of words to build up or destroy.

We can easily lose sight of the deeper values, insights and aspirations that reflect who we really are. Psalm 8 says we were created "a little bit less than the angels." Genesis says we were made in the image and likeness of God.

Our sin really comes down to the times when we've traded in that birthright for a juicy piece of fruit offered by one who would have us think less of ourselves. The serpent strikes at our weakness, our vulnerability and promises us something he cannot deliver. This is why in today's Gospel it is only in Jesus' weakest moment, after 40 days in the desert, that the devil offers such tempting fruit! "Turn stones into bread, fall off this cliff, or worship me and these promises will be all yours!"

Jesus' response is to use the strength of his identity as a Beloved Son to thwart these temptations. Although he was able to refuse the offers of the devil, we need to keep in

mind that these were "temptations" for him. Here he was, weak with hunger, no popularity or political power and still he could face the Tempter and refuse to listen to a voice of doubt about his impending ministry.



Richard Rohr, in his book titled *Simplicity*, writes: "Contemplation is a long and loving look at what really is." I would simply change one word to make this truth our focused exercise. I would say, "this Lent is a time to take a long and loving look at what really is." Jesus spent 40 days in the desert, so let us spend 40 days listening for the voice of God amid the cacophony of all the other voices crying out to sell us a new piece of fruit. That voice of God will tell us who we really are as sons and daughters, made in God's own image and likeness.

Let us begin a new season of Lent with a positive approach. I need to get more firmly in touch with the person God has created me to be. I need to reject any voices that would leave me feeling resentful, jealous or disadvantaged. Take a long and loving look at what really is, the truth about who we are. As Rohr puts it, "Our real value depends on who we are, not what we do. We continually try to be good people, whatever that means. In reality, we are not always *good*, but we are *holy*. Being good is something that you earn or acquire or achieve, but we are holy because we came forth from God. That's just fact."

Take a long and loving look. In fact, take 40 days. Happy Lent!

# Scripture contains a strong religious challenge to welcome the stranger

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



In the Hebrew Scriptures, that part of the Bible we call the Old Testament, we find a strong religious challenge to always wel-

Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website: [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com). Now on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser](http://www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser)

come the stranger, the foreigner. This was emphasized for two reasons: first, because the Jewish people themselves had once been foreigners and immigrants. Their scriptures kept reminding them not to forget that. Second, they believed that God's revelation, most often, comes to us through the stranger, in what's foreign to us. That belief was integral to their faith.

The great prophets developed this much further. They taught that God favours the poor and that consequently we will be judged, judged religiously, by how we treat the poor. The prophets coined this mantra (still worth memorizing): *The quality of your faith will be judged by the quality of justice in the land; and the quality of justice in the land will always be judged by how orphans, widows, and strangers fare while you are alive.*

Orphans, widows, and strangers! That's scriptural code for who, at any given time, are

the three most vulnerable groups in society. And the prophets' message didn't go down easy. Rather, it was a religious affront to many of the pious at the time who strongly believed that we will be judged religiously and morally by the rigour and strictness of our religious observance. Then, like now, social justice was often religiously marginalized.

But Jesus sides with the Hebrew prophets. For him, God not only makes a preferential option for the poor, but *God is in the poor*. How we treat the poor is how we treat God. Moreover the prophets' mantra, that we will be judged religiously by how we treat the poor, is given a normative expression in Jesus' discourse on the final judgment in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25. We are all familiar, perhaps too familiar, with that text. Jesus, in effect, was answering a question: What will the last judgment be like? What will be the test? How will we be judged?

His answer is stunning and, taken baldly, is perhaps the most challenging text in the Gospels. He tells us that we will be judged, seemingly solely, on the basis of how we treated the poor, that is, on how we have treated the most vulnerable among us. Moreover, at one point, he singles out "the stranger," the foreigner, the refugee: "*I was a stranger and*

*you made me welcome . . . or . . . you never made me welcome.*" We end up on the right or wrong side of God on the basis of how we treat the stranger.

What also needs to be highlighted in this text about the last judgment is that neither group, those who got it right and those who got it wrong, knew what they were doing. Both initially protest, the first by saying, "We didn't know it was you we were serving," and the second by saying, "Had we known it was you we would have responded." Both protests, it would seem, are beside the point. In Matthew's Gospel, mature discipleship doesn't depend upon us believing we *have* it right, it depends only upon us *doing* it right.

These scriptural principles, I believe, are apropos today in the face of the refugee and immigrant issues we are facing in the western world. Today, without doubt, we are facing the biggest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War. Millions upon millions of people, under unjust persecution and the threat of death, are being driven from their homes and homelands with no place to go and no country or community to receive them. As Christians we may not turn our backs on them or turn them away. If Jesus is to be believed, we will be judged religiously more by

how we treat refugees than by whether or not we are going to church. When we stand before God in judgment and say in protest: "When did I see you a stranger and not welcome you?" our generation is likely to hear: "I was a Syrian refugee, and you did not welcome me."

This, no doubt, might sound naive, overly idealistic, and fundamentalist. The issue of refugees and immigrants is both highly sensitive and very complex. Countries have borders that need to be respected and defended, just as its citizens have a right to be protected. Admittedly, there are very real political, social, economic, and security issues that have to be addressed. But, as we — our churches, and our governments — address them, we must remain clear on what the Scriptures, Jesus, and the social teachings of the church uncompromisingly teach: We are to welcome the stranger, irrespective of inconvenience and even if there are some dangers.

For all sorts of pragmatic reasons, political, social, economic, and security, we can perhaps justify not welcoming the stranger; but we can never justify this on Christian grounds. Not welcoming the stranger is antithetical to the very heart of Jesus' message and makes us easily forget that we too were once the outsider.

**Are you Moving?**

Please let us know a month in advance.

