



## Trends in religion

There's a bumpy but promising road ahead for Catholic education, according to Canadian pollster and sociologist Angus Reid,



who spoke at the Catholic Educators' Conference in Vancouver recently.  
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## Consecrated lives

A mass to celebrate the lives of men and women living a consecrated life in the Archdiocese of Regina was held in Holy Rosary Cathedral Feb. 12.  
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## Seventy years

Seventy years of witness and service by Sister Catherine Seemann, NDS, was celebrated at Trinity Manor in Saskatoon on the World Day of Consecrated Life, marked on the Feast of the Presentation.  
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## Parish visits

Archbishop Donald Bolen plans to celebrate mass in every one of the Regina archdiocese's 142 parishes, plus the missionary churches, including churches on First Nations reserves.  
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## Seeking truth

In a world of "post-truth politics," serious investigative journalism and documentary films committed to seeking the truth of the matter are more important than ever, says Gerald Schmitz. He reviews top documentary films from the Sundance festival.  
— page 9

## Winners and losers

"Our society tends to divide us up into winners and losers," writes Ron Rolheiser, OMI.



"Sadly, we don't often reflect on how this affects our relationships with each other, nor on what it means for us as Christians."  
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# Poor are not a nuisance, but a summons

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Without making room for God's word in their heart, people will never be able to welcome and love all human life, Pope Francis said.

"Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love," the pope said in his message for Lent, which began March 1 for Latin-rite Catholics.

"The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable," he wrote.

Released by the Vatican Feb. 7, the text of the pope's lenten message — titled "The Word is a gift. Other persons are gift" — focused on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in the Gospel of St. Luke (16:19-31).

The parable calls for sincere conversion, the pope said, and it "provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life."

In the Gospel account, Lazarus and his suffering are described in great detail. While he is "practically invisible to the rich man," the Gospel gives him a name and a face, upholding him as worthy, as "a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast," the pope wrote.

The parable shows that "a right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value," he said. "A poor person at the door of the rich is not a

nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change."

But in order to understand how to open one's heart and see the other as gift, a person must see how the word of God operates.

One way to do that, he said, is to be aware of the temptations and traps the rich man fell victim to, derailing his search for true happiness.

The nameless "rich man" lives an opulent, ostentatious life, the pope wrote, and his love of money leads to vanity and pride — "the lowest rung of this moral degradation."

"The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal," he said. "For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door."

Love of money, St. Paul warned, "is the root of all evils," and the pope said, it is also "the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion."

"Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity toward others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace," he added.

The rich man's eyes are finally opened after he and Lazarus are dead; Lazarus finds comfort in heaven and the rich man finds tor-

ment in "the netherworld," because, as Abraham explains, "a kind of fairness is restored" in the afterlife and "life's evils are balanced by good," the pope said.

The rich man then asks for an extraordinary sign — Lazarus coming back from the dead — to be given to his family members so they will repent and not make the same mistake as he.

But, Abraham said the people have plenty of teachings with "Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them," the pope said.

This explains what the real problem is for the rich man and those like him: "At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbour," the pope said.

The pope asked that Lent be a time "for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour."

"May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion,



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

**POPE MEETS RABBI SCHOLARS** — Pope Francis accepts an illustrated copy of the Torah from children during a meeting with Rabbi Abraham Skorka and an interreligious group of scholars at the Vatican Feb. 23. Skorka, rector of the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary and a longtime friend of the pope, led the group in presenting the Torah to the pope.

so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need," he said, especially by taking part in the various lenten campaigns sponsored by local churches.

# Meeting with imams may lead to national dialogue

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A Feb. 14 meeting with imams and bishops at the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops offices may lead to an ongoing national dialogue, said Bishop Claude Champagne.

Champagne said the commission "felt the need to explore a bilateral dialogue between Catholics and Muslim imams," and the goal of the meeting was to explore "if there's an openness to that."

"The climate was quite good," he said.

