



## Poverty and imprisonment

Poverty is a main cause of imprisonment and largely affects Canada's Aboriginal community, according to a new research paper by the co-ordinator of pastoral care for the Archdiocese of Edmonton.

— page 3

## Rite of Election

Catechumens throughout the world were enrolled in the Book of the Elect on Feb. 18, the first Sunday of Lent. In the Archdiocese of Regina and the Diocese of Saskatoon, some 124 people took part in the Rite of Election, marking a new phase in their journey toward full membership in the Catholic Church.

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## Treaty Elders

Elders Walter Linklater and Agnes Desjarlais described their healing journeys as residential school survivors during a session of the Treaty Elder Series Feb. 11 at St. Joseph Parish in Saskatoon, calling for ongoing reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

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## Micah Mission

The Micah Mission is an ecumenical ministry in Saskatoon aimed at befriending ex-offenders who are attempting to reintegrate into society. Despite a difficult year marked by financial constraints, 64 volunteers donated 5,334 hours of service in 2017, offering advocacy, guidance, career planning and housing support.

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## On celibacy

"In a world where chastity and celibacy are seen as naive and to be pitied and where there's a general skepticism that anyone is actually living them out, personal testimony is perhaps the most effective protest," says Ron Rolheiser, OMI.

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# Take the World Youth Day challenge: pope

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — It's time to break free from fear, fake online personas and looking at the world through a digital screen display, Pope Francis told young people.

"Do not allow the spark of youth to be extinguished in the darkness of a closed room in which the only window to the outside world is a computer and smartphone," the pope told youth in his annual message for local celebrations of World Youth Day.

"Open wide the doors of your life! May your time and space be filled with meaningful relationships, real people with whom to share your authentic and concrete experiences of daily life," he said in the message, published Feb. 22 at the Vatican.

In preparation for the next international celebration of World Youth Day — which will be held in Panama Jan. 22 - 27, 2019 — many dioceses will have their own celebrations Palm Sunday, March 25.

The Panama gathering will focus on Mary's response to the angel Gabriel's announcement that God had chosen her to bear the child Jesus: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." The 2018 theme chosen by Pope Francis is the angel's

reassurance, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God."

Many young people today are afraid — afraid of never being accepted, of finding a good job and even of their real selves, the pope said in his message.

"Today, there are many young people who feel the need to be different from who they really are, in an attempt to adapt to an often artificial and unattainable standard," he wrote. "They continuously 'Photoshop' their images, hiding behind masks and false identities, almost becoming fake selves."

This sense of inadequacy is the root of many uncertainties and even obsessions, such as "receiving as many 'likes' as possible" on social media, he added.

No one is exempt from doubt or fear, which even can be seen in the Bible in the lives of Mary, Moses, Abraham, the apostles



CNS/Kevin Lamarque, Reuters

**MARYLAND STUDENTS PROTEST GUN VIOLENCE** — Students who walked out of classes from Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland protest against gun violence in front of the White House Feb. 21 in Washington. An afternoon shooting spree Feb. 14 at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County, Florida, left 17 people dead and at least 14 injured.

and many others, he said. In fact, he added, the biggest obstacle to faith in God is often

fear, not skepticism.

— PRAYER, page 15

## Slow progress to clear refugee backlog

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — As they wait to learn about 2018 quotas, sponsoring agencies are set to welcome 18,000 refugees this year, including many who have waited for years to finally start a

new life in Canada.

A backlog of up to 45,000 privately sponsored refugees frustrates Deacon Rudy Ovcjak, director of the Archdiocese of Toronto Office for Refugees. Last year ORAT helped Toronto parishes and others welcome nearly 1,200 refugees, but that

still leaves 4,000 in the pipeline.

"While Immigration Canada may have made significant progress in reducing the backlog for spousal sponsorships, they have not had any such success with the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) backlog," Ovcjak told *The Catholic Register* in an email.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has promised far more refugees will be processed this year.

Average processing times for privately sponsored refugees can vary wildly. Refugees in Iraq who have church sponsors lined up can be in Canada in 15 months. The average processing time for refugees stuck in Lebanon is 18 months.

But at the other end of the scale, refugees in Ethiopia are left waiting an average of 68 months. For refugees stuck in South Africa it's 69 months. Canadian-sponsored refugees in India wait for an average of 81 months — nearly seven years.

"Certain IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) missions overseas have clearly not been adequately resourced to support the demand of the PSR program in that region," said Hamilton Diocese Office of Refugees director Erin Pease.

"Such a large backlog is, of course, not at all good for the PSR program and none of us like it," said the Archdiocese of Edmonton's refugee sponsorship co-ordinator Paulette Johnson. But Johnson believes Ottawa is making progress in clearing up the backlog. She's confident that the government will keep its

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— OTTAWA, page 5

## Kambeitz recognized for lifetime service

NEPEAN, Ont. — In recognition of a lifetime of dedication to faith and education, Sister Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, of Saskatoon has been named the 2018 Higgins Award Winner by the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association (CCSTA).



CCSTA

Sister Teresita Kambeitz, OSU

Named in memory of a distinguished jurist and school trustee — Justice James Higgins (1913-1974) of St. John's, Nfld. — the award is presented annually to a person or group that has made an

outstanding contribution to Catholic education in Canada.

Nominated by the board of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS), Kambeitz is the seventh woman to receive the honour. Her 56-year tenure spans from 1959 when she began teaching in Tramping Lake, Sask., to her present role as assistant director of Religious Education for the Saskatoon extension site of Newman Theological College, Edmonton.

"Sister Teresita was the consummate Catholic teacher," the GSCS board stated in their nomination letter: "deeply faithful, talented, brilliant, and possessing a charisma that inspired in her students a desire to deepen their faith."

After her teaching career, Kambeitz focused on the development of lay Catholic teachers, recognizing that the teacher is the heart of the school and foundational to the Catholic school's ability to realize its mission. In 1988, she established the Master of Religious Education degree program at Newman Theological College, and served as both director and professor for 11 years. She also developed the college's Certificate Program in Catholic School Administration.



# Thirsty souls are quenched by God, preacher says

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The yearning for one's soul to be quenched must not be confused with longing for worldly desires, a Portuguese priest told Pope Francis and senior members of the Roman Curia during their lenten retreat.

The spiritual significance of thirst is a reminder that all Christians must distinguish between a true desire to satisfy their spiritual needs and the false satisfaction given by worldly possessions where "pleasure, passion and joy are exhausted in a wild consumerism," Rev. Jose Tolentino de Mendonca, vice rector of the Catholic University of Lisbon, said Feb. 19, according to Vatican Radio.

"Let us not confuse desire with need. Desire is a lack that is never completely satisfied, it is a tension, a wound that is always open, an endless" need for something from outside oneself, he said.

The 52-year-old Portuguese priest was to deliver 10 talks on the theme "In Praise of Thirst" during the retreat Feb. 18 - 23 at the Pauline Fathers' retreat centre in Aric-

cia, 40 kilometres southeast of Rome.

Before boarding a bus with the Curia officials for the drive out to Ariccia, Pope Francis had asked pilgrims for prayers during his Sunday Angelus address Feb. 18.

"I ask all of you to remember in your prayers myself and my collaborators of the Roman Curia who will begin the week of spiritual exercises this evening," the pope said after praying the Angelus prayer with the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square.

In his main talk, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Mark, which recalled Jesus' temptation in the desert.

Like Jesus, he said, Christians also must fight against temptation during Lent, which is a "time of spiritual challenge, of spiritual struggle."

"We know it, evil is unfortunately at work in our existence and around us, where violence, rejection of the other, closures, wars and injustice are manifested. These things are works of the evil one, of evil," Pope Francis said.

Although Lent is a time of prayer and penance, he added, it

is not "a sad time of mourning" but rather time for "a joyful and serious commitment to strip ourselves of our selfishness, of the old person within us and renew ourselves according to the grace of our baptism."

On the retreat's first full day, Feb. 19, Tolentino's morning meditation was titled, "The science of thirst," and he cited Jesus' invitation in the Book of Revelations (22:17) to "let the one who thirsts come forward and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water."

Christians, Tolentino said, must first acknowledge their thirst and know "just how much we thirst."

Through the gift of pure grace, he said, Jesus quenches the souls of Christians who thirst and "comes to meet our history as it is, in its incompleteness, emptiness or failure."

In the afternoon, Tolentino reflected on the theme, "I realized I was thirsty." Christian life hinges on the acceptance of one's own thirst, otherwise, "spiritual life loses its grip on reality," he said.

"The opposite of thirst, which appears at times in our lives, is



CNS/Vatican Media

**POPE MAKES LENTEN RETREAT — Pope Francis arrives Feb. 18 at the Pauline Fathers' retreat and conference centre in Ariccia, a town about 40 kilometres southeast of Rome. The pope and senior members of the Roman Curia had their annual lenten retreat Feb. 18 - 23.**

apathy. It is this thirst for nothing, which more or less assails us imperceptibly, that makes us ill," Tolentino said.

According to the retreat schedule published by the Prefecture of the Pontifical Household, the retreat began with vespers, the first meditation by Tolentino and eucharistic adoration.

From Feb. 19 to 22, the pope and his top aides were to begin

their day with mass, breakfast and a meditation by Tolentino. After lunch at 12:30 p.m., the program gave retreat participants free time until another meditation at 4 p.m., followed by vespers, adoration and dinner.

On the final day, Feb. 23, the retreatants were to celebrate mass together, have breakfast, listen to the last meditation, and then leave for the Vatican at 9:30 a.m.

## Billy Graham started at Catholic college

By David Hains

BELMONT, N.C. (CNS) — In 1967 Belmont Abbey was a small, unimposing Catholic college seeking to make itself known.

For many colleges, the strategy then, as it is today, was to invite well-known speakers to the campus to give a talk, sometimes in exchange for an honorary degree.

The late Benedictine Father John Oetgen, a past president of the college and a monk of the Belmont Abbey Monastery, had a groundbreaking idea: invite the extremely popular evangelist Rev. Billy Graham to the school for a talk and a degree.

Graham, who was born in Charlotte, accepted. The groundbreaking part was that the Baptist preacher had never before been invited to speak at a Catholic institution.

"That was seen as quite a startling move — both that Billy Graham would accept and that we would confer the (honorary) degree," said Benedictine Abbot Placid Solari in Oetgen's obituary. "That sounds strange now, but it was a forward-looking gesture at that time on both parts."

A 1967 account of the event from the Gaston Gazette in Gastonia quotes Graham as relishing the opportunity to speak to Catholics. He called it "a time when Protestants and Catholics could meet together and greet each other as brothers, whereas 10 years ago they could not."

History professor Frank Murray, who was just starting his 50-year tenure at the school, recalled: "Dr. Graham spoke in the Haid and it was more packed than I had ever seen." At that time the Haid building was the school's main non-liturgical gathering area for students.

Graham's talk was open to the public and non-students flocked



CNS/Belmont Abbey

**REV. BILLY GRAHAM DIES — Rev. Billy Graham and Benedictine Father John Oetgen, president of Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina, are pictured in 1967 after the popular evangelist was invited for a talk and to receive a degree from Belmont College. Graham called the gathering "a time when Protestants and Catholics could meet together and greet each other as brothers, whereas 10 years ago they could not."**

to the school. "I have never seen so many bibles on the Belmont Abbey campus," quipped Murray.

Oetgen introduced the evangelist: "We welcome Dr. Graham here tonight. Because of his presence we have received great praise and recognition nationally."

But not all of the recognition was positive. A slew of websites that can be found by using the search term "Billy Graham and Belmont Abbey" are harshly critical of Graham's association with the Catholic Church that began at the Benedictine Abbey in Belmont.

Graham often began his talks with some gentle humour. At the abbey, Murray said that the preacher joked around saying, "I'm not sure but this could start me being called 'Father Graham.'"

Graham was not alone in thinking like that. Murray, who was seated among the monks who

were also members of the faculty, overheard one of them say, "Wouldn't it be marvellous to put a habit on this man and take him into the monastery?"

In retrospect, Graham's talk that day answered his critics by quoting the well-known first verse of the Book of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

On a more serious note, Murray recalls that Graham recognized the ecumenical gravity of the invitation from Belmont Abbey. "I consider this a new stage in my ministry," said Graham.

Murray said Graham's speech was a blessing both for the college and for Christianity. "He was open to everyone," he said.

Oetgen, who according to Murray was never at a loss for words, thanked Graham by saying, "Instead of praise, we should be blamed for not inviting Dr. Graham a long time ago."

## Pope accepts resignation of bishop after priests protest

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Eight months after ordering priests in a Nigerian diocese to pledge their obedience to the pope and accept the bishop that now-retired Pope Benedict XVI had named for them, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of the disputed bishop.

Bishop Peter Ebere Okpaleke, who since 2012 has been prevented from exercising his ministry as bishop of Ahiara because most of the priests in the diocese refused to accept him, said in a statement, "I am convinced in conscience that my remaining the bishop of Ahiara diocese is no longer beneficial to the church."

Okpaleke's appointment was met by protests and petitions calling for the appointment of a bishop from among the local clergy. Ahiara is in Mbaise, a predominantly Catholic region of Imo state in southern Nigeria. Okpaleke is from Anambra state, which borders Imo to the north.

The Vatican announced Feb. 19 that Pope Francis had accepted the resignation of Okpaleke, who will turn 55 March 1. The pope named as apostolic administrator of the diocese Bishop Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji of Umuahia.

"Exercising the ministry in a diocese where priests who are supposed to be my immediate and closest collaborators, brothers, friends and sons are at war with one another, with the laity and with me as their chief shepherd would be disastrous and a threat to the salvation of souls — including my own soul," Okpaleke wrote to

members of the Nigerian bishops' conference in a letter dated Feb. 14.

"I do not think that my apostolate in a diocese where some of the priests and lay faithful are ill disposed to have me in their midst would be effective," the bishop wrote in a letter to the diocese also Feb. 14, according to Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

In June, Pope Francis had given each priest of the diocese, both those resident in Ahiara and those working outside the diocese, 30 days to write him a letter promising obedience to him and accepting the duly-appointed bishop or face suspension.

According to a statement from the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the pope "received 200 letters from individual priests of the Diocese of Ahiara, in which they manifested to him obedience and fidelity."

"Some priests, however, pointed out their psychological difficulty in collaborating with the bishop after years of conflict," said the congregation's statement Feb. 19.

Therefore, the statement continued, "taking into account their repentance, the Holy Father decided not to proceed with the canonical sanctions and instructed the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples to respond to each of them. In this line, the congregation has urged every priest to reflect on the grave damage inflicted on the church of Christ and expressed hope that in the future they will never again repeat such unreasonable actions opposing a bishop legitimately appointed by the supreme pontiff."



# The path of peace is a call to action, bishops urge

Following is the complete text of the statement issued by Saskatchewan bishops on Feb. 15, following the acquittal of Gerald Stanley in the shooting death of Colton Boushie.

## A Message from the Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran Bishops of Saskatchewan

The events surrounding the tragic shooting death of Colten Boushie in August 2016, and the subsequent trial of Gerald Stanley and recent jury decision, have re-

surfaced profound pain to families and communities. They have also raised enormously important questions and challenges for our province and our country.

As bishops who serve Christian communities in our province, we join all those who are longing to escape the slavery of prejudice,

racism, anger, frustration, violence and bitterness. We wish to join all those who are rededicating themselves to work for reconciliation and peace among all people in our communities and in our nation.

We continue to offer our prayers for all of you, and remain committed to the spirit and principles of truth and reconciliation as we learn to walk together as indigenous and non-indigenous people.

The path of peace is more than simply avoiding conflict — it is a call to active engagement and to concrete action that builds right relationships. Our biblical tradition highlights that violence breeds violence; that the path forward encompasses acting honourably and seeking mutual respect as we address difficult issues together. We acknowledge the message many of us are already hearing from indigenous people across this province and beyond: “Be the change you want to see.”

Building right relationships has been the goal of the Truth and Reconciliation process that Canada has embarked on in recent years, and all are now being challenged and called to pursue that goal with renewed passion and commitment.