Write to:

Circulation Dept.  
Prairie Messenger  
Box 190  
Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0

[pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca](mailto:pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca)

Undeliverable papers cost twice as much to return.



# This lenten season, let's 'give it up for the Earth'

## Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



This Lent, instead of giving up chocolate, let's give it up for the Earth!

Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter Sunday, has long been associated with the need for conversion, to return to the roots of our faith, and to act more deeply from our shared spiritual convictions. This has traditionally been done in three specific ways: by prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These three activities are still relevant, but today we may be called to deepen our lenten practices in ways that not only firm up our waistlines — but also our resolve to serve humanity and God's creation.

Pope Francis' 2017 lenten message stated, "I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many church organizations in different parts of the world." In his encyclical letter *On Care for Our Common Home*, the pope recognized that, "Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation."

So how will you decide to

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

observe this period — starting March 1 and ending April 16?

Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) has officially launched Give it up for the Earth!, our faith in action climate justice campaign for Lent. Give it up for the Earth! is centred on a postcard that includes: a pledge to individual climate action; and a call for more far-reaching national climate policy measures. Church groups (and others) are invited to sign your pledge at [www.cpj.ca/pledge](http://www.cpj.ca/pledge) and register a Give it up for the Earth! event at [cpj.ca/for-the-earth](http://cpj.ca/for-the-earth). In the Saskatoon diocese, contact Myron Rogal at the Office of Justice and Peace for materials.

There are several personal actions that might renew and contemporize the spirit of Lent, as well as move us to act in ways that better respect the environment. For example, we might reduce the amount of driving we do, once we note that transportation is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada — second only to the oil and gas sector. Carpooling, taking transit or even walking more often may be options to lower our carbon footprint.

A spring break "staycation" closer to home, avoiding aviation emissions, might provide another option for a frugal lenten observance. Fasting from meat on Fridays — long a Catholic tradition — can also help, since GHG emissions associated with beef production are four

times those associated with chicken and 18 times higher than the emissions to produce beans and lentils.

And while filing your taxes during Lent, you might consider joining the global movement that is divesting from fossil fuel companies and reinvesting in renewable energy projects. Last year my daughter prodded me to redirect my retirement savings from a Canadian bank that had invested in the Dakota Access Pipeline Project, and redirect my RSPs to new, fossil-free, investment opportunities.

At the same time we have to be clear that individual actions, while necessary to change our mindsets and develop authenticity in our lifestyles, are not enough to resolve the environmental challenges we face today. We also need governmental action in new public policy directions.

Give it up for the Earth! suggests several ways for Canada to lower our communal contributions to climate change and achieve our international commitments.

We could support governments that put a rising price on carbon emissions so that market mechanisms begin to influence and change our most wasteful behaviours. (Even conservative economists prefer allowing the market to reward cleaner technological developments than the alternative of bringing in bureaucratic regulations to determine carbon targets. The longer we delay, the more likely harsher usage of both tools becomes inevitable.)

We could eliminate federal subsidies to fossil fuel operations, currently estimated at \$1.5 billion annually, redirecting those savings toward major investments in a low-carbon future and guaranteeing retraining support for workers to transition away from declining old-economy jobs. Investments in green infrastructure and renewable energy products must also be encouraged, while respecting the autonomy of Aboriginal peoples when major projects of any sort impinge upon their territories.

Finally, as Pope Francis and Development and Peace/Caritas Canada have told us, the poor will suffer most from climate change, although they contributed the least to cause it. Developed countries like Canada have a responsibility to share the financial burden of poorer countries which must adapt to climate change. Our fair share of signed global commitments would be for the federal government to pledge \$4 billion by 2020.

Pope Francis has said that, "On climate change, there is a clear, definitive and ineluctable ethical imperative to act."

This Lent, Give it up for the Earth! offers a postcard, biblical reflections and explanatory materials to reflect and act on our environmental challenges. They may be even more delicious than chocolate!



Design Pics

**CARE FOR THE EARTH — Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) has officially launched Give it up for the Earth!, our faith in action climate justice campaign for Lent, writes Joe Gunn. There are various personal actions that might renew and contemporize the spirit of Lent, as well as move us to act in ways that better respect the environment, he says.**

## Remember that we are not alone: God carries us and we carry us

## Barefoot and Preaching

Leah Perrault



Listening to the news on my way home the other day, I switched off the radio when tears were falling down my face. Six families in Quebec are fatherless this weekend. Refugees all over the world will wait longer with more fear that the violence that forced them from their homes will also make them lifelong suspects. Neighbours and friends are spitting vitriol at each other over political divides at home and concerning other nations. It is exhausting and the world is heaving with a weight I cannot carry.

Fifteen minutes later my lit-

*Perrault is a wife and mom, a grateful employee of Emmanuel Care, and a speaker, writer and consultant at [www.leahperrault.com](http://www.leahperrault.com).*

tlest was chattering away in the back seat. My eyes were dry and the sun was shining into the car. I was thinking about the pumpkin muffins I would make to take to a friend and put out for bedtime snacks. Turning toward my life is not avoidance of the trauma; it is my response to the suffering.

In the midst of pain and struggle we are tempted to choose cynicism, despair, checking out, revenge, giving up, or getting mad. These are normal reactions, and sometimes the only things we know how to do. But I feel God pushing me toward another way: reaching out for my people, for more life, for more connection. Pain is a cry for more love, not less.

Lighting candles and hugging my kids tighter and making more time for Lego is a political act of resistance against a senseless

shooting. I am changing the world with each choice to buy less stuff and get to know my neighbours. It is enough to grieve by shedding tears and calling a friend to say I cannot do this alone. It is good practice to ask my mom to carry my heart for a few minutes when it is breaking.