The bishops did not address the Islamophobia Motion M-103 now before the House of Commons, said the Edmundston bishop, who chairs the CCCB's Christian Unity, Religious Relations with the Jews, and Interfaith Dialogue commission.

Instead, the meeting examined how the two religious communities could support each other and work together on projects such as the recent interfaith collaboration opposing euthanasia and assisted suicide.

"At the end of the meeting, we were in position to recommend to the executive and the Permanent Council to develop that dialogue between Catholic bishops and imams," Champagne said.

Five bishops from the commission met for lunch and discussion with five imams from the Canadian Council of Imams. Four drove to Ottawa in a snowstorm; the fifth came from Ottawa. Next time, the bishops hope to include imams from other cities in Canada. "For us, we would like it to be a national dialogue," Champagne said.

The meeting had been organized well before the Jan. 29 shooting at a Quebec mosque that killed six men and injured many more. It did give the bishops a chance to offer their condolences and support to the Muslim religious leaders.



Rene Laprise/CCCB

**MUSLIM-CATHOLIC DIALOGUE** — Five imams and five Catholic bishops took part in a meeting at the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops secretariat in Ottawa Feb. 14.

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# Vatican, Al-Azhar urge halt to religious extremism

CAIRO (CNS) — The Vatican and Al-Azhar University, Sunni Islam’s leading institution of higher learning, called for the world’s governments, organizations and leaders to co-operate with each other in countering extremist and violent groups, noting that such groups “have negatively impacted stability and peaceful coexistence among peoples.”

In the final statement after a Feb. 22 - 23 symposium at the Cairo university, representatives of al-Azhar and the Vatican called for finding realistic ways to fight terrorism and terrorist organizations: cutting off resources, including money and weapons, or closing down social communications that spread extremist ideologies to young people.

They also called for eliminating the “spirit of hatred and animosity for religions and defaming reli-



**VATICAN MUSLIM TALKS —** Representatives of the Vatican and Al-Azhar University, Sunni Islam’s highest centre of learning, meet at the Vatican Feb. 23 to discuss practical ways to stop terrorism and religious extremism. Second from left is Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, head of the Vatican delegation.

gious symbols, since these are hostile actions.”

The joint statement pointed to

political abuse of religion and incorrect understanding of religious texts.”

Leaders must pay attention to issues that concern young people and open dialogue with them, explaining true concepts of religions. The statement advocated an educational curriculum “that establishes the common human values, taking into consideration women and youth issues and bearing the responsibility of caring for children.” It also stressed the need for mercy, love and for respecting “other official values” in countering extremism, violence and intolerance. It rejected “all forms of fanaticism, extremism and violence.”

The symposium concluded on the vigil of the anniversary of the visit of St. John Paul II to Al-Azhar in 2000.

Maronite Father Fadi Daou, chair of Adyan, a foundation for interfaith studies and spiritual solidarity based in Lebanon, told the symposium that Pope Francis “is continuously affirming the double responsibility of all believers to delegitimize religious violence, on the one hand, and to engage in limiting its effect and build peace on the other hand.”

“As strongly stated by Pope Francis, every religion can and should be a source for peace and coexistence; yet any religion can be used for violence legitimization,” Daou added.

He emphasized that the consideration should not be which religion “is more peaceful than the other,” but rather, “how we can,

together, make our world and life more peaceful by preventing the manipulation of religion.”

“Religions should be together, against violence and discrimination, but more efficiently to be together, too, for social justice, human rights, freedoms and especially freedom of religion and belief, inclusive citizenship and coexistence,” Daou said.



**NORMA MCCORVEY —** Norma McCorvey, the anonymous plaintiff known as Jane Roe in the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark 1973 Roe vs. Wade ruling legalizing abortion in the United States, died Feb. 18 at age 69. She is pictured in a 2005 photo.

## Greed, selfishness corrupt beauty of creation

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Humanity’s greed and selfishness can turn creation into a sad and desolate world instead of the sign of God’s love that it was meant to be, Pope Francis said.

Human beings are often tempted to view creation as “a possession we can exploit as we please and for which we do not have to answer to anyone,” the pope said Feb. 22 at his weekly general audience.