As Saskatoon Tribal Chief Mark Arcand and Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark said in a recent statement, “We must continue to work with each other in a good way, in a respectful way.”

As representatives of our churches, we call our own communities, and the wider community, to take concrete steps, in words and actions, in a spirit of humility and goodwill, rooted in profound prayer. We renew our commitment to pursue meaningful, respectful dialogue and the

building of positive relationships between all peoples. We reject the evils of racism and division, and strive to work for peace and reconciliation for a renewed future.

Bishop Bryan Bayda  
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of  
Saskatoon

Archbishop Donald Bolen  
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of  
Regina

Archbishop Murray Chatlain  
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of  
Keewatin-Le Pas

Bishop Mark Hagemoen  
Roman Catholic Diocese of  
Saskatoon

Bishop Robert Hardwick  
Anglican Diocese of Qu’Appelle

Bishop Sid Haugan  
Saskatchewan Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
Canada

Bishop Michael Hawkins  
Anglican Diocese of Saskatchewan

Bishop David Irving  
Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon

Bishop Albert Thévenot  
Roman Catholic Diocese of  
Prince Albert

# Poverty the main cause of imprisonment

By Chris Berthelot  
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — Poverty is a main cause of imprisonment and largely affects Canada’s Aboriginal community, according to a new research paper by the co-ordinator of pastoral care for the Archdiocese of Edmonton.

“There’s many levels of poverty; it’s not just a monetary poverty,” said Teresa Kellendonk, who presented her paper on Feb. 1 to a meeting of the International Prison Chaplains Association held at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Kellendonk is a vice-president of IPCA, which represents Christian prison chaplains around the world. She served as a prison chaplain herself for six years, and during that time she heard inmates say that they felt like animals or like bad people.

“Trying to get somebody to see the goodness of who they are because they’re born, because of their humanity. . . . If we don’t enable them to see that, that’s spiritual poverty,” Kellendonk said.

Kellendonk was invited to present her paper to the conference.

In her paper — entitled “A Human Dignity and Faith Perspective on the Eradication of Poverty as One of the Main Root Causes of Incarceration” — Kellendonk addresses the effect poverty has

had on the Aboriginal community. In 2016-17 alone, inmates with Aboriginal heritage represented 23 per cent of the total inmate population, despite only representing three per cent of the total Canadian population, according to Correctional Service Canada.

“There’s a lot of poverty on our reserves . . . the legacy of residential schools, and there’s the generational poverty. When you have all of that, there’s an economic poverty, then there’s a political poverty,” Kellendonk said.

Aboriginal children alone are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than non-Aboriginal children, according to a 2016 study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The study says 51 per cent of First Nations children live in poverty, rising to 60 per cent for children living on reserves.

Child poverty rates also worsened between 2005 and 2010. The study calculated poverty rates on reserves and in the territories, something that had not been examined before.

“We have a generational poverty happening, and it’s a vicious cycle,” said Gary Gagnon, co-ordinator of the Office of Indigenous Relations for the Archdiocese of Edmonton.

In prison, chaplains serve an essential need for offenders, who often suffer from isolation from their community and their culture, said Kellendonk. This is especial-

ly true for Aboriginal offenders, she added.

Since 1992, Correctional Service Canada has had elders minister to offenders with sweat lodges and other spiritual practices.

“Elders are invaluable,” said Gagnon, adding they have traditional teachings that aren’t codified. “They’re living stories.”

Elders help inmates reintegrate back into society, according to the Correctional Service of Canada.

“Elders recognized that indigenous inmates required healing to better understand their history, their challenges, and to develop a strong sense of identity so that they can move forward in their lives as productive members of society,” said Sara Parkes, a spokesperson for the CSC.

# Salkeld presents Catholic discussion forum

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The church isn’t perfect, says a Catholic theologian, and he advises anyone who finds a group of perfect people not to join them, “because you’ll wreck it.”

Dr. Brett Salkeld, theologian for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, backed his statement by reminding listeners that Jesus said, “ ‘I didn’t come for the healthy, I came for the sick.’ We are all sinners. Christian or not, all of us will mess up.”

Salkeld was in Winnipeg Feb. 17 to present a Catholic discussion forum and to respond to a range of questions about faith versus reason, church credibility, and Catholic sexual teaching.

He told an audience at St. Mary’s Academy that there is no denying that people have sinned in the name of the church, but “don’t simply accept the narrative in total.” Catholics did not burn Galileo at the stake, nor did they murder millions of women on charges of witchcraft. Unjust persecutions may be part of church history, but “people say things that are divorced from reality. We haven’t done every awful thing we’re accused of.”

Salkeld said another questionable period in Catholic history — the Crusades — were Christian armies responding to a call for help from eastern Christians who were under attack, although some of the campaigns became a slaughter of non-believers in the name of Jesus.

Salkeld said the widespread sex abuse cases in the Catholic Church have led many to believe Catholic priests are more likely than others to molest children, but in fact priests offend at a lower rate than

society: “Sex abuse occurs in families, sports, schools, clubs, wherever you have humans. In the Catholic Church the problem is institutions allowed one person to commit massive abuse. What do you do with him? The common response was to send him away for psychiatric treatment then back to a parish — which is a disaster because sex offenders are extremely likely to reoffend.”

The correct response, said Salkeld, is to take responsibility and do what must be done. “We’re getting better at it and we’re leading society. Are we setting up for a perfect church? I don’t like the odds because we’re people. There will be another occurrence. This will always be a challenge to the credibility of the church.”

But with all its dark history, “how on earth did we survive for 2,000 years?” he asked. “Catholicism is still the fastest-growing religion in the world.”

Salkeld said over the centuries the church “has produced remarkable saints and remarkable institutions. Imagine Canada without Catholic schools and hospitals, or anywhere else in the world. No one does more work with HIV victims than the Catholic Church. You would have a crisis and chaos if you closed all the Catholic schools and hospitals. These are elements of our history that give us immense credibility.”

Salkeld said the Jesuits started schools hundreds of years ago to teach the poor, “and within a generation all the nobles were sending their kids and it becomes a wealthy private Jesuit school. So the Jesuits would start another school for the poor. If you keep in mind these elements, it’s a



PM file

Dr. Brett Salkeld

remarkable amount of work in helping the world.”

The church today, Salkeld said, is typically described by secular society as being behind the times and out of step. “It’s not the church’s job to offer what the popular culture tells it to,” he said, “and at the same time it’s not the church’s job to denounce popular culture *en masse*, but to recognize the good in it. The church does engage with culture, but I’m not interested in a church that takes its cues from culture just to stay credible.”

Salkeld is also director of academic formation in the Archdiocese of Regina’s permanent diaconate program. He is the author of several books, including *How Far Can We Go? A Catholic Guide to Sex and Dating* (with Leah Perrault), and is currently working on a book for Catholic teachers. He has worked in the formation of Catholic teachers across Canada, and is co-host of the Catholic podcast “Thinking Faith!” with Eric Gurash.



Leo Roth

OPENING CEREMONIES — Dignitaries gather for the opening of the Knights of Columbus Saskatchewan Indoor Games held Jan. 25 - 27 at the Saskatoon Field House. Front row, from left: John Marshall, K of C chapter president; Joseph Codrington, Testimonial Award recipient; Gene Makowski, Minister for Culture and Sport; and Gil Wist, president of the K of C Games. The piper is 15-year-old Luke Douglas. The annual event brings in world-class athletes to compete in track and field events, alongside students from across the province. Many high-profile athletes and Olympians have participated in the event over the past 53 years.



# Reconciliation means reaching out to all sides

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Churches can help facilitate reconciliation after the verdict in the Gerald Stanley case by reaching out to both families and communities involved, says an indigenous Catholic leader.

Since Stanley was found not guilty of second degree murder in Colten Boushie's August 2016 death, the focus has been on the indigenous youth's family, said Harry Lafond, a member of the Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council (CCAC) and a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

"If we're going to think and feel this in terms of Christ's message, the churches, the faith communities need to reach out to both of these families," said Lafond. He commended the extended family of Colten Boushie, whose message "was not about revenge, or getting even or anything like that."

Their message was, "we can't allow Colten Boushie's life to be without meaning, and the meaning should be about bringing about change where there is injustice in Canada," said Lafond. "They focused attention on the justice system in Canada, because it is so blatantly inappropriate to the lives of indigenous peoples."

"It just does not work for the general indigenous population," he said.

"This family's gone through a lot and still going through a lot, with social media, almost people feel they are allowed to say whatever they like on social media, and some of it is pretty brutal," said Lafond. "... (the family) really were showing an amazing leadership for Saskatchewan people and for Canadians."

The Boushie family also went to Ottawa to speak to the prime minister and to ministers, and "continued to provide that leadership," Lafond said. "I think the church needs to pay attention to that,

"If we don't pay attention to that kind of leadership, we're going to continue to wallow in this racist environment that's bubbled to the surface since that young man was killed."

But Lafond said one thing he's noticed missing in the public response is any recognition of the Stanley family. "I can't help but imagine their lives have been turned upside down by this event, whether it was an accident or it was something else, I can't image Gerald Stanley's life is going to return prior to that evening when Colten Boushie died."

Not only has Stanley's family, including their internal relationships, been damaged irreparably, so has their livelihood, Lafond said. "All that speaks of great suffering. When we pray or reach out, we should be reaching out to both of these families."

Churches can also find a way for both communities — the Red Pheasant Cree Nation and the surrounding farming community in the Biggar, Sask., area — to "walk into the same room and begin to have a relationship not based on hatred, suspicion, and stereotyping."

"It needs to be something more in keeping with the legacy we inherited: this land is made for everybody and we're intended to live on it," Lafond said.

The faith communities of the region need to come together to create an environment for the two communities to "come together in a way that they feel safe and yet can put their realities on the table," Lafond said.

One of the issues on the table is "rural safety," and "rural security," said Lafond. "That's real. I live out in a rural community, but it's not a racist thing. It's a social problem we have in Saskatchewan."

"If the communities came together, the conversation would

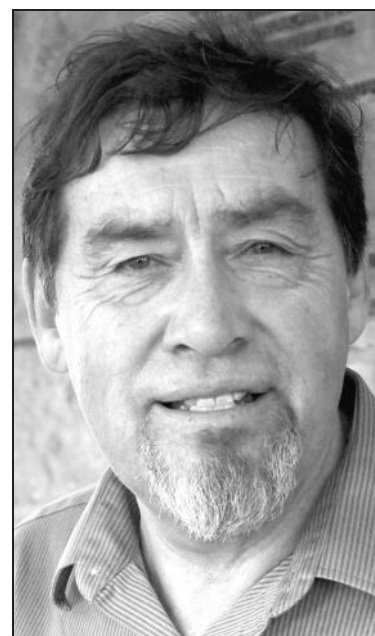
reveal we have common issues, common concerns, and thoughts on how we're dealing with the question of rural safety," he said. This rural safety issue involves not only the Red Pheasant community, but his own and his neighbours, he said. "We've started locking doors in our community. We don't feel comfortable anymore. A lot of times it's the urban unrest that comes out of the gangs, the drug stuff."

"It's a social issue and we need to deal with it from that perspective," Lafond said. "Faith communities can really help in beginning to address that problem."

The Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran bishops of Saskatchewan issued a joint statement Feb. 15 making a "renewed commitment to pursue meaningful, respectful dialogue and the building of positive relationships between all peoples," so as to "reject the evils of racism and division" (see PM, Feb. 21).

John Somosi, a Métis formerly from Saskatoon now living in Ontario, said the Prairie provinces are "unique places in Canada," where "the societal acceptability of racism is quite different."

"I think it's vital that we remember the battle against



CCN/D. Gyapong

Harry Lafond

racism isn't even close in some places in Canada," said Somosi, who runs Sky Buffalo, a consulting company that raises awareness of indigenous culture and traditions.

Lafond, however, challenged the notion the Prairie provinces are more racist than other parts of Canada, noting there are racist attitudes in every province.

— with files from Kiply Lukan Yaworski

## While some parishes struggle to survive, others just getting started

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Declining church attendance, priests shortage and rising building costs are common factors that are forcing dioceses across the country to close churches and amalgamate parishes.

However, it is not all bad news. There are some areas of the country where brand new churches are going up.

For now, St. Francis Xavier Church is a hollow building that towers over a main street in Camrose, Alta. But in a few months time, Rev. Larry Pederson said it will be a shining beacon of Christ's presence in the small city.

"This is such a positive and important statement for our community, this building," said Pederson. "The fact that we have the courage to build in this day and age."

In a way, St. Francis Xavier Church was a solution to these factors for the Archdiocese of Edmonton. The current church building was built in 1963 and Pederson said the parishioners outgrew the facility a long time ago. The costs of maintaining the building are also rising faster than the parish can manage.

"There's no hall here. There's very few meeting rooms. The facilities are just not accommodating our needs," said Pederson. "Another important thing is that we cover an area outside of ourselves."

As pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, Pederson is also pastor to five mission churches in the area. The goal for this new building is to expand the facilities to accommodate the 1,100 families, as well as the surrounding communities.

"Right from the beginning, I

included all of them in the planning," said Pederson. "Some of them have mass (at their home churches) about once a year, so this is their centre now for the Sunday mass. And probably, our territory will expand even more in the future."

Plans for the new church has been 15 years in the making. During that time, the parish community was responsible for raising

es has become a more economic solution than restoring old churches. Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and Corpus Christi Parish have been worshipping in church buildings that are 60 to 70 years old.

Anticipating the rising costs of maintaining the aging buildings of these neighbouring parishes, Kroetsch is working with them to start a new parish named after St. Catherine of Siena.



**NEW PARISH CHURCH** — This is an architect's rendition of how St. Francis Xavier Church in Edmonton will look when finished. The parish is expanding quickly.

\$17 million for the build. The Archdiocese of Edmonton provided a loan for the amount the parish was short, but the parish will have to pay the full amount of the loan back, plus interest.

The Archdiocese of Edmonton acquired six acres of property and in 2015, they broke ground. The new St. Francis Xavier Church is set to open in October this year.

Similar to St. Francis Xavier Parish, chancellor Msgr. Murray Kroetsch in the Diocese of Hamilton said building new parish-

"It's the first experience we've had of this in the Hamilton diocese where we've closed two parishes in order to make a new parish," said Kroetsch. "Both are very viable parishes but the two churches are in desperate need of repairs that are going to be very, very costly. ... It just wasn't a responsible use of our resources."

The diocese acquired a large piece of land and Kroetsch is working closely with both communities to raise the \$13-\$15 million needed for the build.

"I don't think it's any more of a challenge to build (new churches) today. It's always a challenge because it's a financial commitment that's required. Many parishes, they built the church and they're paying the church debt for many years, but it's like people buying a house and they have to pay the mortgage down."

Kroetsch said that the Hamilton diocese has its eyes on a couple of other parishes, discerning future needs for new parishes. However, parishes aren't built in a day.

In fact, David Finnegan, director of Planning, Properties and Housing in the Archdiocese of Toronto, said establishing new parishes can be a seven- or eight-year process. And even before a parish is formally established by Cardinal Thomas Collins, a lot of work goes into researching the need for a new parish.

"In terms of planning for new parishes, you have to first have the need there, the Catholic population projections in that area," said Finnegan. "We consult with the school boards, we consult with the regional bishops, pastors in the area and developers, municipality planning consultants, so there's a lot of work that goes into studying the need for future parishes."

Finnegan said the archdiocese has seen a gradual but steady growth. In the past 15 years, he said he's seen a new parish open its doors approximately once every year. The Greater Toronto

Area is becoming more populated and as more young families move to the suburbs, the archdiocese is working to keep up with the demand for churches.

"It's very positive for the archdiocese and for the Catholic community in our archdiocese," said Finnegan.

The archdiocese will celebrate the opening of its newest parish, St. Josephine Bakhita Church in Mississauga, on May 2. Established in 2008, it is the only parish in Canada named after the African-born saint. For the past 10 years, pastor Rev. Mark Villanueva has been celebrating mass in a local high school.