A friend is struggling through underemployment and a lack of purpose. Day after day, putting oneself out there and receiving rejection, takes its toll. His hope is long-since depleted. But my phone call, my listening, my sharing in his frustration, none of it is wasted.

In the silence, and often in the darkness before I fall asleep, I ask God to carry me once again. More often my words and silence are a recognition that I have been trying to do it all myself. I have forgotten that I belong to God and to these people given to me to do life with. And so I pray to remind myself that I am carried.

My little people have such little problems compared to what life will ask them to face in other seasons of their lives. I am helping them to navigate the devastation of toast cut the wrong way, the disappointment of not being able to go to both a birthday party

and a swim meet at the same time, and the eternity that is having to wait for the little one to be in bed to have Mom's full attention.

Our home is a school in carrying each other's burdens. Mostly we do this imperfectly, with too much sighing and stomping, and we are learning how to do it together. How we handle these little frustrations becomes the habits we will lean on when the world threatens to flatten us.

My middle boy is getting too heavy for me to carry, and so I have told him that the piggybacks to bed will end when he turns six. He is relishing the 14 sleeps he has left to be carried on my back to his bunk. So am I. But when we say goodbye to the nightly rides, I hope he knows I will carry him forever. He will never have to bear his sadness, frustration, anger, and pain alone. I will carry it with him, and when it gets too heavy, I will take a turn holding it all while he rests, if he will let me.

Every month, for two hours, Marc and I connect with three other sets of adults trying their best to raise families and love each other well. It takes some effort and energy to get a sitter, to

leave the house and chores behind, to stay up a little later on a school night. And when we get there, we visit and eat, and then we check in. Every time, I am startled to discover we are not alone.

Other moms cry out for more patience from their exhaustion. Our friends are carrying health concerns, difficult work situations, kid worries and fears, grief. The weight of the world is not actually resting on our shoulders alone. We laugh and tear up and hold hands and pray. We are carrying each other.

God is with us, and we are with us. It does not feel like enough sometimes, but it is the only way I have found to fight effectively against the evil that threatens to overtake us. That evil grows and thrives when we are isolated, cynical, and disconnected. It wins when we ignore the burdens of others and refuse to carry the exhausted, wounded, and lost. Call me an idealist, rail against the insufficiency and impermanence of frail human relationships, or tell me how I have failed to live what I whisper. It is all true. And love, practised with our people, is still the only answer.



# Pastor shares reflections of ministry in the north

*Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, agreed in the summer of 2016 to go to the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas to serve at Southend and La Ronge as part of a commitment by the Diocese of Saskatoon to support ministry in the north.*

By Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB

“Wow!” was the one word that came to mind as I drove up to the rectory in Southend on Aug. 5, 2016, almost six months ago. It was the most beautiful spot where I had ever been asked to live.

And as I contrasted other commitments I’ve accepted, there was almost no struggle to say yes and to follow the call I felt as I sat with the Liebenthal congregation in the Diocese of Saskatoon that Sunday in May of 2016 (when the move to the northern parishes was announced).

I had already related as pastor to the First Nations folks in Cumberland House over a 10-year period and had served La Ronge as well for a brief time. But Southend, named for being at the southern tip of Reindeer Lake with its rectory planted beside what seemed as the jewel of northern Saskatchewan, was totally new.

On the right side of the rectory, looking northwest out into the lake, was what seemed like a private beach with rocks to the right reflecting the Canadian Shield and to the left a naturally carved slanted rock to protect you for a swim or sheltering a boat. To the southwest was the community’s launching area for the many leisure and fishing boats with trailers parked along the shore.

The people in this northern village, almost all Cree speaking, are, like their natural space, beautiful, friendly and religious. There is poverty, yes, but the band is well organized and people have a good support system, a health centre well staffed and effective in dealing with people’s needs.

The school, up on the hill, has all the grades, is available seven days a week and run by the Aboriginal community, reflecting their preferences and values.

One of the first surprises in Southend was an additional symbolic way of dealing with grief at a funeral. I have always been impressed with how First Nations communities handle the experience of death: having a wake that lasts over 48 hours, not having an undertaker involved at the wake or funeral, lowering the casket into the grave with ropes, shovelling the dirt over the casket themselves. But the additional even more dramatic symbol for me was seeing family members and even mothers of small deceased children helping to pound the nails to attach the rough box lid after the coffin was placed inside it.

*I recently provided a report to diocesan leaders as part of discussions about possibilities for next year:*

By way of feedback in response to your invitation to discuss future pastoral involvement, I would begin by saying I have no regrets about having volunteered to work in the North as part of the response of the Diocese of Saskatoon to the critical shortage of resources in the Keewatin-Le Pas diocese. At one point I actually wrote down that I felt it was the action of God’s Spirit that got me involved at this point in my life, that my 53-plus years of priesthood and some 60 years of monasticism were perhaps needed preparation for this endeavour.

On my first day of involvement as pastor of the La Ronge community when preparing to celebrate mass for 11 a.m., I



Design Pics

**NORTHERN MINISTRY — Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, shares the joy, the beauty, and the challenges of the people and the surroundings of his ministry in the north.**

received a call at 9 a.m. that the suicide of a parishioner had just been discovered.

On the morning of Jan. 1, 2017, I got the sad New Year’s news in Southend that one of our parishioners had been murdered, a middle-aged woman, stabbed by a teenage woman, both parishioners. I believe the homily for the day’s feast was able to give some needed help to the grieving community. Several days later in the midst of preparing for the funeral I asked a reliable woman in the parish, a guidance counselor at the local school who had told me about her efforts to help this teenager, to come with me, not only to find the house, but to guide my feeble efforts to see the mother of the murderer. When we arrived at her house she told us how, lying on her couch, she had been crying and praying that someone would come.

La Ronge is having a local TRC (Truth and Reconciliation) on Feb.

22. This came from a conversation with Jonas Bird, a residential school survivor, who, with his wife, Virginia, told of how a previous pastor used to pick on the boys, especially the Aboriginals. At that point I blurted out, “We need our own TRC!” Jonas immediately took me up on it and, having had the excellent experience of the national TRC led by Murray Sinclair in Saskatoon, I contacted him with the question of whether it was realistic to have this kind of local gathering. Senator Sinclair was very supportive, gave us information and suggested it must be done in conjunction with local First Nations’ leaders. Jonas Bird has himself worked out the details with other band leaders for this upcoming event.

These are a few highlights. The regular pastoral work has been going reasonably well. When Rev. Mark Blom, OMI, came for the funeral of the murder victim in Southend, I saw how competent

he was as pastor and evangelizer. Nevertheless, having joked with Archbishop Chatlain about my age, I was quickly told that I was not the oldest, a rather positive way, I felt, of telling me to hang in there. Although I find myself less efficient in getting things done, I do believe the Lord wants me to continue this work and I am quite willing to do so.

Although the First Nations struggles tend to cast a certain shadow over the description I have given here, I would not want to leave the impression that things are grim.

Our First Nations sisters and brothers have wonderful traditions, have great respect for the Elders (giving this old fellow a distinct advantage!), they laugh easily and often, they are amazingly welcoming and enjoy moments like when Santa arrived on Christmas Eve by dog team and the folks present persuaded me to sit on his knee.

My own private joke was on the feast of St. Lawrence when the only red vestment I could find was an ancient “fiddleback.” For most younger Catholics, this would be an item only found in a museum. A few weeks later I did some cleanup in the sacristy and found a somewhat antique but ample red vestment. If La Ronge has lots of volunteers to carry out the pastoral ministry of the parish, Southend needs an extra prayer to find and support the volunteers who are needed. But their deep spirituality is already the foundation for an enlivened parish life and generous outreach to those in need.

## There is no justification for anyone to peddle hatred and fear



### Pulpit & Politics

Dennis Gruending

We are heartsick about the killing of six men and the injury of several others in a Quebec City mosque on Jan 29. Those who were shot and killed as they prayed were Mamadou Tanou Barry, Ibrahima Barry, Khaled Belkacemi, Abdelkrim Hassane and Azzedine Soufiane Aboubaker Thabti. A 27-year-old Laval University student, Andre Bissonnette, has been charged with six counts of murder and others of attempted murder.

In response to this horrific

*Gruending is an Ottawa-based writer and a former member of Parliament. His blog can be found at <http://www.dennisgruending.ca>*

event, a number of things have stood out starkly. One was the graciousness — and even the forgiveness — exhibited by leaders of Quebec’s Muslim community. Another was the expression of solidarity by thousands who attended funeral services for the slain men in Montreal and Quebec City. Those of us in other cities and towns across the country also attended silent vigils and subsequent demonstrations against Islamophobia. Thirdly, compassionate leadership was displayed by numerous political leaders, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard and the mayors of Quebec’s two largest cities.

Most impressive with their

compassion and lucidity, however, were the remarks of Imam Hassan Guillet, who spoke on behalf of Quebec’s council of imams. Naming each of the victims, he said that they chose Canada and Quebec as the place where they wanted to live, to raise their families and to contribute to the community. “The society that could not protect them and the society that could not benefit from their generosity still has a chance,” Guillet said. “The hands that didn’t shake (their) hand, that society can shake the hands of their kids. We have 17 orphans. We have six widows. We have five wounded.” Acknowledging Bissonnette, he added: “Alexandre, before being a killer, he was a victim, himself. Before planting his bullets in the heads of his victims, somebody planted ideas more dangerous than the bullets in his head.”

Couillard made much the same point, saying that, “when I say that words matter, it means that words can hurt; words can be knives slashing at people’s consciousness.” He urged politicians, journalists and members of the public to “think twice” about the words they use.

Bissonnette is apparently an admirer of Marie Le Pen, the far-right presidential candidate in France, and of U.S. President Donald Trump. But he didn’t have to go abroad to ingest a toxic dose of anti-Muslim sentiment. That has regularly been provided by talk show hosts and columnists much closer to home. And in the aftermath of the mosque shootings, only a few politicians and journalists have expressed remorse over what they have previously said and done.

There have been heated controversies for years in Quebec over Muslim immigration and accommodation, so much so that the Bouchard-Taylor Commission was appointed to look into the matter. The commission’s report, Building the Future, was released in 2008 after months of testimony at public hearings and it took an accommodating approach.

In 2013 the Parti Québécois introduced a bill called the Quebec Charter of Values that would have forbade people working in public institutions from wearing clothing or accessories of a religious nature, the hijab, niqab and also

turbans. It was widely interpreted as being aimed at Muslims. The party campaigned on that, the Liberals won the election and the bill died

At the national level, the federal Conservatives, desperate to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat in the 2015 election, also targeted Muslims, promising to ban the wearing of face coverings at citizenship ceremonies and, in mid-campaign, promising to set up a snitch line on “barbaric cultural practices.” The Conservatives lost the election but similar issues have carried over into the current Conservative leadership race, particularly in the campaigns of Kellie Leitch and Stephen Delany.

We can — and do — have open debates about immigration and accommodation. Still, there’s no justification for any politician, journalist or private citizen to peddle hatred, fear and conspiracy theories about our new neighbours. Guillet and Couillard are correct. Words matter. They can unite and heal us as much as they can harm us. So it’s up to everyone to use them well.



## Euthanasia and dementia

Doctors around the world are facing new challenges with euthanasia. Canada now has a law that allows for doctor-assisted suicide or euthanasia. Other countries have a longer history in dealing with it, and with cases going badly.