Finnegan said the archdiocese makes sure that the pastor who is shepherding a new parish is well-supported, especially during the first few years.

"After the parish is established and the pastor is appointed, there's a meeting that takes place with that pastor and various departments sit down with him," he said. "We make sure that we are providing as much guidance and support as we can give to the new pastor."

Finnegan said the first priority for the Planning, Properties and Housing office is to assist the new pastor in finding a rectory to live in. Then, they must find a temporary worship space, which is usually a Catholic school gymnasium.

Different departments throughout the archdiocese also provide the pastor support, such as spiritual formation and fundraising.

"It takes a lot of prayer, certainly a lot of prayer, and it takes a lot of team effort," said Rev. Joseph Grima, pastor of the newly established Blessed Frédéric Ozanam Parish. "It's important that (parishioners) engage in that way and participate."



# Multifaith Housing Initiatives sees vision in action

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Ottawa’s Multifaith Housing Initiatives (MHI) started as a committee of the Social Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of Ottawa around the year 2000.

It has since grown to an independent charity boasting volunteers from more than 80 faiths that owns and manages about 140 apartment units in various parts of the city, including a new affordable housing complex of 98 units called The Haven.

The Haven, an eight-building complex, opened in the late spring to early summer of 2017, and is the first place MHI has been able to fully implement its vision, said Suzanne Le, executive director of MHI.

“What we want to do is equip our tenants to be able to live and move comfortably in a multicultural, multi-religious society,” said Le.

MHI has asked its volunteers, who include members of the Baha’i, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist and a range of other faiths, to use the community room at the Haven to celebrate one of their religious holidays.

They are asked to “go through a ritual tied to that holiday,” provide an educational element, explaining what they are doing and why, and to sponsor a community celebration inviting all the tenants, and providing food, Le said.

About 350 people now live in the Haven, including Syrian refugees, seniors, young families with children, and adults with cognitive disabilities living on their own for the first time, said Le. Ten per cent of the units are fully accessible, but all units are “visitable” by



**MULTIFAITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING — A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Feb. 6 for The Haven. The Haven is a \$20-million eight-building affordable housing complex built with funding from federal, provincial and municipal governments and was inspired by the Multifaith Housing Initiative, which owns and manages it. Centre is Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, with Suzanne Le second from right.**

someone in a wheelchair.

“We have really built community into it,” Le said, noting the complex has a community garden, and the tenants have organized a gardening club. They are putting in a playground.

MHI has plans underway to build a 40-unit special purpose unit to house mentally and physically challenged veterans, working with Veterans Affairs, the Legion, True Patriot Love, Soldiering on and other groups, Le said. They hope to start construction later this year.

“As a faith organization, our members are always looking for ways they can help and this is something close to their hearts,” said Le. “The idea we have veterans living rough on our streets is appalling to most Canadians.”

“In a nutshell, MHI is faith in action, it is communities building communities. We are faith in action.”

Le, 46, has served as MHI’s executive director for the past five years. She studied comparative religion at Carleton, University, and then went on to obtain a master’s degree in conflict studies at Saint Paul University.

Le said it’s humorous that at the time of her studies, people would ask her, “What are you going to do with that degree?”

“Who knew there was a housing org that could absolutely use that kind of knowledge base!”

Her thesis focused on genocide. “I studied how societies are broken down to allow the absolute worst to happen and this is an organization that takes people of all different religious backgrounds and brings them together to create a real societal benefit. It’s created to serve society.”

Le had no housing background when she joined MHI and the details of property management are contracted out. She works with the volunteers and the various partner organizations to imagine projects, “to move our way through opportunities that will enable these projects to become reality,” she said. “I oversee development from conception to operationalization.”

She also organizes fundraising and navigating the various levels of government from federal to provincial to municipal that have contributed to projects like the Haven.

Le oversees a small paid staff that includes a manager of community engagement volunteers who is Muslim, a manager of fund development who is Buddhist, and an office administrator who is Protestant.

“We are very clear with what our mandate is and who we are,” Le said. “We’re open to everybody who is open to working with others in a respectful manner, and enjoys the opportunity to enrich their knowledge of other people from different cultural and religious backgrounds,” Le said. “You have to have an openness to work with other people.”

“If you’re coming in with a conversion mentality this isn’t a great place for you,” she said. “We want people to learn about each

other and respect each other.”

Gay Richardson, an Anglican from St. John the Evangelist, remembers the early days when the Ottawa archdiocese’s Social Justice Commission had formed a committee to address the crisis of affordable housing in Ottawa. At the time it was focused on seeing if they would find a way to repurpose empty houses left at the closing of a city airbase, she said.

“Other people who heard about this committee were invited to join,” Richardson said. At

first it was only Christians involved, but they agreed “we should be looking more broadly.”

It evolved into the interfaith housing committee that continued to meet at the archdiocese until MHI was incorporated in late 2002 as a charity.

“At first our goal was simply to encourage faith communities to build housing themselves,” Richardson said. But they soon realized most faith communities’ mission was not housing. So they revised their charitable mandate in 2004.

After 2004, MHI began to slowly acquire properties for social housing. “It’s been this gradual evolution, but the huge leap that we’ve taken has been under Suzanne’s leadership,” Richardson said.

Catholic Deacon Hugh O’Donnell joined the MHI board in 2010 and served two terms as president, stepping down from the board last year.

MHI had grown and was managing about 40 units, serving 100 people, 30 of them children.

“Then we did a strategic planning exercise as any good organization should do,” O’Donnell said. “We decided by 2020, we would double our number of units. The plan was to go to 80.”

They were looking at acquiring more properties. In the meantime, Le had joined the staff and, in 2014, the City of Ottawa released some land in Barrhaven and offered a competition to groups coming up with the best social housing proposal.

Le guided the whole process, from entering the competition to completion.

“We won the competition, and built a \$20-million facility on Verona Road,” O’Donnell said.

“We are currently managing 140 units,” he said. “So we’ve blown our strategic plan by having 80 by 2020.”

The Haven benefited from funding from multi-levels of government, from municipal to federal.

## Ottawa making good progress clearing backlog

Continued from page 1

promise to reduce PSR wait times to an average of one year by 2020.

“We are actually impressed with what this government has been doing,” Johnson said in an email.

To get down to one-year processing times, Immigration Canada is planning to unite 57,000 refugees with their private sponsors in Canada over the next three years. Most of the sponsors are faith-based groups who undertake to absorb the costs and provide the volunteer hours to ensure refugees settle successfully in Canada. From 2018 to 2020, Canada will annually welcome about four times the yearly average over the previous decade — numbers Canada’s private sponsors haven’t seen since the Boat People from Vietnam began arriving 30 years ago.

In Hamilton, Pease is more cautious about the government’s plans to get refugee wait times down to one year.

“One concern with IRCC’s 2018-2020 Immigration Levels Plan is that it is not ambitious enough,” said Pease. “While PSR arrivals are set to increase in 2018, 2019 and 2020, the arrival targets are not sufficiently high to reduce the PSR inventory to a reasonable size that can be managed within a reasonable timeframe — seemingly established by IRCC to be a 12-month term — unless significant human resource changes are made at key IRCC missions overseas.”

Pease points out that the government has had some success in drawing down the massive backlog of refugees in Africa by adding more paper pushers in Dar es Salaam and Rome. Currently, it’s the vast differences between the processing times for refugees in the Middle East and refugees in Africa and South Asia that worries Pease.

“While the issue of the size of IRCC’s PSR inventory is important, a key problem that must be rectified is ensuring that processing timelines for all PSR applicants are in closer alignment, irrespective of the country of asylum in the world where a refugee finds herself,” she said.

In addition to bringing in larger numbers, the government is limiting the number of new sponsorships church groups can apply for. “How could they reduce a backlog without reducing input?” asks Johnson.

In total, Sponsorship Agreement Holders across Canada were allowed to submit 7,500 new cases last year. This year they will be allowed 8,000 new applications, though how many applications individual sponsoring agencies will be allocated won’t be revealed until the end of February.

Edmonton parishes sent delegations out to the airport last year to greet refugees they had been waiting for since 2011, though most were cases that had been submitted in 2015 or 2016.

“It was so wonderful to have them (IRCC) finally process those old cases,” Johnson said.

### The Diocese of Nelson welcomes applications for the position of Diocesan Director of Faith Formation



The Director of Faith Formation is responsible to the Bishop in designing and implementing programs for adult faith formation, children’s catechetics and sacramental preparation for use in the diocese and in supporting the ministry of the laity. The Office is based in Kelowna but will require travel to the various regions of the diocese.

The Director works in collaboration with:

- The Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the faith development of staff.
- Parish pastoral teams.
- The Diocesan Religious Education and Adult Faith Formation Committees.
- The Diocesan Finance Office (Budgeting).

Requirements:

- A Master’s Degree in Religious Education or Theology or equivalent
- A demonstrated commitment to the Church, her teachings and authority.
- Familiarity with children’s catechetics and adult models of faith formation.
- Steeped in the principles of The General Directory for Catechesis and On Good Soil.
- Evidence of effective leadership, communication and facilitation skills.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively for a common vision.
- Proficiency with technology, including Microsoft Office.

Contact Fr. Bart van Roijen, [bartvroijen@hotmail.com](mailto:bartvroijen@hotmail.com) for further information.

Please submit resumé with three letters of reference (one from your Pastor) by **March 31, 2018**. The position will commence July 1, 2018.



# Rite of Election held on First Sunday of Lent

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The diocesan Rite of Election was held Feb. 18 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, marking a new phase in the RCIA journey for those who will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist during the upcoming Easter season.

In parishes across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon — from Fox Valley to Wynyard, from Unity to Cudworth — some 60 catechumens are journeying toward baptism.

Those catechumens in attendance during the diocesan celebration were presented to Bishop Mark Hagemoen, who welcomed and blessed them as part of this next step in the initiation process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and for children of catechetical age. Similar celebrations are held each year throughout the world on the first Sunday of Lent.

Each catechumen’s name was enrolled in the Book of the Elect, along with the name of their sponsor, before Hagemoen carried the book through the church, displaying the names to the assembly.

A number of candidates — who are already baptized in another Christian tradition and are preparing to become full members of the Roman Catholic Church — were also welcomed and blessed by the bishop. Some 42 baptized candidates from across the diocese will be confirmed and receive the eucharist during the Easter season.

The days of Lent are described by the RCIA as a final period of “purification and enlightenment” for those who are soon to be baptized. This lenten journey is shared by the entire church, said Hagemoen.

“Not only is this powerful for you, but indeed, it is powerful for the whole church. As we watch and join you in your journey, we are renewed.”

Reflecting on the Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent, in which we hear about Jesus being driven into the wilderness, Hagemoen spoke of his experiences in the north, describing the journey of Lent as being “called into the great spiritual wilderness to allow God to touch and bless us.”

And just as Jesus went into the desert and confronted demons that tried to “distract him, tempt him, throw him off,” we too might

encounter “wild beasts,” negative tendencies, temptations, and doubt, as we strive to answer the call to righteousness, Hagemoen said.

“God never abandons us,” he stressed. “We go through times of blessing, and we go through times of trial, yet God is with us.”

The mystery of Christian life can be seen in the life of Jesus, whom we are called to imitate in his “radical obedience and submission to God, so that we can always generously receive from the Lord, the giver of life, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who enlivens within us a great heart to live God’s call and to enter into the vocation he calls us to,” said Hagemoen.

“Baptism is the beginning of the time in which we put on Christ and we share in the life, ministry and mission of Jesus Christ.”

The lenten disciplines of prayer, almsgiving and fasting help us enter into the spiritual desert and deepen our awareness of, and dependence on, God, he added.

“Every day, share your heart with the Lord. There are so many ways to pray, but just do it,” he said, describing prayer as the lifeblood of our lives as people of Christ. Kneeling, the bishop

added: “Prayer fundamentally is about getting down on your knees and saying to the Lord, ‘I need you, I love you absolutely, fill me with your love and grace, I need you and I call you into my life.’”

As for almsgiving, Hagemoen reflected on Pope Francis’ words about the kind of service that “takes us to places we would not normally go,” adding, “when we give our heart and service to another for the sake of Christ, we are filled with grace.”

Fasting is about more than giving up food, the bishop said. Rather, it is about creating space for the Lord to fill. “In that space, God takes us to places we might not normally go. We might be aware of people and circumstances that we can see for the first time. We may even become aware of the demons of fear, or of unhealthy anger, or desolation, because we allow the space in our hearts and lives to confront them. And the Lord is with us when we call upon him.”

Addressing the catechumens and candidates, the bishop concluded:



Kiply Yaworski

**RITE OF ELECTION —** Catechumen Katelyn Desorcy signs her name in the Book of the Elect as her baptismal sponsor looks on at the diocesan Rite of Election, held Feb. 18 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. Some 60 catechumens from across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon are journeying toward baptism at the Easter Vigil.

## Each catechumen is called by name

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Each of the 68 catechumens was called by name as they took part in the Rite of Election, which leads to baptism, confirmation and first eucharist and full membership in the

for non-Catholic students to attend Catholic schools was instrumental in some of the catechumens’ decisions. At the time of the decision it was feared that non-Catholic students would have to leave the Catholic school they were attending, and that possibility was not well received.

Other catechumens’ reasons for joining the church were similar to those of Jennifer Schmalenberg, whose husband and his whole family are Catholic. “Our kids go to St. Gabriel Catholic School. They were starting to ask questions that I couldn’t answer, so I thought I’d better take the

in which catechumens and godparents responded to Bolen’s questions regarding their intent to join the Catholic faith.

Following this, the archbishop addressed the congregation.

The Rite of Election is the final step in the RCIA process (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) leading to the catechumens’ accepting the sacraments of initiation in their journey into the Catholic Church.



Frank Flegel

Kahla and Angela Rieger

Roman Catholic Church. It was the largest group of catechumens anyone could remember.

“Some want to stay in Catholic schools,” said Marion Grady, a member of the Regina Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission. “For others it was family related, and for some it was because they had married into a Catholic family. There are about 15 children, but the rest are adults. It’s really quite amazing.”

Kahla Rieger, a Grade 10 student at Miller Catholic High School, explained her decision to join the church: “I like the environment in my school and they encouraged me to go to a Catholic church.”

“And she asked me to accompany her,” added her mother, Angela Rieger.

The recent court decision that ruled the government could not pay

next step, and here I am.”

Archbishop Donald Bolen welcomed the catechumens, saying that “today is a day that fills the diocesan church with great joy.” There are other important events in the life of the church, he said, “but everything begins with baptism.”

The ceremony began with catechists from each parish coming to the lectern with the parish Book of Elect and calling out the name of each catechumen, along with their godparents. Each group was then ushered into the sanctuary, where they sign the Book of the Elect, which was subsequently presented to the archbishop for his signature.

Bolen called for a moment of silent prayer once the catechumens and their sponsors had returned to the pews. This was followed by the Act of Election,

## Students transformed by Catholic faith

Continued from page 1

tremely significant in offering new opportunities to me in educational ministry,” she commented. These included Rev. Wilf Murchland, CSC, who, as president of Newman Theological College in the 1980s, invited her to join the faculty and establish the MRE degree program.

Then in 2009, Ken Loehndorf, executive director of the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association, asked Kambeitz to establish the MRE degree for teachers in Saskatchewan, despite “what at the time seemed to be an insurmountable hurdle to get it recognized by government authorities,” Loehndorf recalled.

Prior to Murchland’s invitation, Kambeitz’s superior, Sister Rose-Anne Engel, OSU, had urged her for several years to pursue a doctorate.

“If it had not been for the prompting of others,” she said, “I would probably have remained happily as a high school teacher.”

When asked why it is so important to integrate Catholic teachings into the school experience, she responded: “Each school subject opens a pathway of truth — the truth about ourselves, about our

world, about creation, about God. Catholic teaching shines light into the ways these paths converge, thus providing direction and meaning to the whole academic pursuit. Every subject — physics, history, literature — takes on new depths of meaning when undergirded by and integrated in the light of Catholic faith. Students are thereby not only informed, but also formed and transformed into authentic human persons.”

Growing up in the pre-Vatican II church which, as she says, was wonderful in many ways but rather narrow in perspective, led her to struggle as a young sister with the intellectual and spiritual stretching demanded by her initial studies in Vatican II theology.

“It was in this state of turmoil that I was assigned to teach Christian Ethics, encountering considerable confusion not only among students but also among teachers,” she said, adding that making the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius was a gift beyond words, shifting her understanding of religion from an ideology to a scriptural/experiential-based faith.

“With a deeper and broader appreciation of Catholicism, and also with further theological studies, I found myself being invited

to assume new leadership roles in Catholic education.”

Reflecting on how Catholic schools can help build a student’s overall experience in learning and growth, Kambeitz said, “If Catholic schools are to contribute to the well-being of the common good in our increasingly pluralistic society, it is imperative that the teachers in Catholic schools offer religious education in a manner that teaches critical reflection as well as tolerance and respect for all faith traditions.”

Noting that “a study in Alberta 10 years ago warned that ‘religious groups can bring up children in ways that we abhor,’” Kambeitz stressed that “teachers must be offered opportunities to grow in a Christocentric faith perspective that avoids indoctrination and encourages critical reflection and openness to other faiths. This is the educational goal to which I am committed. I believe that our schools are genuinely Catholic only if their administrators and teachers are Christ-like role models, grounded in Gospel values and sound Vatican II theology.”

*This article is based on a post that can be found at [www.ccsta.ca](http://www.ccsta.ca)*



# Saskatoon diocese continues Treaty Elder Series

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Elders Walter Linklater and Agnes Desjarlais described their healing journeys during the second session of a Treaty Elder Series Feb. 11 at St. Joseph Parish in Saskatoon, calling for ongoing reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

“This event is an attempt to promote understanding and awareness of indigenous culture and spirituality, and treaty history,” said Mike Broda of St. Joseph Parish, introducing the elders, who were later joined by Lyndon Linklater of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner’s Speakers Bureau.

Walter Linklater, a residential school survivor and a retired teacher, began the afternoon presentation with a song to the Creator and to the “spiritual grandfathers and grandmothers,” explaining the meaning of the song and the significance of the four directions in indigenous culture.

“We are to be respectful of who we are and where we are, to respect the spirits that guide us,” Walter explained. “As human beings we require a lot of guidance to try and live a good life.”

As the Judeo-Christian tradition has the Ten Commandments, the elders teach how to live a good life: “They teach us to be good, to be kind, to be loving, to respect other faiths, to respect other people.”

He shared the story of his own life, the damage done by residential schools, his struggles to overcome the negative impacts, and the healing he found in the spirituality and traditional practices of his people.

Originally from Couchiching First Nation in the Rainy Lake district near Fort Frances in northwestern Ontario, Walter was taken to St. Margaret’s Indian Residential School at the age of seven, spending eight years there, allowed home only on Sundays and in the summer and, separated from his parents and grandparents, gradually losing his language and culture.

When he finished Grade 8, the Department of Indian Affairs, which at that time exercised complete control over the lives of First Nations people, sent him to high school in Lebreton, Sask., east of Regina — “a thousand miles from home. I became alienated from my family completely.”

It was eventually decided that he would become a teacher — “We had no say whatsoever” — and he started his career at Thunderchild First Nation, where he met his wife, Maria. Walter worked in several communities in the north, until the family moved to Saskatoon 25 years ago.

Walter struggled with alcohol, trying to cope with the ongoing effects of colonialism in his life. He described how his mother — both a devout Catholic and an Ojibwa/Anishinaabe elder — would pray for him to stop drinking. It took a long time, he said, but “I started to realize the inherent spiritual nature of who I was.”



Kiply Yaworski

**TREATY ELDERS — Elders Walter Linklater and Agnes Desjarlais spoke at the second session of the diocesan Treaty Elder Series held Feb. 11 at St. Joseph Parish hall in Saskatoon.**

He pointed to the similarities between First Nations spirituality and Catholic teachings: “We honour the same Spirit, but perhaps defined differently.” He recalled the words of an elder at a sweat lodge ceremony: “Remember, grandson, there is only one God. This is how we honour that God.”

The elder urged Walter to forgive the hurt inflicted by the residential schools and the church, echoing the words of Christ on the cross: “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

“He told me, ‘Walter, you will never, never live in peace if you don’t forgive them.’ That hit me. I began to correct the hatred that had built up in me.” He described the steps on the long spiritual journey that followed, as he

stopped drinking and was able to recognize his “Higher Power” as the one God — the Creator, the Great Spirit.

“I fully understood and accepted what our elders are teaching us: how to love, how to respect, how to be honest, how to be kind, how to be loving, how to be helpful.”

Walter also reflected on the recent acquittal of Gerald Stanley in the shooting death of Colten Boushie: “When that verdict came down I wept, because I hold back that little anger that has festered in me, and I asked for help from the elders, some of whom have passed on and are in the spirit world. The answer they gave me was to pray for the Boushie family and also for the other family involved, that they

will understand what respect and equality are really about.”

He added: “We start with ourselves: we look within ourselves and find out who we are and what we can do to help change the relationship between First Nations and non-First Nations people. Will we ever achieve that? I don’t know. But if we don’t try we never will. And if we try, perhaps someday we will live together in harmony, like the Creator and like Jesus Christ want us to. That is the hope that I have today.”

Elder Agnes Desjarlais also shared her story of finding healing through the spirituality, ceremonies, and traditions of her culture, and spoke about the importance of continuing to work together for understanding.

About Colten Boushie and his family, and events surrounding the Stanley trial, she said, “We must keep praying for the families and for the young people, because some of them are thinking really negatively. I believe in the power of prayer, and sometimes you can do nothing else, if people aren’t going to listen to you.”

Desjarlais stressed the importance of forgiveness: “Pray. Keep praying for them, so they are not carrying hatred and bitterness too far.”

During the presentation, Walter’s son Lyndon Linklater provided an overview of treaty history in Canada and the meaning of treaties as a sacred relationship.

“Both sides of a treaty

received benefits,” he said. “You have benefitted from the treaty that was made in 1876 (Treaty 6). There would be no such city as Saskatoon, no such province as Saskatchewan, without the treaties.”

Many Canadians are unaware of the history of the treaties, and there are many misconceptions. Only recently has there been an effort to teach this history.

“The land is our mother,” Lyndon said, describing the understanding of indigenous peoples. “Oral history tells us that we did not sell the land, but agreed to share it.”

The elders view treaties as “a relationship with Canada, our country, and we have to work at it,” he added. “This country belongs to all of us. We have children and grandchildren. What kind of country do we want for them? Reconciliation is about learning and understanding, eating together, praying together, singing together. The more you know about me, the more I know about you, and the more this continues in our country, the better it is for all of us.”

As one response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, parishes in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon have been invited to participate in the Treaty Elder Series, organized in conjunction with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. For more information about reconciliation efforts in the diocese, contact Myron Rogal at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Saskatoon.

## Micah Mission values volunteers’ donation of time

By Blake Sittler

SASKATOON — When a person goes to jail, several things happen: they lose their privacy, their dignity, their job, their home and, in many cases, their family and friends. And when that person serves their time and gets out of jail, they get back some of their freedom, but many of the things and people they lost do not return.

The Micah Mission is an ecumenical ministry in Saskatoon that was born out of the recognition that when a person who is just out of prison tries to reintegrate into society, if they have no friends or family, no home, and no job, there is a high statistical chance that they will reoffend.

Staff and volunteers of Micah offer their time to sit with ex-offenders and give them a healthy friendship, and that friendship might be the only thing that keeps a person from reoffending.

On Jan. 27 the board and staff of the Micah Mission organized a volunteer appreciation event for their 64 volunteers and for many of the men who benefit from the various offerings of their ministry.

2017 was a difficult year for Micah. After several years as the Community Reintegration chaplain, Peter Oliver was let go for financial reasons. There has since been a financial turnaround, with

funding from the federal government through the Ministry of Public Safety, announced last May by Ralph Goodale under the National Crime Prevention Strategy. This has allowed Micah to hire a part-time person, Adrianna Appleton, to work in co-ordinating Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSAs) in the region.

CoSAs are small gatherings of volunteers along with a person who has recently been released from prison. The volunteers are not counsellors or therapists. They are simply people who gather to talk and listen. This reflects the Micah Mission motto: “Tough on crime, one friendship at a time.”

The effectiveness of the CoSA model in lowering recidivism has been studied often, but not at a large enough level to produce reliable statistics. One 2014 study by Dr. Kathryn J. Fox of the University of Vermont reported that only one in 21 core members reoffended during their participation with a CoSA, which is a much lower rate than those who did not seek the support of a CoSA.

Dave Feick, executive director of the Micah Mission, spoke during the gathering, bidding farewell to Colleen Rickard who was a volunteer who then became a staff person and served as book-keeper.

Many volunteers were high-



Blake Sittler

**MICAH MISSION — On Jan. 27 the board and staff of the Micah Mission, an ecumenical ministry that works with ex-offenders to help reduce recidivism, organized an appreciation event for their volunteers and for many of the men who benefit from their ministry.**

lighted and remembered, including Abram J. Hiebert and the late Keith Lapsley, as well as Edna Zacharias.

Appleton shared some statistics about the volunteers: “In the last year, 64 volunteers have donated 5,334 hours. The time you give as an advocate, a compassionate listener, in guidance, career planning and housing support could easily be valued at \$133,350,” she said.

“This list does not begin to

describe everything our volunteers do,” she continued. “In this room we have a collection of individuals with a high capacity for empathy, a strong sense of compassion, and a commitment to helping others.”

The Micah Mission also recently expanded to partner with students at St. Thomas More College to form Micah on Campus. Several students now volunteer in person-to-person prison visits and sit on CoSAs.



# Faith and trust, even in blowing wind and deep snow

## Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



It was a snowy Boxing Day about 10 years ago when I took my kids sledding to a hill not far from our home. The kids were excited to “hit the slopes” that afternoon and to sail down the hill at great speeds.

The second we got to the top, Nathan jumped on his sled and began the first of what must have been 50 downhill descents. Jenna, who was only five at the time, took as many turns as her little legs could endure. The work was doubly tough for a small child like Jenna, but nothing was going to detract her from the fun, no matter

*Saretsky is a teacher and chaplain at Holy Cross High School in Saskatoon. He and his wife, Norma, have two children, Nathan and Jenna.*

how tired she was getting. Occasionally Jenna would stay at the bottom and beg me to carry her back up the hill for another thrilling run. I obliged and Nathan, who was also beginning to fade, sometimes begged me to pull him back to the top too.

The snow was falling gently when we first arrived, but as the afternoon wore on, the snow fell with greater fullness. That signalled it was time to leave. Besides, the kids were exhausted. Winter seemed to take exception to our departure, as the wind began to blow with greater speed.

Does winter somehow lament when children return indoors? Winter’s only outdoor company would be leafless tree branches that bend to the will of its wind. Not much fun in that, but when children come out to play in its

cold, winter delights in their company, leaving rosy kisses on their cheeks.

Our car was parked a fair distance from the hill, which meant a laborious journey into the teeth of the increasing northeast wind. Now it was getting personal. The wind, if it was begging us to stay, could have been a little more hospitable. The deep snow was getting too much for Jenna to plod through. Nathan trudged his way through and left me with the sleds.

Jenna and I had a more difficult time. I carried the toboggans while coaxing Jenna to keep going. She complained with each step she took, exclaiming she was too tired to go forward. Finally, in utter exasperation, frustration and fatigue, Jenna stopped and declared, “Daddy, I’m too tired! I’m not walking any longer. I’m staying right here!” She had

reached the limit of her endurance.

Was she seriously going to just stay there? I told her to walk behind me and, like Good King Wenceslaus, said, “Thou shalt find the winter’s rage freeze thy blood less coldly.” Jenna wasn’t impressed by my wit, and re-

mained fixed at her position. “No Dad! You’re going to have to get me, or I’m just going to stay here for the rest of the winter.”

For a few seconds I simply watched Jenna where she stood,

— CARRIED, page 10



Design Pics

**GREAT REWARDS** — “We are promised that we will never be forsaken. We will never be forgotten. We will never be left to fend for ourselves, and our reward will be far greater than hot chocolate and marshmallows” when we face cold winter winds and deep snow, writes Tom Saretsky.

## Gathering a reminder of how our lives are infused with influence of family

By Caitlin Ward

I was on my way to the airport when my godbrother, Bernard, called with the news. His mother, Margot, godmother to both my sister and my father, the person I was going to Toronto to visit, had died.

It was not unexpected. She was 84. She’d been unwell for a long time, since she’d had an accident

Long Live the Queen

Frank Turner

nine years previously in which she’d punctured a lung. In recent years, she’d been declining more rapidly. I was going to Toronto that weekend because all of us, Margot included, suspected she was not long for this world. My sister joined us as well, though it was a longer and more costly journey for her than it was for me.

It was not the weekend my sister or I expected. We’d planned to spend days in the hospice, driving family back and forth if need be, supplying tea, holding vigil and saying the rosary. With that phone call, this plan flew out the window.

I didn’t know what to expect when I arrived. I landed around 1 a.m. The plane that was to take me to Toronto broke somewhere between Thunder Bay and Winnipeg on the way to Saskatoon, requiring an emergency landing and repair that pushed my flight back by four hours. When the plane finally

*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 [www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings](http://www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings)*

boarded around 9 p.m., fate or Air Canada or both sat me beside someone who’d worked on a mining project that my friends in the Dominican Republic had spent the better part of 10 years fighting.

So I was a bit out of sorts and feeling like I was out of time when I arrived, Bernard and his wife, Emily, waiting at the arrivals, all of us a bit manic in this surreal moment when nothing’s gone quite right and someone’s just died. My sister, exhausted and jetlagged, had fallen asleep hours previously.

But she and I hadn’t seen each other in person for six months, so when I arrived at the family home off Queen West, I woke her up. We talked a few minutes, both of us half asleep, excited to see one another but not under these circumstances.

There is a strange liminal space between death and funeral. It’s hard to think beyond the present moment. We talked. We ate. We prayed. I bought spices in Kensington Market that Friday, and we went into every shop in Chinatown looking for moon cakes. We drove out to Cambridge and ate Indian food in a strip mall. We stayed in a country house outside the city, drank prosecco and ate fresh figs.

The family was generous and kind in a way that is humbling and overwhelming and so completely second nature to them. I left before the funeral because of work obligations, so for a time I merely existed with them. I don’t know how much good I did, but I was glad to be there.

Margot and her family moved to Toronto when I was four or five years old. I sort of remember her house in Saskatoon. I remember her dog Fletcher better, who was probably twice my

size and at the age of three seemed monstrous to me. We fell somewhat out of touch for a while after they moved, but reconnected with them in more recent years. I only saw Margot a handful of times as an adult.

More than anything I know her from the delightfully idiosyncratic presents she would send my sister, and the stories my parents would tell about their friendship with her. She mentored my mother through her early academic career; she walked with my father through his faith journey and eventual conver-

I was sipping on a Whiskey when I got the call  
Yeah my friend Lex was lying in the hospital  
She’d been pretty sick for about half a year  
But it seems liked this time the end was drawing near  
So dropped my plans and jumped the next London train  
I found her laid up and in a lot of pain  
Her eyes met mine and then I understood  
That her weather forecast wasn’t looking too good  
So I sat and spun her stories for a little while  
Tried to raise her mood and tried to raise a smile  
But she silenced all my rambling with a shake of her head  
Drew me close and listen this is what she said now

“You’ll live to dance another day,  
It’s just now you’ll have to dance,  
For the two of us, so stop looking so damn depressed  
And sing with all your heart that the Queen is dead”

Yeah she told me she was sick of all the hospital food  
And of doctors, distant relatives, draining her blood  
She said “I know I’m dying,  
But I’m not finished just yet,  
I am dying for a drink and for a cigarette”  
So we hatched a plan to book ourselves a cheap hotel

sion to Catholicism. And I know they walked with her, as well, through sometimes harrowing personal struggles and a life rebuilt for her and her children. There is a profound relationship there that predates my sister and me, and certainly predates Margot’s four grandchildren.