Alex Schadenberg, executive director of Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, is an active opponent of the drive to allow euthanasia, or to widen the criteria for allowing it. He keeps regular tabs on legislation being introduced around the world.

Recently, he reported on a case in the Netherlands which seems very problematic. And its outcome was even more astonishing. Cases in the Netherlands continue to serve as a caution of what could occur in Canada.

The Netherlands case involves a doctor secretly putting a drug in the coffee of a woman with dementia to calm her. Then she started to give her a lethal injection.

While injecting the patient she woke up and fought the doctor. The paperwork showed that family members had to help restrain her so her doctor could complete the injection.

In the days before her doctor-assisted death the patient had said several times, “I don’t want to die.” Reports indicate the doctor had not spoken to her about what was planned because she did not want to cause unnecessary extra distress. She also did not tell her about what was in her coffee as it was also likely to cause further disruption to the euthanasia process.

The Netherlands Regional Euthanasia Review Committee concluded that the doctor had “crossed the line” by putting sleeping medicine into her coffee. It also judged she should have stopped when the woman resisted.

The committee determined that the woman’s declaration in her will did not clearly state that she wanted to be euthanized after being admitted to a nursing home. The words “when I myself find it the right time” does not take into account a situation in which the woman was no longer mentally competent. Committee members said they understand how the doctor read it as a wish, but they still felt it was too broad an interpretation.

The committee chair wants to bring the case to court to create a precedent. Surprisingly, he wants the court decision to protect doctors, not patients. The verdict would enable other doctors to lethally inject people with dementia, without consent, and without fear of legal repercussions.

The committee says that if doctors act “in good faith” they should be able to do what they have to do when it comes to the euthanasia of patients suffering from severe dementia.

However, the Feb. 10 Dutch NL Times reports that doctors are resisting this latest trend which has allowed three patients with advanced dementia to be euthanized since the rules were adjusted in December 2015.

A group of 220 Dutch doctors have taken out an advertisement to show they are against granting euthanasia to advanced dementia patients. The doc-

tors believe it’s wrong to give euthanasia based on a statement which the patient can no longer confirm.

“Our moral reluctance to end the life of a defenceless human being is too big,” the ad reads. Among the signers are doctors specialized in helping patients die, the article stated.

In Canada, the vice-president for medical professionalism with the Canadian Medical Association reports that Canadian doctors are struggling with participating in “assisted dying” procedures. Jeff Blackmer said doctors have been telling his group that they struggle with taking part in assisted-death procedures.

As reported in Schadenberg’s blog, Blackmer said physicians who have agreed to help a patient they knew well may find it difficult to help subsequent patients.

“They will say, it was just too difficult and too traumatizing physiologically and it is not something I will go through again,” he said. “They really struggle with it, and for some of those that is the only one they will do.”

Blackmer said some of Canada’s physicians are entirely ruling out providing end-of-life assistance to future patients.

This scenario is no surprise to those who are pushing protection of conscience rights for medical professionals. They should not be forced to carry out procedures that violate their consciences. And who knows what new procedures will be required in the future. — PWN

## Tim Hortons campaign is most successful in Canadian food industry

By Sylvain Charlebois, Halifax

In its 31st year, Tim Hortons’ RRRoll Up the Rim to Win still attracts more business and more attention than any other campaign in the Canadian food industry.

It’s one of the few campaigns that transcends generations. And people have even attempted to steal boxes of Tim Hortons cups just to get their hands on a prize.

The campaign is a stroke of brilliance.

And after a few years of ownership, American giant 3G Capital and Berkshire Hathaway clearly thinks RRRoll Up is worth keeping.

But why does the promotion work?

The odds are against it: Non-paying customers stay longer in the restaurants while paying ones desperately try to find a spot to drink and eat. Some don’t even bother rolling up their rim to see if they’ve won, so the sustainable value is questionable. Paper cup haters have expressed concerns about how environmentally unfriendly the campaign is. And anyone showing up at the restaurant with a reusable travel cup is automatically excluded.

None of this seems to matter.

The campaign lengthens lines and the restaurants are full of patrons in the middle of winter. Research suggests Canadians are attracted to lineups and busy restaurants. That’s just the way we are. Car lineups at the drive-throughs speak for themselves.

Since the 2014 takeover of Tim Hortons by 3G Capital and Berkshire Hathaway, people have wondered if the campaign would survive. But this is Tim’s third

campaign since the acquisition. The new owners remain committed to the highly profitable mid-winter classic campaign. Many things have changed at Tim Hortons since the acquisition, but not RRRoll Up. That speaks volumes about the success of the campaign.

RRRoll Up works for a few reasons.

Timing is everything. While most competitors run promotions during the holiday season, Tim Hortons holds its promotion after. In 1986, when the first campaign began, it filled a wintery void of nothingness. RRRoll Up now owns the February-March space and no competitor has capitalized on the winter months in the same way. In 2011, McDonald’s Restaurants tried to increase morning traffic by giving away coffee during RRRoll Up. The promotion affected Tim’s success, but only for the one year.

The campaign name is self-descriptive and easy to remember. While the French version of the slogan is less obvious, it nevertheless has positioned itself favourably in Quebec over the years.

The use of social media has also helped reach several markets.

But most importantly, simplicity is the key. With RRRoll Up, you know if you’ve won without looking at papers or online for winning numbers. Other than winning instantly while buying something you would normally buy, nothing else is required. The intrigue while you finish your drink makes the campaign tick.

The campaign is as simple for customers to understand as it is for Tim Hortons to run. Other than a few tweaks at the store level, the campaign is a straightforward management challenge.

In its first year, the campaign’s biggest prize was Timbits. Since then, vacations and cars have been added to the list of prizes. Non-coffee and donut prizes

include 2017 Honda Civic Coupe EX-T, 55-inch LG 4K UHD TVs and \$5,000 CIBC prepaid card prizes. These companies see value in collaborating with Tim Hortons to increase their own brand equity.

Over the years, RRRoll Up has had several winners, but the

biggest is undoubtedly Tim’s. It promotes Tim’s products to hook new coffee customers once the campaign is over. And it builds customer loyalty.

It’s surprising that other Canadian brands have never been able to match the effectiveness of RRRoll Up.

And it’s difficult to see this campaign ending anytime soon.

But coffee wars are heating up in Canada. Chains such as Starbucks, McDonald’s and others are vying for more coffee business and Tim Hortons will need all the help it can get from RRRoll Up to keep its customers and gain new ones.

## School successful with Aboriginal students

By Gerry Chidiac, Prince George, B.C.

In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada for the crimes committed against them in the residential school system. It’s sometimes difficult to see where this has made a difference.

Canada’s Aboriginal populations tend to have lower levels of education, lower average income,

higher levels of incarceration and higher incidence of health issues than the rest of the nation’s population.

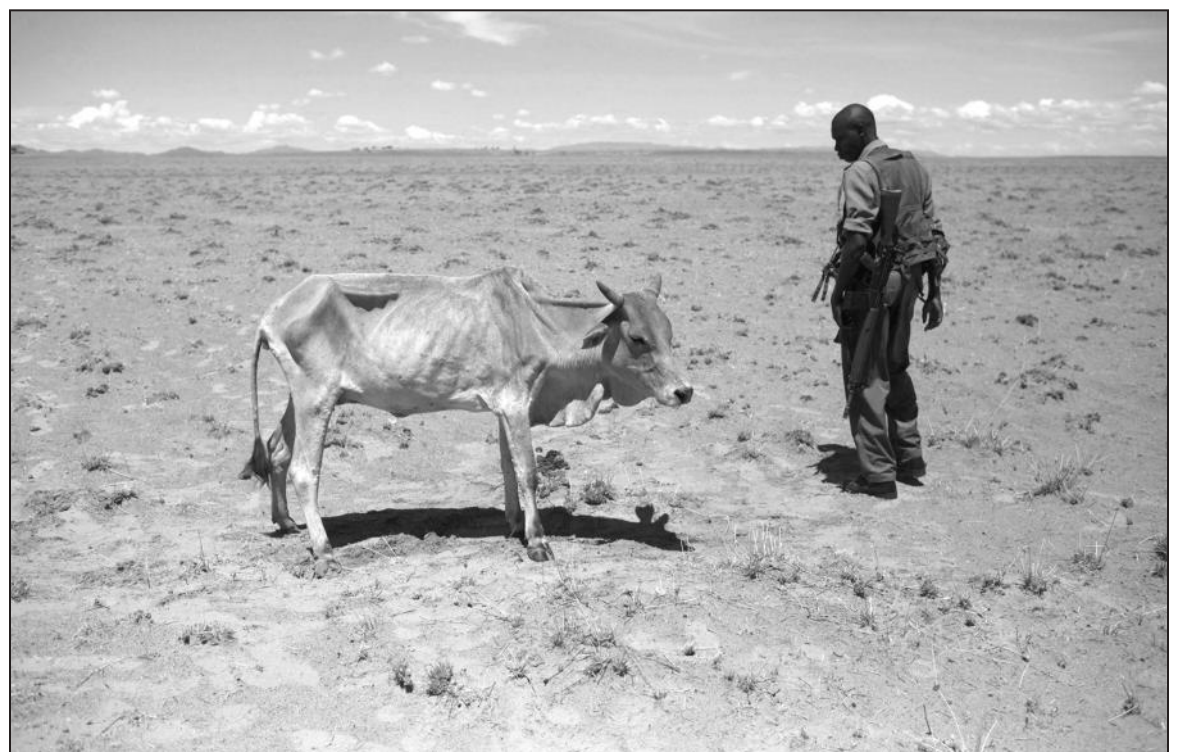
We know it will take generations to heal our country and at times the process can seem overwhelming.

Faced with such a situation, it’s important to look at where progress is being made and to emulate programs that work.

I have the privilege of being

part of one of the most progressive and effective school systems in Canada. Prince George has more Aboriginal students than any other school district in British Columbia. Our administrators have worked with Aboriginal leaders in our region to establish an innovative program that has a tremendously positive impact, not only on Aboriginal children but on

— INNOVATIVE, page 15



CNS/Siegfried Modola, Reuters

**DROUGHT IN KENYA —** A Kenyan soldier looks at a malnourished cow in 2013 in Todonyang. Kenya’s Catholic bishops are appealing to the international community for relief food because of a recent drought.

Charlebois is dean of the Faculty of Management and a professor in the Faculty of Agriculture at Dalhousie University. [www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)



# Innovative program proves successful

Continued from page 14

all students in the Prince George School District.

One measure of success is graduation rates. These fluctuated for Aboriginal students in Prince George over the years but rarely rose above 50 per cent. Today, 61 per cent of Aboriginal students graduate and the next goal is to reach 80 per cent, which would be on par with the non-Aboriginal population.

Other areas of success are not as measurable but certainly as significant. I was recently at a meeting of social studies teachers where it was noted the visible pride our students express in having Aboriginal heritage. One teacher noted that it was so refreshing to see students celebrating who they are from a young

*Chidiac is an award-winning high school teacher specializing in languages, genocide studies and work with at-risk students. www.troymedia.com.*

age — and that she had never even mentioned to people that she was Métis until she was well into her 30s. Another teacher noted that this was likely a result of the declarations of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Others, however, said it was more likely the impact of local action.

What are some of the local things that are making a difference?