In one way, I knew Margot only slightly. We would chat periodically, and I would see her when I happened to be in Toronto. In a more profound way, though, I know Margot better than I know most anyone. My life

In the centre of the City and to raise some Hell  
They waste to all the clubs  
And then when everyone else is long asleep  
We know we’re good and done

“You’ll live to dance another day  
It’s just now you’ll have to dance  
For the two of us,  
So stop looking so damn depressed  
And sing with all your heart that the Queen is dead”  
And South London’s not the same anymore  
The Queen is dead,  
And the last of the great has finally gone to bed

Well I was working on some words when Sarah called me up  
She said that Lex had gone asleep and wasn’t waking up  
And even though I knew that there was nothing to be done  
I felt bad for not being there and now, well, she was gone  
So I tried to think what Lex would want me to do  
At times like this when I was feeling blue  
So I gathered up some friends to spread the sad sad news  
And we headed to the City for a drink or two  
And we sang

“We live to dance another day,  
It’s just now we have to dance for one more of us,  
So stop looking so damn depressed,  
And sing with all our hearts, long live the Queen”



Black Panther, Oscar best bets and some other films

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



There’s a reason why big-budget superhero movies that take up so much commercial screen space are generally absent from awards season speculations except for a few special effects or technical categories. A few offer solid entertainment, if one likes that sort of thing, although more are just a plain awful waste of time. On the plus side, it’s worth celebrating several recent breakouts from the white macho superman genre. The year 2017 gave us the rousing spectacle of *Wonder Woman*. Now people of colour and African descent have their own comic superhero to cheer with the release of Marvel Studios’ *Black Panther*, which earned back its \$200-million mega-budget in just a few days of release.

*Panther* is helmed by Ryan Coogler, whose 2013 breakout feature, *Fruitvale Station*, won the Sundance grand jury prize, followed up by *Creed* in 2015. The star of those films, Michael B. Jordan, plays a villain here — N’Jadaka, abandoned as a child in California after his father was killed by the king of Wakanda, a

mythical never-colonized African paradise of superior civilization and technology that exists on a parallel plane to the planet where black people suffer more than succeed. Wakanda’s ace is its possession of “vibranium,” the strongest element in the universe.

T’Challa (Chadwick Boseman) is in line to be king, anointed by spiritual leader Zuri (Forest Whitaker, a producer on *Fruitvale Station* who plays the pastor in the Sundance hit *Burden*), after first surviving a ritual combat challenge. King T’Challa has a strong sister, Shuri (Letitia Wright), and fearless female warriors Nakia (Lupita Nyong’o) and Okoye (Danai Gurira) at his side. T’Challa gains Black Panther superpowers as heroic protector by drinking a sacred purple potion. He’ll need them all and more after seemingly being vanquished by rival cousin N’Jadaka, who takes over the throne seeking to use vibranium for world domination. Of course T’Challa rises again and saves the day.

There’s a bad-guy white character, Klaue (Andy Serkis), who

gets disposed of before matters get ultra-violent in the battle for Wakanda, in which another white guy, CIA agent Ross (Martin Freeman), is on the good side. The principal scenario, however, is all black power, including roles for a tribal ruler, M’Baku (Winston Duke), and a sidekick, W’Kabi (Daniel Kaluuya, best-actor nominee for *Get Out*). The production design is spectacular, with cinematography by Rachel Morrison (the first woman to be Oscar nominated in this category for *Mudbound*). The story is convoluted but satisfying enough to set up the inevitable sequels.

On to the 90th Academy Awards show coming this Sunday night. (For the full list of nominees see; <http://www.oscars.org/>) The safest prediction is that there won’t be another embarrassing snafu like last year’s best-picture fumble when *La La Land* (with its record-tying 14 nominations) enjoyed a few seconds in the limelight until the actual deserving winner, *Moonlight*, received the prize. The nominations are much more spread out this year. And with the storm clouds of sexual misconduct allegations swirling about the entertainment industry, we also know that last year’s best-actor Oscar winner, Casey Affleck, will not be a presenter, or indeed present, at the ceremony.

The nine best-picture nominees are a toss-up with no obvious frontrunner, although *The Shape of*



Walt Disney Pictures

BLACK PANTHER — Lupita Nyong’o and Chadwick Boseman star in Black Panther.

*Water* with 13 nominations should be the odds-on favourite. *The Post* is on the list but has only one other nomination and was shut out at the Golden Globes. Director Steven Spielberg was also snubbed in that category. Still, its timely treatment of a great American story of journalistic courage to publish in the face of a hostile Nixon White House could appeal to a lot of academy voters in this era of “fake news” and Trumpian attacks on the press. I would not be surprised to see it come out on top, as two years ago did *Spotlight*, another inspiring true story of frontline journalism exposing inconvenient truths. *The Post* has received some critical love; indeed it was a National Board of Review triple winner for best film, actor and actress. With all of the nominees having their passionate supporters the votes could be split, allowing a narrow plurality to claim the honour.

Meryl Streep received a record 21st Oscar nomination as best actress for her portrayal of *Washington Post* publisher Kay Graham, but faces stiff competition. I loved Saoirse Ronan in *Lady Bird*. Sally Hawkins is extraordinary in *The Shape of Water* (and was equally good in the overlooked Nova Scotia-set *Maudie* opposite Ethan Hawke). Margot Robbie was sensational in *I, Tonya*. But, although I was not a big fan of the pitch-black “comedy” *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, veteran Frances McDormand commands the screen in it like an avenging force of nature and will likely be rewarded.

For best supporting actress, Laurie Metcalf was great as the exasperated yet supportive mother in *Lady Bird*, but Allison Janney really turned heads as the mother from hell in *I, Tonya*. Expect her to add an Oscar to her Golden Globe win.

On the men’s side, I was a bit surprised to see Denzel Washington in the best-actor mix for *Roman J. Israel Esq.*, with both Tom Hanks (*The Post*) and James Franco (*The Disaster Artist*) overlooked. Franco has been the target of allegations since his Globe win. However, Hanks continues to be admired as the great American everyman. I thought he did a terrific job portraying legendary *Washington Post* publisher Ben Bradlee (whose storied career is the subject of an excellent new HBO documentary *The Newspaperman: The Life and*

*Times of Ben Bradlee*). Still, my guess is that the Oscar will go to Gary Oldman who endured many hours in the makeup chair in order to portray Winston Churchill in *Darkest Hour*. It’s a dominating performance that would stand out in any year. Daniel Day-Lewis is great as always in *Phantom Thread*, and he says it’s his last screen role, which would be a shame. But, like Streep, he already own three Oscars, so . . .

For supporting actor I would cheer if remarkable 88-year-old Canadian thespian Christopher Plummer were to get another statuette for coming to the rescue of *All the Money in the World*, replacing the disgraced Kevin Spacey at the last minute. However, I think it will come down to either Globe winner Sam Rockwell for *Three Billboards*, or Willem Dafoe for *The Florida Project*, most deserving in what was really a lead role.

Best director is another toss-up. I’d love to see Greta Gerwig become only the second female director to win in Oscar history, which is a sad statistic. The strongest competition is probably from Guillermo del Toro (*The Shape of Water*), who won the Golden Globe. For cinematography with 14 nominations, Roger Deakins is due to finally win one for Dennis Villeneuve’s *Blade Runner 2049*. But Hoyte van Hoytema could be in the running for the IMAX awesomeness of Christopher Nolan’s *Dunkirk*.

The world of non-English language cinema is reduced to a single category that allows only one submission per country. That left out Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki’s excellent *The Other Side of Hope*. Cambodia submitted *First They Killed My Father* directed by A-list American actress Angelina Jolie, but it didn’t make the cut either. I’m mildly surprised that the Golden Globe winner, Germany’s *In the Fade*, was also left out. Of the five foreign-language nominees I have not seen Lebanon’s *The Insult*, yet to be released in Canada. The Hungarian *On Body and Soul* has had no theatrical release but can be watched on Netflix. A strange love story that takes place in an abattoir, I found it depressing and definitely not for the squeamish. Although a recipient of the Golden

— FAVOURITE FILM, page 10



G. Fallis

Crows’ Pass

Usually there’s a purple hole  
at the end of the night sky  
through which we fly west  
toward the undying sea  
arriving silent at dawn.

Then at dusk, the sun going,  
the hole in the sky returns  
sometimes a wash of pinkish blue  
guiding us home to roost again  
under the warmth of green cedars.

We are black legions now  
passing quietly high above  
heading for the day shift at the beach  
where we hammer clams, nibble on starfish,  
scour the tidal beds for fish and snails  
and unearth the odd grubs nestled  
along worn shores and old dikes.

Our semi-retired elders  
hang back and forage trashcans,  
take care of road kill and leftovers,  
and carry their catch by claw or beak  
to stash away in eavestroughs,  
under loosened shingles or  
in our secret hideaways —  
that are only known to our kind.

God created the owl to be wise,  
the eagle to be strong,  
the heron to be graceful,  
the robin to marshal in spring,  
the hummingbird to delight,  
and the sparrow to sing.

But we are proletarian,  
created for grunt work,  
to pick up garbage,  
to remove the dead and  
to clean beaches and roads.  
It’s a simple vocation,  
one given not chosen.  
It is an honourable path  
with many things to crow about.

Most of all we  
caw the shots as we see them,  
screech truth back and forth,  
and cover each other’s back.  
We’ll protect our meek, our weak,  
and challenge the strong of the earth.  
We fly through the holes in the sky  
at beginning and end of each day.  
The world’s better off this way.

By Michael Dallaire



# Family is the centre from which ministry grows

## Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



“I want to say thank you, to all you parents.” Father Joe doesn’t usually start mass this way, but it seems to me an excellent beginning. The 10:30 Sunday eucharist at my parish, after all, incorporates the children’s liturgy and there are always many families with young children in attendance. “I know it isn’t easy for you to come on a Sunday,” he continued, “so I want you to know we appreciate having you here. Thanks for coming.”

I smile inwardly, applauding his remarks. I vividly remember years ago struggling to get our three, then four, young ones to mass on any given Sunday. To have them cleanly scrubbed, decently dressed and out the door on time was always hard. Things haven’t changed much for families. Parents are tired; children are restless and reluctant; weekends are packed with activities. It re-

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mains difficult for them to come to mass and I was glad to hear our pastor acknowledge it. With all the strain and stress on our families, it is both necessary and good for the church to affirm them.

It is also good for us to remember that whatever the shape of our family and the struggles entailed therein, Jesus knows families from the inside out. He was a member of a few in his life and they nourished and sustained him.

At the beginning, there’s his Nazareth family — his mother, father, and, we can presume, a close clan of relatives. We don’t know much about Jesus’ life here beyond the unusual birth and the precarious trip to Egypt while he is still a baby. We know the young family spends time there as refugees before returning home and settling into small-town life. However, that Jesus lives in close-knit relationships can be assumed: his mother and father think Jesus is with “the family” when he goes missing for a few days as they return from their Jerusalem visit. It is in Nazareth, though, in the midst of everyday life, that Jesus “grows in wisdom” at the feet of his mother and father and amidst his relatives.

There is also Jesus’ Bethany



CNS/Guadalupe Pardo, Reuters

**WE ARE FAMILY — In his ministry, Jesus calls all of us into familial relationships with him, God and one another.**

family. It’s composed of his close friends, Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus, and we are told by Scripture that Jesus loves these three. It is in their home, as an adult, that Jesus experiences warmth, hospitality and companionship. He and his disciples find respite from the crowds as Martha cooks for them and Mary listens. Good food, good conversation and a place to lay his head: the Bethany family is, we can imagine, for Jesus a haven and a home.

Finally, there is the family Jesus creates around himself. It is the fundamental relationship of his

life and its origin is his awareness that he is the “beloved” of Abba. Knowing himself to be at one with Abba and a recipient of the Spirit, Jesus claims divine sonship. He knows, moreover, that it is a relationship to be shared.

In his ministry, Jesus calls all of us into familial relationships with him, God and one another. When we pray, Jesus instructs us, we are to say, “Our Father,” and according to St. Paul, it is the selfsame Spirit as Jesus receives who empowers us to claim God as our “Abba.” The Spirit further fashions us as brothers and sisters in Christ, forming the family of the church. It is birthed at the foot of the cross where Jesus creates a

new community with the words: “Woman, behold your son; son, behold your mother.” A grieving widowed mother and a beloved disciple are entrusted into each other’s care, and, sealed and symbolized in a flow of water and blood, the Body of Christ begins. It is characterized by relationships of love as we are all called to be one.

It’s a revelation when we realize we are called to be one family. “We have forgotten we belong to one another,” Mother Teresa is reputed to have said when she looked at the ills of western culture. Family is the one place

— ONE FAMILY, page 12

## We will always be tenderly carried

Continued from page 8

in the depths of the snow, while the wind was getting more frenzied. I dropped the sleds, picked her up and carried her the remainder of the way.

What goes on in the mind of a five-year-old? Jenna can be fiercely defensive of her position, and her tenacity, when she wants something, is still intense, even at 14. She has calmed considerably since then, yet shades of her five-year-old ferocity and determination still occasionally come through. Jenna has a passionate will, and those traits will serve her well throughout the storms of her winter seasons in life.

Jenna knew I wasn’t going to let her stay where she was. There was a trust and a faith that I was going to come and get her. Her body went limp as I carried her to the car. I could feel it relax, even through her bulky snowsuit. She intimately knew she was safe in my arms.

How many times do we become overwhelmed by life’s cold and unrelenting wind? There are times when we can’t muster the strength or the courage to keep moving, and we’d rather just stay where we are. Immobile. Immovable. It’s sometimes too much effort to trudge through life’s snow banks because the drifts are too deep and our exhaustion is

too great. Do we have that hope or faith or trust that someone is waiting and willing to pick us up and bring us home? What father would leave his child alone to face the harsh elements of winter?

We are promised that we will

never be forsaken. We will never be forgotten. We will never be left to fend for ourselves, and our reward will be far greater than the hot chocolate and marshmallows Jenna and Nathan enjoyed when we finally got home that day.

## Coco a favourite film

Continued from page 9


Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival, I still find it an odd choice given stronger potential picks like Israel’s *Foxtrot*. My bet to win is Ruben Östlund’s *The Square*, which received the *Palme d’Or*, Cannes festival’s top prize. Controversial certainly, but among the best films of 2017.

Documentaries also get squeezed into a single category, and the Golden Globes completely ignore non-fiction cinema. Steve James’ *Abacus: Small Enough to Jail* is excellent and has been broadcast on television. But it’s a 2016 film and there were so many other compelling choices from 2017. Three Sundance selections are in the running, including *Strong Island* and *Icarus*. The latter is a somewhat surprising choice, although undoubtedly timely given its probing of Russian Olympic doping scandals. *Faces*, *Places* and *Last Men in Aleppo* (Sundance grand

jury prize winner) were my two top docs of 2017 so an Oscar to either one would be well deserved.

The animation category has the same five nominees as the 75th Golden Globes. It includes the remarkable oil-painted *Loving Vincent* and the inspiring Afghan girl’s story *The Breadwinner*, a Canadian co-production with Ireland and Luxembourg executive produced by Angelina Jolie. But my guess is that the late-year Mexican-themed blockbuster *Coco* will again come out on top and be a popular choice.

As a final note, my best film of 2017, Paul Schrader’s *First Reformed* with Ethan Hawke, appears nowhere in the above since it won’t have even a limited U.S. theatrical release until this April. It’s a good reminder both that some things are worth waiting for, and that it’s often necessary to look beyond Oscar lists for challenging cinema of the highest order.



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# Gaining sight: washing the mud from our own eyes



## Liturgy and Life

Brenda Merk Hildebrand

Today's readings consider *seeing*: if we can see, what we see, how we interpret and understand what we see, and how that affects our thoughts, words and actions.