Aboriginal culture is taking a prominent place in our schools. A few weeks ago, a work of Métis art was unveiled to hang near the entrance to my school. Fiddlers performed jig music in the common area during lunch and everyone was served stew. One could not help but feel the joy so prevalent in this rich culture.

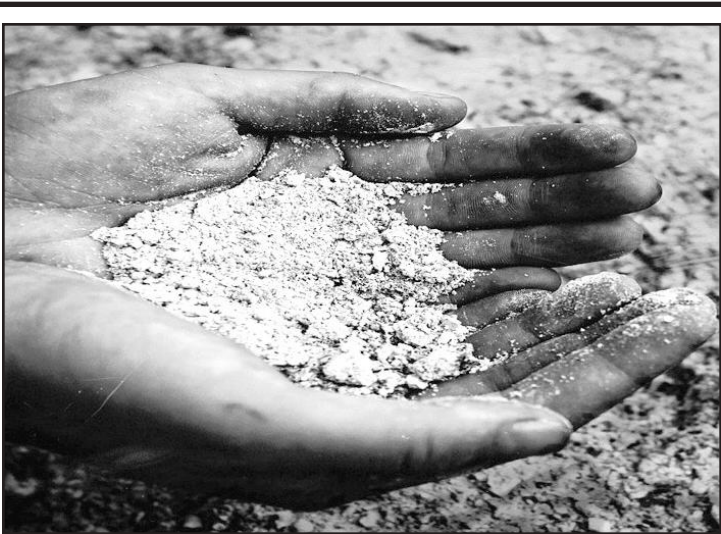
There are also numerous curricular supports. Student artwork is breathtaking but Aboriginal content permeates all areas of study.

In our examination of genocide, for example, we take a thorough look at the residential school system and how and why

it has had such a devastating impact on First Nations peoples. This lesson became especially real for my students when two of their classmates got up together and spoke about how their families had been directly impacted. The issue was no longer far away or in a book, it was walking among us and it was clear that we are all part of the healing process.

What’s most thrilling about this entire journey is that it takes us back to the way things used to be, and the way they’re meant to be. Aboriginal and European cultures lived in symbiosis in this part of the world for many years. Fur traders were welcomed and everyone benefited. As a non-Aboriginal teacher, I’m never made to feel like an outsider. It’s clear we’re moving forward together.

In a world that’s just beginning to become aware of the devastating and lasting impact of colonialism, we are a beacon of hope. As we come together and improve our system, we demonstrate that positive change really is possible.



## Ash Wednesday

I’m wandering through  
a field of ashes  
from burned platforms  
to smouldering idols  
and my old tired  
hands are grey.

Yet I’m still seeking  
with a flame in my heart  
and sifting through the embers,  
remembering  
that I came from  
stardust and to dust  
I am returning.

Let my prayer this day  
slowly rise like incense,  
mingle with the winds  
and turn this field into  
a green pasture  
where I may rest  
when I become ash  
and cross over.

By Michael Dallaire

## 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.

# WOMEN AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

This Lent,  
help women grow.

PLEASE,  
GIVE GENEROUSLY!

➔ 1 888 234-8533

➔ devp.org

Share  
Lent 2017

Development  
and Peace  
CARITAS CANADA

# Christians boast of abundance of grace

Continued from page 2

people are taught that boasting reflects “a certain pride” and reveals “a lack of respect for others, especially toward those less fortunate than us.”

“How is it possible to do this without offending, without excluding anyone?” the pope asked.

He explained that Christians are called first to “boast of the abundance of grace we have received in Jesus Christ” by “learning to read everything with the light of the Holy Spirit.”

“If we pay attention, acting — in our history, in our lives — we are not alone, but above all with God. It is he who is the absolute protagonist, who creates everything as a gift of love, who weaves the storyline of his plan of salvation and who fulfils it in us through his son,” the pope said.

By seeing one’s life illuminated by the Holy Spirit, he added, “we are at peace with God and experience freedom.”

However, the pope continued, St. Paul’s second invitation to

boast in times of tribulation “is not easy to understand.”

While it may seem to be unrelated with the peace that comes from “boasting of the abundance of grace,” Pope Francis said that peace does not mean the absence of difficulties, but that “God loves us and he is always close to us.”

“It’s easy to say: ‘God loves us,’ ” the pope said, departing from his prepared remarks. “But think a little; is each one of us capable of saying: ‘I am sure that God loves me?’ It is not so easy to say, but it is true. This is a good exercise, to tell yourselves, ‘God loves me.’ This is the root of our security, the root of our hope.”

God’s love, he said, nourishes Christian hope that “doesn’t separate us from others, nor does it lead us to discredit or marginalize others.”

“Our greatest boast is having, as a father, a God who does not make preferences, who excludes no one, but rather opens his home to all human beings, beginning from the last ones to the far away so that as his children, we learn to console and support one another,” Pope Francis said.



# Conflict-minerals provisions must remain in force

By Jonathan Luxmoore

OXFORD, England (CNS) — Church leaders and organizations in Africa, Europe and the United States said it would be disastrous if U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order telling companies they no longer had to disclose whether their firms use “conflict minerals” from Congo.

Western firms have been accused of working with violent gangs in Congo to obtain minerals used for producing mobile phones, laptops and other consumer objects, and of allowing trade in resources to perpetuate human rights violations.

In the United States, the chair of the U.S. bishops’ International Policy Committee wrote the acting head of the National Security Council urging Trump not to suspend the rules related to Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Act.

“Congolese die every day in the illegal mines and at the hands of the armed groups that destroy communities in order to expel them from potential mining sites,” wrote Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, committee chair. “The estimated death toll in the Congo is the highest since the end of World War II. The international community, including our own nation, non-governmental agencies and the church, provides emergency assistance to displaced and traumatized persons and families — assistance that has real financial costs that do not appear on the balance sheets of corporations.”