The first reading recounts the selection process for a new king, and the unexpected prompting from the Lord to choose the youngest of the eight sons. It is made clear that the decision is based on seeing into the heart, the attention focused on the inner qualities and disposition of the future leader.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians also directs our attention to that kind of seeing: what is pleasing and what is shameful. We are directed toward the light, toward all that is right and good and true. We are also asked to see the darkness and to expose it for what it is. Our seeing is to be complete. Adding to Paul's words, we are invited to "wake up and smell the coffee." We are to become awake and remain aware, fully alive as we stand in the light of Christ. Some days it is easier not to see, it is easier not to know. It takes courage to see the whole picture. It takes work and willingness. We have to want to see.

The Gospel recounts the story of the man born blind, made able to see by the healing grace of God. We too, are born blind, with the necessary naïveté and innocence of infancy and childhood. If we remain that way, we will be as helpless as the man who could only beg for the necessities of life. Something will need to change, and for that we need the grace of God.

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The healing process is puzzling and mysterious. In a move that could only compound the blindness, a mixture of saliva and mud is layered on top of sightless eyes. Symbolically, we might think of this as the muddy experiences of our lives that leave us unable to see anything clearly. Following instructions, the man in the Gospel co-operated with Jesus in bringing about this healing. We are also *sent* to wash our eyes so that we can see.

The places to which we are sent are many, varied, and often specialized. The possibilities are endless: perhaps we begin to see more clearly when we join and participate in a support group, engage in counselling sessions, or make and keep necessary medical appointments. It may be time to connect with a spiritual director in order to be better able to bear the blessings and burdens of life's journey.

We may feel ourselves experiencing insistent promptings of the Spirit, who directs our attention toward helpful reading materials or other resources. We may be drawn toward a deeper prayer life, and experience a growing understanding of Scripture. There may be a closer connection with the eucharist and the sacraments of our faith tradition. Most often we begin to see clearly only when we have followed through — investing time and making a sincere effort to co-operate in our own healing and transformation.

### Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 11, 2018

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13  
Psalm 23  
Ephesians 5:8-14  
John 9:1-41

In companionship with the man in the Gospel, things might not be easy for us. Like him, we might be misunderstood by others who think they see clearly. The unnamed man was thoroughly questioned and challenged. He stood alone with his new clarity of vision. Only he could see Jesus for who he was and what he was about. Standing alone with the light of his new seeing, this man was powerless to reach those who were still in darkness. His newfound vision cost him — he even lost the support of his parents.

Most of us can relate to the painful feelings that arise when we stand alone. We might recall being labelled in a negative way, or treated as an outcast. We might have been

mocked for daring to challenge those who felt they already knew everything. Perhaps these painful moments, when



PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

we stand alone, are our true "coming of age." No longer naïve, no longer blind, we see things as they are.

We are now well settled into Lent, a time of renewal. It might be challenging. During a celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation I recall sharing some of the difficulties that particular Lent was bringing my way. The priest nodded with compassion and offered some insight he had gained from living in a community setting. Pondering that if life took him elsewhere and he lost all track of time, he believed he would immediately know if it was Lent when he returned to the building in which they lived. The work of Lent was always that palpable. It permeated the whole place.

The effort of co-operating with Jesus in our own healing and transformation is real. The work of living and working with others is real. It takes energy, time, and commitment.

The promise of the psalm brings comfort to those who walk through challenging and painful struggles: the Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want. We can be unafraid, even in the darkest hour. Our souls are restored in green pastures and beside still waters. Quietly, we recall our own sacred anointing and see ourselves as chosen: our lives are consecrated to God.

Jesus came that we might be healed. He lived so that we might live full and abundant lives. May our seeing lead us to greater wholeness and holiness.

# The misunderstandings of celibacy and chastity: a personal testimony

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Writing in the first person is always a risk, but the subject matter of this column is best done, I feel, through personal testimony. In a world where chastity and celibacy are seen as naïve and to be pitied and where there's a general skepticism that anyone is actually living them out, personal

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testimony is perhaps the most effective protest.

What's to be said for celibacy and chastity, whether these are lived out in a vowed religious context or are simply the given situation of anyone who is going through life celibate? Here's my story.

At the age of 17, I made the decision to become a priest and enter a religious order, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. That decision involved committing to celibacy for life. Strange as this may sound, since I was only 17, I didn't make that decision naively or out of some passing fancy. I

intuited pretty accurately the cost, so much so that virtually everything inside me strongly resisted the call. Anything but that!

While I was drawn to ministry, the accompanying vow of celibacy was a massive stumbling block. I didn't want to live as a celibate. Who does? Indeed nobody should. But the inner call was so strong that, despite its downside, when I finished high school I gave a reluctant but solid assent and entered a religious congregation. Now, looking back on it more than 50 years later, I see it still as the purest, most unselfish decision I've ever made.

I've been in religious life now for more than 50 years and have served as a priest for more than 45 of those years and, all told, celibacy has served me well, just as I can honestly say that I have served it in essential fidelity. Celibacy has its upside. Beyond the inner work it forced me to do in terms of my relationship to God, to others, and to myself (often painful work done in restlessness and prayer and on occasion with the help of a counselor), celibacy also afforded me a privileged availability for the ministry. If you move through this life as a priest and missionary, celibacy can be a friend.

But it isn't always a friend. For me, celibacy has always been the hardest struggle within religious life and ministry, a habitual

emotional crucifixion, as it should be. There have been seasons — days, weeks, months, and sometimes many months — when most everything inside of me screamed against it, when because of falling in love, or dealing with an obsession, or dealing with the one-sided energy within a male congregation, or when I was overcome with the fact I will never have children, or, when the simple, raw physical and emotional power of sexuality left me restless and frustrated enough that the man inside of me wanted to take back what the priest inside of me had once vowed. Celibacy will have you sweating blood in the Garden of Gethsemane sometimes. It goes against some of the deepest, innate, God-given instincts and energies within you, and so it doesn't allow itself to be dealt with lightly.

That being said, though, something else also needs to be said, something too little understood today: celibacy can also be generative, because sexuality is about more than having sex. Just before creating the sexes, God said: It is not good for the man to be alone! That's true for every person who will ever walk this earth. Sexuality is given to us to take us beyond our aloneness; but many things do that for us and full sexual intimacy is only one of them.

Perhaps the single biggest misunderstanding about sex today is

the belief that deep friendship, warm companionship, faith community, and non-genital forms of intimacy are only a substitute, some second-best compensation for sex rather than a rich, generative modality of sex itself. These aren't a consolation prize for missing the real thing. They are, just as is having sex, one rich aspect of the real thing.

Recently I phoned a priest on the 60th anniversary of his ordination. Eighty-five years old now, he had this to say: "There were some rough times, all of my classmates left the ministry and I had my temptations too. But I stayed and, now, looking back, I am pretty happy with the way my life turned out."

Looking back on my own life and my commitment to celibacy I can say something similar. Celibacy has made for some tough seasons and remains, as Merton once put it, the deep anguish within chastity. But celibacy has also provided me with a life rich in friendship, rich in community, rich in companionship, rich in family of every kind, and rich in opportunity to be present to others. I will die without children, my life, like everyone's, an incomplete, never fully consummated symphony. But looking back on it all, I'm pretty happy with the way it turned out. Celibacy can be a life-giving way of being sexual, of creating family, and of being happy.

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# Prairie Messenger begins its focus on social issues

This is the fourth of seven articles on the Prairie Messenger and the past 100 years of journalism by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter's Abbey.

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Wilfred Hergott was the longest-serving editor of the *Prairie Messenger*, managing the editor's desk for 24 years from 1931 to 1955. Under Hergott's tenure the *Prairie Messenger* became more focused on social issues. Concern for the rights of the individual came to the fore during the economic depression of the 1930s. The term "new social order" entered into discussion following the Second World War as world leaders struggled to rebuild Europe and prevent future conflicts. Hergott and his successor, Augustine Nenzel (1955 - 1962), were well versed in political and social issues, which become the subject of commentary in editorials.

Dark clouds were on the horizon

*Paproski is a monk of St. Peter's Abbey, pastor, archivist and historian.*

## All creation is one family

Continued from page 10

where we belong. Jesus experienced it and showed us the depth and breadth of our connections. It doesn't stop with one small nuclear family; it spreads out, over and through all boundaries. "One ohana," the Hawaiians say: all creation is one family.

Today's families might challenge us in their diversity. They might be single, married, divorced, widowed, LGBT, with children or without, but the one thing they share is their commitment to love with all its challenges, and the one thing they deserve is our support and prayers.

I look at the people around me at mass. There's a family across from us where the young father is cradling a young baby while a toddler plays at his feet. Further down the pew, the mother is holding a third child. Behind them are two teenagers with their mom. The teenagers look bored; the mother is praying with eyes closed. Everywhere I look, I see the families, small, large, happy, struggling. "Thank you for coming," I whisper. "I'm glad you are here."

when Hergott became editor. Stories began to circulate of an economic depression that was costing millions of workers their jobs. Unions were seeking better wages and working conditions. North America was hit by a drought that turned fertile fields into dust bowls. Extremist right- and left-wing political movements came onto the scene offering simple answers to society's complex issues.

The *Prairie Messenger* portrayed a church that was often under attack. Front-page stories told of hostile governments, politicians, other churches or educational institutions lambasting the Catholic Church. The church had come under siege in Europe where communism had a tight grip on Russia. Fascists had Italy under their thumb and the Nazis were on the rise in Germany. Nationalism had swept Europe where nations became entangled in political alliances that competed in an arms race.

The church was struggling, as well, in North America. The Mexican government was trying to erode the church's power after failing to destroy it in the 1920s. Catholics were under suspicion in the United States, where religious and ethnic tensions were strong and racism was rampant.

Pope Pius XI and the church's bishops pleaded for peace and reconciliation in Europe. Their voices were ignored and the church was placed on the defensive as it continually became the target of aggression. As the 1930s dragged on, front-page articles detailed persecution of the church and society by the Nazis, fascists and communists. Spain, in 1936, erupted in a civil war that brought death to thousands of clergy and religious. The Nazis in Germany eventually solidified their grip on power by closing Catholic schools, Catholic organizations and imprisoning and killing clergy. The "church militant" (church on earth) had become the "church persecuted."

Aware that the Catholic Church opposed atheistic socialism and communism, the *Prairie Messenger* was cautious in its analysis of new social movements in Canada, such as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Hergott agreed with the stance of the CCF on issues of social justice and the

FIVE GREAT ENCYCLICALS

LABOR—EDUCATION—MARRIAGE—  
RECONSTRUCTING THE SOCIAL ORDER—  
ATHEISTIC COMMUNISM

LEO XIII on The Condition of Labor  
PIUS XI on Christian Education of Youth  
PIUS XI on Christian Marriage  
PIUS XI on Reconstructing the Social Order  
PIUS XI on Atheistic Communism

PAPAL ENCYCLICALS — Rev. Wilfred Hergott, OSB, and Rev. Augustine Nenzel, OSB, used papal encyclicals to defend new social movements that promoted a more just society. Two powerful encyclicals by Popes Leo XIII (On the Condition of Labour) and Pius XI (On Reconstructing the Social Order) defend a just wage and just living conditions. Papal encyclicals are letters or documents written by popes to express opinions on social or religious issues of the day.

rights of workers. He reminded readers of *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Labour), a groundbreaking encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, and *Quadragesimo Anno* (Reconstructing the Social Order), an encyclical of Pope Pius XI, which defended the rights of workers and families while condemning unbridled capitalism, communism and atheistic socialism. Readers were encouraged to be informed about political issues and to vote.

Society was in flux, not only politically, but morally. New social movements were challenging traditional church teachings. The *Prairie Messenger*, an important voice of the church, criticized the increasing acceptance of contraception, divorce, sterilization, mixed marriages, immoral movies, reading material, false modesty (improper dress) and euthanasia. Hergott took umbrage with J.S. Woodsworth, the MP for Winnipeg North Centre, who wanted criminals to be sterilized. He disagreed with temperance movements that wanted to ban alcohol.

Editorials not only expressed opinions, but explained church teachings on moral issues, feast days, sacred celebrations and the lives of saints. Rev. Norbert Schwinghammer, OSB, often submitted guest editorials on church teachings, relating them to daily living.

The importance of Catholic schools and the teaching of religion were continually emphasized. Parents were warned that children who lacked proper religious education could become delinquent. Readers were made aware of the importance of the Catholic Church as the one true church founded by Christ. They were cautioned to avoid getting caught up in modernism, which was condemned by Pope Pius X in 1907. Modernists were "freethinkers" who wanted to decide truth for themselves. One outcome of modernism was the evil of communism.

The Catholic Church had its share of critics and Hergott and Nenzel were staunch defenders of the divine institution. Hergott reminded the readership that the media, particularly the American media, was biased against the Catholic Church. He cited an example of this in the persecution of the church in Mexico, which was largely ignored by the American media. He was saddened by the death of Austria's chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, who was murdered in 1934 by Austrian Nazis. The Canadian media, Hergott said, portrayed Dollfuss as a dictator when he was actually a devout Christian who tried to keep the country out of the hands of racist extremists. Similarly, the media disregarded the atrocities commit-

ted against the church in the Spanish Civil War.

The *Prairie Messenger* emphasized the authority of the church as an essential moral and spiritual guide. The church hierarchy and church organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women's League, were praised for their roles in upholding church traditions.

The church hierarchy was held in high esteem and it was often the subject of headline stories that praised achievements of church officials. Front-page articles spoke of conversions to the church, the building of new churches, schools and other institutions. Stories brought forth the popularity of church missions, pilgrimages and rosary crusades.

The term "new social order" became part of the discussion among world leaders involved in rebuilding Europe after the Second World War. Hergott and Nenzel explained that the groundwork for a new social order was outlined in papal encyclicals. The editors supported the proposal of a more universal health care system in Canada, as well as co-operative movements.

The 1950s brought a stronger economy and a new wave of optimism in Canada where dioceses fundraised to build new Catholic schools, hospitals and nursing homes. Church attendance was strong and pilgrimages and rosary crusades were popular. Church leadership was looked upon as a moral guide and it began to address new moral issues such as euthanasia and mercy killing. Pope Pius XII worked tirelessly to promote peace as fear of an atomic war arose between countries allied with the United States and Soviet Union. The issue of modernism continued to manifest itself in the media through immoral reading material and movies.

The *Prairie Messenger* continued to appeal to the family. Pages were set aside for local church and community news, and news briefs with national and international news. Feature articles explained church teachings and gave advice on family life. Youth pages included pious stories of saints and articles on Christian living. Special feature articles and editorials instructed youth on proper conduct and moral living. Teenagers were encouraged to write letters to ask questions, which were answered by someone named "Brother Ben."

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# Vatican and China: making the best of a bad situation

By Thomas Reese, SJ  
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For the Vatican, negotiating with China is like negotiating with someone who has a gun to your head. Or perhaps the better comparison is that it is like being a hostage negotiator with no police backup.

The bottom line is that Chinese government can do whatever it wants to the Catholic Church in China, and no one can do anything about it. The job of Vatican diplomats, like Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, is to make the best of a bad situation.

Conservatives who opine from their comfortable offices in the United States demand that the Vatican not talk with oppressive regimes like China, especially about the appointment of Catholic bishops — now under discussion again. But those critics are not responsible for protecting the Christian flock from wolves. They talk with impunity about principles but refuse to recognize that the church has to live in the real world.

I might add that many of these ideologues prophesied that capitalism and foreign investment would bring democracy and human rights to China. Didn't happen. Investors do not care about human rights. They only care about profits.

*Reese is a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, but the views expressed in this column do not necessarily represent the views of the commission.*



CNS/How Hwee Young, EPA

**VATICAN AND CHINA — A girl reads a Bible during mass in the state-approved Xuanwumen Catholic Church in Beijing, China, in this 2016 photo. The Vatican has been in negotiations with China over the appointment of bishops.**

These same ideologues opposed Pope Paul VI's attempt to negotiate with communist governments in eastern Europe. They also opposed Vatican negotiations with Cuba and Vietnam. Yet in all these places, the church is better off today than it was in the past. Improvements do not normally come through revolution; often they come through incremental change over time.

The Vatican has hundreds of years of experience negotiating with bad governments. Its principal goal is the survival and welfare of the church. I will not

argue that it always gets it right, but those who think it is the job of the Vatican to lead its flock to martyrdom should volunteer to get in the front of the line.

Besides ivory-tower ideologues, there are also expatriates who oppose any compromise or reconciliation with their former countries. These expatriates often had to flee their countries where they had suffered persecution. They offer an important voice for the voiceless in countries like Cuba and Vietnam. Often, they are critical of the Vatican and local Catholic bishops for trying to deal with these governments.

It is difficult to argue with people who bear the scars of persecution, but they cannot be seen as a morally superior voice simply because they argue for a tougher line. They are now safe. Those still in their old countries must find ways to survive, even if this means compromising with the regime.

There are also Catholics in China who have suffered persecution because of their faithfulness to Rome and are now confused and upset by the Vatican's attempt to make peace with the government. These are true martyrs. To think that the Vatican is not sympathetic to these people is absurd. But not everyone is called to be a martyr. If all the Christians had marched into the Coliseum, there would be no Christians today.

The Vatican's job is to make martyrdom unnecessary wherever possible. This is why negotiations are conducted by diplomats, not saints or martyrs.

It is clear that the Chinese authorities fear any group that they cannot control, and this especially applies to religious groups, whose leaders often have more credibility with the people than local officials. China has a history of religious groups leading revolutions. It is especially fearful of religious groups with foreign ties, and that makes the Catholic Church scary to China. After all, it saw what St. John Paul II did in eastern Europe.

The authorities want religion with "Chinese characteristics," which means a religion with local

leaders who support the government.

The critical issue in the negotiations between the Vatican and China has always been the selection of bishops. The Vatican has fought with governments over the selection of bishops for centuries. In ancient time, bishops were elected by the people or priests of a diocese, but local thugs (a.k.a. nobles) would sometimes disrupt the elections with threats and violence. This was especially true when the church was wealthy. Sadly, sometimes the right to appoint bishops

was granted to kings or nobles in return for favours to the church.

All of that came to a crashing end thanks to Napoleon, who unseated the Catholic monarchs of Europe. Church reformers in the 19th and 20th centuries fought more or less successfully to wrestle the selection of bishops away from secular governments and put it in the hands of the pope, who would be more concerned for the good of the church than kings and politicians. In about a dozen countries, the civil government still has the right of consultation or even presentation for episcopal appointments.

But authoritarian governments always want a say in the appointment of bishops because they fear their influence with the people. Sometimes governments demand a veto over the appointment of bishops. Sometimes the Vatican bypasses its first choice because it knows the appointment would cause problems with the government.

In some cases, the Vatican has to negotiate with such governments until an acceptable candidate is found. Obviously, a priest who advocates for democracy and human rights would not be welcomed by authoritarian governments. They prefer weak leaders who stay in the sacristy. They will allow freedom of worship, but not freedom to preach against corruption and abuse of power or in support of democracy and human rights.

The Vatican could make a fuss with the media, but one diplomat negotiating with Vietnam was warned that the Vatican might get news coverage for 48 hours, but afterward, it would still have to deal with the Vietnamese government.

I have been hearing rumours of a deal between the Vatican and China on and off again for at least 20 years. Usually, nothing happens.

This year the rumours are more specific, with the Vatican appearing to be willing to accept seven bishops from the Chinese government-sponsored Patriotic Association, of whom two would replace bishops loyal to Rome. One of these loyal bishops is 85,

way past the retirement age of 75. The Vatican under Popes John Paul and Benedict XVI together accepted 45 state-sponsored bishops, so what it is doing today is not that revolutionary.

While some object to accepting these bishops back into the fold, Giuseppe Wei Jingyi, bishop of the Diocese of Qiqihar, told Vatican Insider that "we know that the pope is a father, and the illegitimate bishops are like the prodigal son, they made mistakes and left home. When the son repents, and asks to return to his father, may there be any reason for the father to refuse forgiveness? On the contrary, the father had been waiting a long time for his return."

It is not clear what the Vatican is getting in return, but if it is getting government recognition of bishops from the underground church, that would be huge progress. About 70 bishops have already been recognized by both the Vatican and the government.

For the Vatican, another priority is healing the rift between those Catholics who have been subservient to the government and those who have been loyal to the pope. The longer this split continues, the harder it will be to heal. Most of those who split from Rome did so under pressure or out of expediency. Pope Francis speaks of the church as a field hospital, and few need this hospital more than the Catholics of China, who sorely need healing and reconciliation.

It would be great if the Catholic Church in China could be a voice for democracy and human rights, but while that might be the prophetic vocation of a few, like Hong Kong Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, it is unrealistic to think that the institutional church could be that voice today.

Bishop Joseph Jingyi Wei, who was secretly ordained in 1995, told Vatican Insider that no matter how relations between China and the Vatican end, he will follow the pope.

To those attacking the Vatican initiative he said, "I wholeheartedly beg our friends outside of mainland China, including those from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and all the other continents, please not to speak on our behalf, do not insist on speaking in our place, do not speak on behalf of the clandestine church. I ask you for it is not you who can represent the underground church in China."

"In the present situation in the People's Republic of China," he argues, "no one can claim they represent the underground church."

At the same time, he acknowledges that "(t)he situation around us is not optimal, far from it, and that worries so many people. But even now our help comes from the Lord."

Whatever the deal the Vatican is able to make, only time will tell whether it leads to improvement for the life of the church. Critics should back off and let the diplomats do their work. If they fail, China will continue to be a church of martyrs. If they succeed, things could become incrementally better over time. Let's hope and pray that the Vatican diplomats can make the best of a bad situation.

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Billy Graham dies at age 99

One of the most famous evangelists of the 20th century has died. Billy Graham passed away early Feb. 21 at his home in Montreat, N.C., according to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He was 99.

The Southern Baptist minister became known for his crusades — revival meetings, often held in large stadiums — that took him to more than 185 countries to preach the message of Jesus Christ and invite people to accept Jesus as their Lord and saviour. In 1957, he filled New York’s Madison Square Garden for 16 consecutive weeks.

The outreach of his preaching ministry rivalled that of Pope John Paul II. Graham reached at least 210 million people through his personal appearances and through his radio and television ministries. In 1950, he launched his weekly “Hour of Decision” radio program that became a staple of Christian broadcasting for 60 years.

He reached many more through his films, more than two dozen books, an internationally syndicated newspaper column, “My Answer,” and a monthly magazine, *Decision*, which comes out in six languages and has more than two million subscribers.

His 1975 book, *Angels: God’s Secret Agents*, sold more than a million copies in three months. He wrote more than 30 books, starting in 1947 with *Calling Youth to Christ* and ending in 2015 with *Where I Am: Heaven, Eternity and Our Life Beyond*.

Respect was shown him both during his lifetime and when he died. He appeared on the Gallup list of the world’s most admired men 60 times in his life — every year the polling company asked the question.

Graham was “a preacher of God’s word not only in his sermons, but also in the very life he lived,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-

Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. “His faith and integrity invited countless thousands around the world into a closer relationship with our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for the ministry of Billy Graham.”

Bishop Peter J. Jugis of Charlotte, where Graham was born, commented: “Through his ministry, Graham taught the world that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. May the Father of mercies now receive Dr. Graham into his loving embrace. The condolences and prayers of the Catholic Church are with the Graham family at this time.”

Graham’s ecumenical approach in ministry “helped to forge bonds of friendship and understanding between Catholics and Protestants,” said Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, Pa. “He reminded us that what we had in common in Christ was greater than what divided us.”

It is worth noting that it was a Benedictine Abbey in North Carolina that initiated Graham into his relationship with Catholics — a relationship that led to several visits with Pope John Paul II. As reported on page 2, Belmont Abbey invited Graham to its college in 1967 to give a talk and to present him with an honorary degree.

This was the era after the Second Vatican Council, when other Benedictine abbeys were also promoting the ecumenical initiatives of the council. St. John’s Abbey in Minnesota, for example, built a centre for ecumenical scholars that has an international reputation today.

The late Benedictine Father John Oetgen, a past president of Belmont College, had a groundbreaking idea. He wanted to put the small, unimposing college on the map by inviting the extremely popular evangelist to his school. Graham accepted, and drew a huge crowd. The Baptist preacher said he had never before been invited to speak at a Catholic institution.

He commented at the time that 10 years earlier Protestants and Catholics could not “meet together and greet each other as brothers.”

Graham welcomed representatives of other denominations, including Catholics, to attend his crusades. In many places local Catholic authorities welcomed him and formed pastoral followup programs to welcome lapsed Catholics who were prompted by the preacher to return to the church.

In 1964, Cardinal Richard J. Cushing of Boston said that no Catholic who heard Graham preach “can do anything but become a better Catholic.”

Besides his openness to the ecumenical movement, Graham also crossed the racial divide in America. He was a friend of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., held integrated rallies beginning in 1953 and was considered a major influence in the civil rights movement.

Among the awards Graham received in his lifetime were numerous honorary doctorates and a wide range of religious, humanitarian and broadcasting honours. They include the prestigious Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in Religion, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

In the 2000 Jubilee Year celebrations, Pope John Paul II asked churches to remember witnesses of the Christian faith, especially martyrs from all denominations: Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant. He broadened the appeal to include teachers of the faith. In his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* he wrote, “Perhaps the most convincing form of ecumenism is the ecumenism of the saints and martyrs” (37).

In an age of televangelism, Graham has left a legacy of teaching the faith, living the faith and inviting believers and non-believers alike to fullness of life in Jesus Christ. — PWN

Essential elements of church teaching ignored by many Catholics

Soul Mending

Yvonne A. Zarowny



“Whatever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers you do to me.” — Matthew 25:40

“In order to overcome the misguided mechanisms — and replace them with new ones which will be more just and in conformity with the common good of humanity — an effective political will is needed.”

— St. John Paul; 1987 *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (SRS) (“Concern of the Church for the Social Order,” 35)

Building “an effective political will” capable of moving our culture of death toward a variety of authentically sustainable cultures of life which enable all God’s children life *with* dignity is what the “new evangelization” was supposed to be about.

Why these constitutive (essential, not optional) elements of our Official Teachings of the Church (OTC) are not part of every Catholic faith formation activity — formal or informal — has long mystified me.

No more. They exist and are on the Internet.

In his oft misrepresented 1991 *Centesimus Annus* St. John Paul states:

“After the Second World War, she (the church), put the *dignity* of the person at the centre — insisting that material goods were meant for all, and the social order ought to be *free of oppression* and based on co-operation and solidarity” (61).

This was to be the criteria to evaluate the *actual* realities flow-

ing from our social structures.

He raised to the our highest level of teachings, the “ecological” question — the inter-relatedness of all social issues — while denouncing as *idolatry* the “worship” of money, ideology, class and technology (SRS 37).

He makes clear, as do Popes Benedict and Francis, that a social order requiring leaders to prostitute a people’s well-being to attract “investment” or “jobs” is oppressive and is a “modern imperialism” (neo-colonialism).

None of this appears on EWTN’s “God and Creation” or Pro-life tabs.

EWTN, a privately funded Catholic global media conglomerate, receives financing from the K of C Supreme Council as well as “top tier” Catholics associated with Tim and Steph Busch. In the 1980’s the Vatican was essentially broke for a variety of reasons (The Vatican’s Finances [Fortune, 1987] online).

The reported fear of some cardinals, including Canada’s Cardinal

Carter, that appealing to wealthy Catholics for help would “give undue power and sway to a few rich people” is what happened — even though the cardinals tried to structure the appeal so it wouldn’t.

Assistance was requested to balance the Vatican’s budget and assist in educating the faithful for the “new evangelization.”

My unpacking the existence and activities of a tiny group of self-described “top-tier” (i.e., multimillionaire) Catholics last fall goes a long ways to removing my mystification.

They are *part* of the multifaceted, integrated *stealth* network using strategies developed in the 1940s, mushroomed in the 1970s, and refined ever since to *impose* on

us and the world an understanding of our human nature, God, what our faith requires of us, the root causes of the numerous life-threatening challenges generated by our social structures and possible solutions to those challenges.

The best source I know on this, including who funded what, when and why, is John Blundell’s 1990 “Waging the War of Ideas.” This nine-page paper for the Heritage Foundation is online.

His short 2001 book (same name) does not “begin at the beginning” as

does the paper.

Blundell’s paper and book help show how an ideology based on fantasy is being surreptitiously spread around earth, who paid for it and why.

This *self-serving* ideology was marketed as being “morally superior and more economically efficient” to other ways of organizing to enable all life with dignity as a means to reduce poverty, environmental devastation, wars, crime and demand for abortion.

Hayek’s War of Ideas morphed into the culture wars.

So began the fragmenting of faith communities and societies to inhibit the growth of “effective political will” to transform our structures in response to the life-

denying realities that the social, earth and cosmic sciences was revealing.

In his paper, Blundell states: influencing those who “translate and transmit ideas” to the broader public “*is critically important*.” “He is the filter who decides *what* we hear, *when* we hear it, and *how* we hear it.”

Blundell, himself a free market ideologue, amongst other things, was president of the Institute for Humane Studies, president of the Charles G. Koch and Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundations, director general of the London’s Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), president of the Atlas

— SUPER RICH, page 15



CNS/Shannon Stapleton, Reuters

**NEW YORK DACA DEMONSTRATORS** — Activists and DACA recipients are seen in New York City Feb. 15. The group is walking 400 kilometres to Washington to demand Congress pass a “clean” bill with no conditions to save the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, such as the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act.



Sunday mass is a serious obligation for Catholics

**The Editor:** I value the wonderful insights of Rev. Ron Rolheiser which appear in the *Prairie Messenger*. Two of his more recent articles were critical of Catholic clergy who preach to the seriousness of missing Sunday mass — such as being potentially damned — which, if I understood correctly, Rolheiser describes as creating fear of a judgmental God which is incompatible with the merciful and forgiving Jesus portrayed in the Gospels.

But if we fail to take our Sunday mass obligation seriously aren't we in effect trivializing the mercy of God offered in the guidance of his church and in the mass? Jesus told his friends: "Do this in memory of Me" for a reason. I think because he also tells us that apart from him and his church we can do nothing. And he also says, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have

life within you" and "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."

Surely then it is an act of mercy when priests remind their flock about the gravity of missing Sunday mass — separation from his life offered to us in the church and the mass — even in this life. And isn't being separated from God the definition of damnation?

— **Paul Burgoyne, Roseisle, Man.**

Super rich influence Catholic thinking

Continued from page 14

Economic Research Foundation, director of the International Policy Network and the State Policy Network.

He aided in co-founding Vancouver's Fraser Institute (1971) — the first export of the IEA.

It and the others set up were successful in impacting public opinion and inhibiting the growth of *effective* political will in response to the sciences.

That is the context into which Mayer's 2016 "Dark Money," MacLean's 2017 "Democracy in Chains" and the unpacking of some top-tier Catholics being part of these stealth multi-faceted networks needs to be understood.

Only then will we be able to be the effective "unified force for good" our OTC call us to be.

Why care?

It reaches into the heart of each and every one of us, our parishes, and societies.

An exchange I witnessed at "after mass coffee" the Sunday after Oxfam International released its 2018 report on inequality (online) illustrates this.

One parishioner brought up the report and how 2017 has been

another good year for multimillionaires and billionaires. Of the wealth generated, 82 per cent went to the wealthiest one per cent. Meanwhile, the trend of increasingly few super-rich controlling wealth equal to that of the poorest 50 per cent of humanity (3.5 billion people) continued.

In 2009 there were 380 people; in 2016 there were 61; and in 2017 there were 42.

This was countered by an equally well-intentioned parishioner (a Knight and EWTN subscriber) stating inequality is not the same as poverty (which it isn't) and that between 1990 - 2010 the number of people living in extreme poverty (i.e., less than \$1.90/day) halved (which it did).