Bishop Fridolin Ambongo Besungu of Bokungu-Ikela, Congo, told Catholic News Service such a ruling would be “a victory for big mining compa-

nies” and would “worsen human suffering.”

“Other western countries have since adopted more modest regulations, and we fear the consequences if this law is now suspended,” he told Catholic News Service in mid-February.

He said if such an order were signed, Congo’s bishops would work with church organizations in the U.S. and Europe to have it reversed.

The 2012 Securities and Exchange Commission ruling, required by Section 1502, does not prohibit companies from buying such minerals, but was designed to force companies to disclose the chain of custody of such minerals in an effort to keep them from helping armed groups, particularly in Congo.

As with other executive orders signed by Trump, a draft was leaked to the press. The draft called for the SEC ruling to be suspended for two years and for the government to review ways of breaking the connection between armed groups in Congo and the sale of these minerals, often used in high-tech devices, including cellphones.

Cantu noted that in 2011, Bishop Nicolas Djomo, then president of the Congolese bishops’ conference, visited the United States to argue for strong and effective regulations on conflict minerals. Cantu said people in Congo saw the U.S. legislation “as a true expression of solidarity with the women, families, and villages who have suffered at the hands of those who destroy their communities to mine their resources.”

Cantu noted that “more than 70 per cent of the world’s smelters and refiners” for minerals such as tungsten, tantalum and tin have passed audits showing

they were not supporting armed gangs disrupting the local area. “Trade in these minerals is now significantly less lucrative for armed groups because the price for certified minerals is higher than for illegal, illicit minerals. Thus, the free market is now working to offer the right incentives to encourage safe and legal mining activities.”

Stefan Reinhold, advocacy officer for CIDSE, a network of 17 Catholic development agencies in Europe and North America, said “the trend globally, from China to Europe, has been toward introducing guidelines on conflict minerals. We must hope this encouraging trend continues.”

Anne Lindsay, a private sector analyst at CAFOD, Britain’s Catholic aid agency, told CNS Feb. 16 that such a move would contradict steps “now being implemented in 30 countries around the world.”

“Too often people in countries rich in oil, gas and minerals haven’t seen the benefits of their own natural resources — and it was the U.S. which led the drive to ensure extractive companies had to be more transparent,” Lindsay said.

“The U.S. provisions have sparked the passage of similar transparency laws, regulating use of conflict minerals in global supply chains — and inter-

national standards for businesses are here to stay,” she said.

Congress has already passed, and Trump has signed, a two-year suspension of another section of the Dodd-Frank bill, which required oil and gas mining companies to publish what they paid foreign governments in countries in which the companies operated.

Cantu had urged Congress to reject the legislation.

Opponents of the Dodd-Frank provisions said the disclosure rules cost jobs and put U.S. companies at a competitive disadvantage, and had worsened, rather than reduced corruption, violence and hunger in the developing world.

Bishop Ambongo Besungu

said such claims were theories invented by “big companies out to destroy the law.”

“What the big companies argue isn’t based on any investigations on the ground,” the bishop told CNS. “To say the Dodd-Frank law has set people apart, and pushed them into poverty and famine, is just the version put about by big capitalists at the behest of the mining companies.”

He said research by the Congolese bishops’ Natural Resources Commission at Walikale, in Congo’s North Kivu province, showed extraction of minerals had been “taken over and militarized” by rebel gangs.

*Contributing to this story was Barb Frazee in Washington.*



CNS/Jerry L. Mennenga

**BEGINNING OF LENT —** Rev. Dan Rupp, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church in Sioux City, Iowa, places ashes on the forehead of six-grader Samir Arbizu after a Feb. 14 talk with a class at Holy Cross School-Blessed Sacrament Center about the upcoming Ash Wednesday observance. Ash Wednesday, on March 1, marks the beginning of Lent.

## Consult, respect indigenous peoples and their land, pope says

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Development projects involving indigenous communities must be

planned in consultation with them and must respect their traditional relationship to the land, Pope Francis said.

Having the “prior and in-

formed consent” of the native communities who could be impacted by development projects is essential for “peaceful co-operation between governing authori-

ties and indigenous peoples, overcoming confrontation and conflict,” the pope said Feb. 15 during a meeting with about three dozen representative of indigenous communities.

The representatives from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean were in Rome for continuing discussions with the UN-related International Fund for Agricultural Development. Their talks aim at ensuring development projects impacting native communities are carried out in consultation with them and that they respect their land, cultures and traditions.

“I believe that the central issue is how to reconcile the right to development, both social and cultural, with the protection of the particular characteristics of indigenous peoples and their territories,” the pope said. “This is especially clear when planning economic activities which may interfere with indigenous cultures and their ancestral relationship to the earth.”

While none of the representatives were from North America, several news outlets immediately connected the pope’s remarks to the ongoing protests over the construction of a leg of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which would go through indigenous land in North Dakota. Several Sioux tribes have protested the pipeline project saying it endangers the Standing Rock reservation’s water supply and infringes on sacred tribal grounds.

Departing from his prepared text, Pope Francis praised the indigenous communities for approaching progress “with a special care for Mother Earth. In this moment in which humanity is committing a grave sin in not caring for the earth, I urge you to continue to bear witness to this. And do not allow new technologies — which are legitimate and good — but do not allow those that destroy the earth, that destroy the environment and ecological balance, and which end up destroying the wisdom of peoples.”



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

**POPE MEETS INDIGENOUS PEOPLE —** Pope Francis speaks during a meeting with participants in the Indigenous Peoples’ Forum of the International Fund for Agricultural Development Feb. 15 at the Vatican.

Patience is not just the ability to wait, it’s how we behave while we’re waiting.

— Joyce Meyer