The building of an *effective* political will capable of transforming our culture of death into a variety of authentic cultures of life — stymied.

I went home, googled the report, and there it was.

The Acton Institute's Rev. Ben Johnson's blog on the five biggest problems with the Oxfam Report accuses "the poverty industry" of "reorienting the storyline from poverty relief to reduction of inequality." He ridicules Oxfam's

methodology.

There is no mention of the violation of the dignity of the women working in the U.S. poultry industry having to wear "nappies" because they are not allowed bathroom breaks.

No mention of the breakdown of families in Vietnam and elsewhere because workers need to be away from their families for long periods in order to work.

And no mention of the reality of free market economies assigning effective political power on the basis of one vote/dollar as if distributed on the basis of one vote/adult citizen with easy access to peer-reviewed science would most likely result in very different social structures.

America's Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, Canada's Cardus, the U.K.'s Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics and others are part of the massive set of mutually complimentary networks whose setup Blundell helped facilitate.

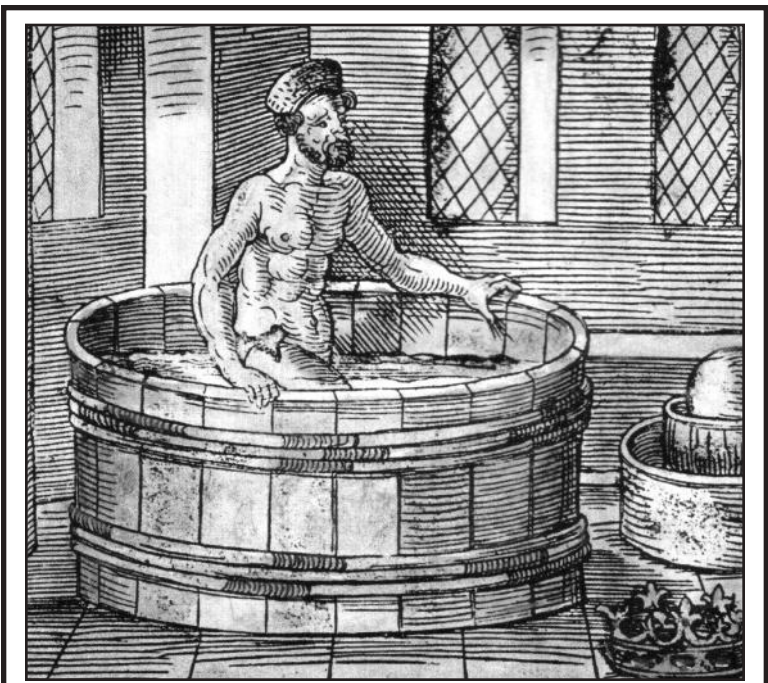
I don't know if Tim and Steph Busch et al or the KC Supreme Council are aware they are players in this "war of ideas" actively promoting social structures generating realities the opposite of what our faith and OTC require.

Carl Anderson's 2008 "A Civilization of Love" and his 2010 "Beyond a House Divided," as well as articles and interviews with Tim and Steph Busch, particularly Busch's 2015 article in The Wall Street Journal "Teaching Capitalism to Catholics" (online), reflect close connection to the above-mentioned, multi-dimensional *stealth* network set up by some super-rich.

And I know there is not a single parishioner in my parish who would knowingly contribute to our culture of death — including all of the Knights of Columbus and EWTN subscribers.

Fortunately, since the end of the Second World War, we have had everything we need, except effective political will, to co-create *with* Spirit and each other a variety of authentic cultures of life.

How to do that will be the subject of my Easter and last column for the *Prairie Messenger*.



Archimedes

He ran out in the buff hollering "Eureka!" for he had found that buoyant force pushed up.

By Seb Koh

www.prairiemessenger.ca

Prayer and sacraments give courage, wisdom and grace

Continued from page 1

The only way forward is to face one's fears head on, identify them clearly and come to terms with them, he said, "so as not to find yourself wasting time and energy by being gripped by empty and faceless ghosts."

People have to act, which requires faith in God and his grace, otherwise fear and doubt will make people "become inward-looking and closed off to defend ourselves from everything and everyone, and we will remain paralyzed," he said.

The pope told young people to look for God in prayerful silence and the sacraments so they could draw on the needed courage, wisdom and grace, and to turn to members of the church for encouragement and support.

God is always there to help everybody, he said. He does not ask people to present a stellar resumé of their lives, "full of merits and successes."

Receiving God's grace will not mean life's problems will disappear, he said, "but it does have the power to transform our life deeply."

"The unknown that tomorrow holds for us is not a dark threat we need to overcome, but a favourable time given to us for living out the uniqueness of our personal vocation, and for sharing it with our brothers and sisters in the church and in the world," he said.

Being with others on life's journey is always key, he said, because it helps unlock one's own gifts, inspires dreams and opens new horizons.

"Never lose the enthusiasm of enjoying others' company and friendship, as well as the pleasure of dreaming together, of walking together," he said.

That is why it is so important young people break out of the "darkness of closed room" and the virtual world so as to experience meaningful relationships with real people, he said.

Pope Francis called on adults in the Catholic Church to have courage, too, and give young people "important responsibilities."

"Young people need to know that someone truly believes in you," he said. "Please know that the pope has confidence in you, that the church has confidence in you! For your part, have confidence in the church!"

"In the sacred Scriptures the expression 'do not be afraid' is repeated 365 times with different variations, as if to tell us that the Lord wants us to be free from fear, every day of the year," he said.

The Catholic Church's annual gathering of World Youth Day "is for the courageous! Not for young people who are searching only for comfort and who withdraw whenever difficulties arise," the pope said. "Do you accept the challenge?"

**A message to our subscribers . . .**

As most readers of the *Prairie Messenger* are aware, we will cease publication in May 2018.

For those subscribers who would normally receive a renewal notice during the months of February, March and April, we wish to assure you that you will continue to receive your copy of the *Prairie Messenger*. Renewal notices will not be sent out. Your previous support on our subscription list guarantees your copy until we cease publication.

For any readers who are interested in a new subscription until May 9, 2018 (our closure), we will charge a fee of \$15 to help offset administration and mailing costs. [pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca](mailto:pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca)

We are humbled by the outpouring of support for the *Prairie Messenger*. Although this support cannot change the decision made by the Benedictine community to cease publication, it encourages our efforts to continue in our mission to deliver the Good News.



# Christian leaders shut Church of Holy Sepulcher

By Judith Sudilovsky

JERUSALEM (CNS) — Protesting several recent actions they described as a “systematic campaign . . . against the churches and the Christian community in the Holy Land,” the heads of Christian churches announced Feb. 25 they were closing the doors of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for an undisclosed period of time.

Bewildered pilgrims milled around the square in front of the church as Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III — flanked by Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, custos of the Holy Land, and Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian — read a short statement to the press. At the same time, the only two people allowed to close the doors — the Muslim custodian of the key, Adeeb Jawad Joudeh Al Hussein, and Muslim door keeper Wajeeh Nuseibeh — closed and locked the doors.

“This systematic and unprecedented attack against Christians in the Holy Land severely violates the most basic . . . and sovereign rights, trampling on the delicate fabric of relations between the Christian community and the authorities for decades,” the heads of churches said in their statement.

The church leaders were protesting the Jerusalem municipality’s intention to impose prop-

erty taxes on church property, such as hotels and convention centres, not used for worship purposes. The proposal to levy taxes on some properties would run contrary to the unofficial historical tax-exempt status the churches have enjoyed for centuries.

In addition, the church leaders said they oppose a bill in the Israeli parliament that would limit the ability to sell church-owned land to private owners. The bill, whose vote was postponed following the church protest, would be specifically detrimental to the Greek Orthodox Church, which owns large tracts of land in central Jerusalem upon which many private homes are built; many of those 99-year-old building rental contracts will soon expire. The church already has sold some of the land to private owners, and homeowners whose apartments are on the land worry about losing their homes.

Rachel Azaria, the member of Parliament who sponsored the bill, said it is not meant to affect what the church can do with its property, but what happens when the land rights are sold to a third party.

As media gathered to hear the church leaders, pilgrims wandered around the church square, some kneeling in front of the massive wooden doors — the closest they would come to entering the church. “We had one shot,” said Flavia

Falcone, 25, an Italian Catholic living in Poland, who had come to Israel for four days. “This was a bad decision. Faith and politics are two different things. I came here all this way to see the church and I find it closed. It is not very pleasant.”

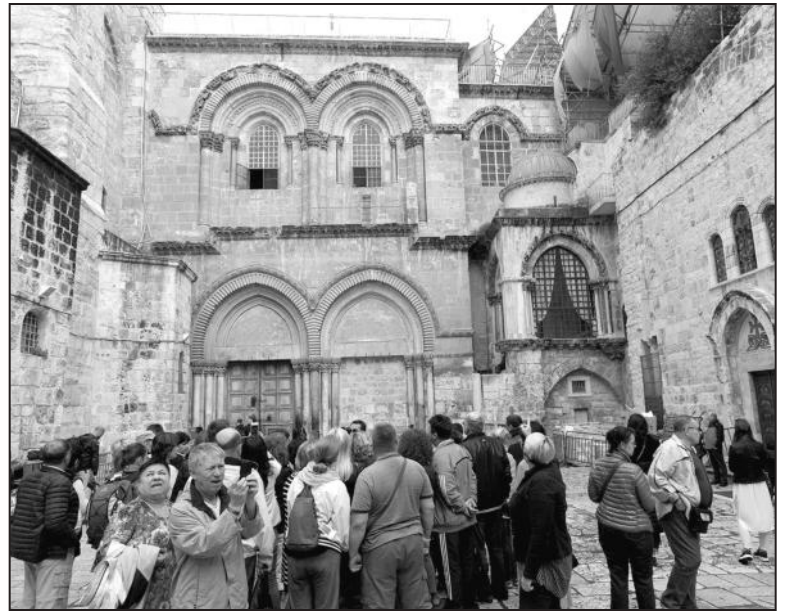
It is only the second time the doors to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher have been closed in the middle of the day, other than for traditional religious ceremonies. The other time was 20 years ago, when a visitor to the church began taking down crosses and candles, said Nuseibeh.

The church leaders said taxing commercial properties decreases revenues for the church’s good works and breaches “existing agreements and international obligations which guarantee the rights and the privileges of the churches, in what seems as attempt to weaken the Christian presence in Jerusalem.”

“The greatest victims in this are those impoverished families who will go without food and housing, as well as the children who will be unable to attend school,” they said.

In early February, the Jerusalem municipality announced it would begin collecting \$186.4 million in property taxes from some 887 church-owned properties that were not houses of prayer.

Patriarch Theophilos has trav-



CNS/Debbie Hill

**HOLY SEPULCHER CHURCH CLOSED** — Tourists stand outside the locked doors of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher Feb. 26 in Jerusalem’s Old City. Protesting several recent actions they described as a “systematic campaign against the churches and the Christian community in the Holy Land,” the heads of Christian churches announced Feb. 25 they were closing of the doors of the church.

elled to meet world leaders, including Pope Francis, on the legislative issue.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat went on social media in response

to the Feb. 25 protest, clarifying that there was no intention to tax places of worship, but rather church businesses such as hotels and conference halls.

## Serving isolated parishes may involve married men

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The idea of exceptionally ordaining older married men of proven virtue to celebrate the eucharist in isolated Catholic communities is something that should be discussed, said Cardinal Beniamino Stella, prefect of the Congregation for Clergy.

“It is not about being in favour of or against something, but about attentively evaluating various possibilities without being closed or rigid,” the cardinal said in a new book in Italian, *Tutti gli Uomini di Francesco* (“All Francis’ Men”) released Jan. 22 by Edizioni San Paolo.

The book, by Italian journalist Fabio Marchese Ragona, includes interviews with churchmen named to the College of Cardinals by Pope Francis.

Pope Francis was asked by the German newspaper *Die Zeit* last year about whether, in the Latin-rite church, he could see allowing married “*virī probati*” — men of proven virtue — to become priests.

“We have to study whether ‘*virī probati*’ are a possibility. We then also need to determine which tasks they could take on, such as in remote communities, for example,” Pope Francis said.

The issue is expected to come up in the 2019 special gathering of the Synod of Bishops to study questions related to the church’s pastoral work in the Amazon. Already at synods in 1990 on the priesthood and 2005 on the eucharist some bishops — especially from Brazil’s Amazon region — suggested ordaining married

men as the only way to ensure Catholics in isolated villages could receive the eucharist regularly.

Stella said that in the Amazon or in some remote Pacific islands, “but not only, there is acute suffering because of a real ‘sacramental emergency,’ which the few priests present are not able to accommodate.”

The discussion Pope Francis wants the church to have, he said, is to look seriously at all the options for responding to people’s real hunger for the eucharist and honouring its central place in the life of the church.

While the Catholic Church throughout the world, especially in the more secularized West, must improve its vocations work, Stella said, it also should study the possibilities and see if “the Spirit suggests something.”

One possibility to explore is the exceptional ordination of older married men in remote communities, he said. “Continuing to maintain their family and jobs and receiving a formation contextualized for their environment, they could offer part-time service to the community they come from in order to guarantee the sacraments, especially by presiding at the eucharistic celebration.”

But an “attentive study and a widespread ecclesial discernment” are necessary before moving in that direction, he said, adding that the ordination of elders in those cases would never mean changing the usual requirements for and ministry of priests in the Latin Rite and “in no way would lead to optional celibacy.”

## Chileans speak to Vatican abuse team

By Jane Chambers

SANTIAGO, Chile (CNS) — Chilean clergy sex abuse victims gave testimony to a Vatican team sent to investigate charges that church officials covered up the abuse.

But many of the victims gave their testimony to a Spanish-speaking Vatican official after the main Vatican envoy underwent emergency surgery.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta underwent emergency gallbladder surgery in Chile Feb. 21. The next day, on Twitter, the archbishop thanked “all those who have kindly expressed their support and generously offered

their prayers as I continue in my recovery. God bless!”

Scicluna decided to make the trip to Chile even though he was not feeling well. While listening to testimony Feb. 20, he started feeling worse, but was determined to finish the day. He went to the hospital for a checkup later that evening.

After Scicluna was hospitalized, Spanish Father Jordi Bertomeu Farnos, an official of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, continued hearing testimony. He also met with some Catholics from Osorno, a town in the south of Chile.

Abuse victims allege that

Osorno Bishop Juan Barros — then a priest — had witnessed their abuse by his mentor, Rev. Fernando Karadima. In 2011, Karadima was sentenced to a life of prayer and penance by the Vatican after he was found guilty of sexually abusing boys. Karadima denied the charges; he was not prosecuted civilly because the statute of limitations had run out.

The victims’ spokesperson, Juan Carlos Claret, said he was glad they could meet with Bertomeu.

“Unlike Scicluna, he’s a native Spanish speaker, so he doesn’t need a translator to help with our conversations,” Claret told Catholic News Service.

Claret said the controversy over Barros was dividing the Catholic community, and many people do not want a bishop they are convinced covered up for Karadima.

Pope Francis sent Scicluna and Bertomeu to Chile after a controversy that reignited during the papal visit to Chile in January. Speaking to reporters, Pope Francis supported Barros and said, “The day they bring me proof against Bishop Barros, I will speak. There is not one piece of evidence against him. It is calumny.”

He later apologized to victims and admitted that his choice of words wounded many.

After their meeting with the Spanish priest, Claret and the other members of his team said they were very pleased that they are finally getting a chance to be heard. He said they spoke about the atmosphere in Osorno and how it is affecting the people living there.



CNS/Jane Chambers

**PROTEST AGAINST BISHOP BARROS** — Parishioners from Osorno, Chile, protest Jan. 15 against Bishop Juan Barros of Osorno during Pope Francis’ visit to Santiago. Pope Francis asked Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta to investigate allegations that Barros covered up allegations of abuse committed by his former mentor, Rev. Fernando Karadima.

Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day saying “I’ll try again tomorrow.”

— Mary Anne Radmacher