“When carried away by selfishness, human beings end up ruining even the most beautiful things that have been entrusted to them,” the pope said.

As an early sign of spring, the audience was held in St. Peter’s Square for the first time since November. Despite the chilly morning temperatures, the pope made the rounds in his popemobile, greeting pilgrims and kissing

bundled-up infants.

Continuing his series of talks on Christian hope, the pope reflected on St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, which expresses the hope “that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption.”

St. Paul, the pope said, reminds Christians that creation is a “marvellous gift that God has placed in our hands.”

Through this gift, he said, “we can enter into a relationship with him and recognize the imprint of his loving plan, which we are all called to achieve together.”

Sin, however, breaks communion not only with God but with his creation, “thus making it a slave, submissive to our frailty,” the pope said.

“Think about water. Water is a beautiful thing; it is so important. Water gives us life and it helps us in everything. But when minerals are exploited, water is contaminated and creation is destroyed and dirtied. This is just one example; there are many,” he said, departing from his prepared remarks.

When people break their relationship with creation, they not only lose their original beauty, he said, but they also “disfigure everything surrounding them,” causing a reminder of God’s love to become a bleak sign of pride and greed.

St. Paul tells believers that hope comes from knowing that God in his mercy wants to heal the “wounded and humbled hearts” of all men and women and, through them, “regenerate a new world and a new humanity, reconciled in his love,” Pope Francis said.

“The Holy Spirit sees beyond the neg-

ative appearances for us and reveals to us the new heavens and the new earth that the Lord is preparing for humanity,” the pope said.

“This is the content of our hope. A Christian does not live outside of the world; he knows how to recognize the signs of evil, selfishness and sin in his own life and in what surrounds him,” he said. “But at the same time, a Christian has learned to read all of this with the eyes of Easter, with the eyes of the risen Christ.”

## Leadership on abuse was ‘catastrophic’

SYDNEY (CNS) — Five Australian archbishops testified before a government commission on child sexual abuse, reiterating apologies and taking responsibility for actions that occurred before they were church leaders.

They also said they believed the culture of church and society had changed enough that it would help such abuse from occurring in the future.

The abuse of children in the church was “a catastrophic failure in many respects, but primarily in leadership,” Archbishop Timothy Costelloe of Perth told the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Feb. 23, near the end of three weeks of public hearings.

Gail Furness, the counsel assisting the commission, asked four other archbishops if they concurred with the assessment, and all agreed.

The commission is wrapping up more than three years of investigation into the Australian Catholic Church’s response to child sexual abuse. During the initial hearings Feb. 6, the commission reported on summary data showing that between January 1980 and February 2015, 4,444 people made allegations of child sexual abuse that related to more than 1,000 institutions. The statistics did not differentiate between allegations and proven cases.

“Precisely because we have failed so badly, our society has a right to expect us to do what we

can to contribute to a solution, if we can,” Costelloe said. “I mean, there may be many people who would think that our record and our reputation is so damaged that we have nothing to offer, and I would understand that, but I think that, tragically and unfortunately, we have learned an awful lot about this terrible scourge.”

Costelloe — along with Archbishops Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, Denis Hart of Melbourne, Anthony Fisher of Sydney and Philip Wilson of Adelaide — told the commission about times they had apologized for the church’s actions and what steps had been taken in their archdiocese to ensure such abuse did not occur.

But they also spoke of times they had spent listening to victims, often under the protocols set up in the bishops’ 1996 document, Towards Healing.

One of the recurring questions in three weeks of public hearing has been how the abuse could have happened on such a massive scale without people being aware of it.

“Part of the difficulty that we’ve had in responding to this crisis about sexual abuse was simply based on the fact that people just didn’t know and understand what they were dealing with,” said Wilson. “I don’t think they really understood the nature of sexual abuse of children and the effect that it had on the children.”

“I think there were people that were just like rabbits in the headlights,” said Fisher. “They just had

no idea what to do, and their performance was appalling.”

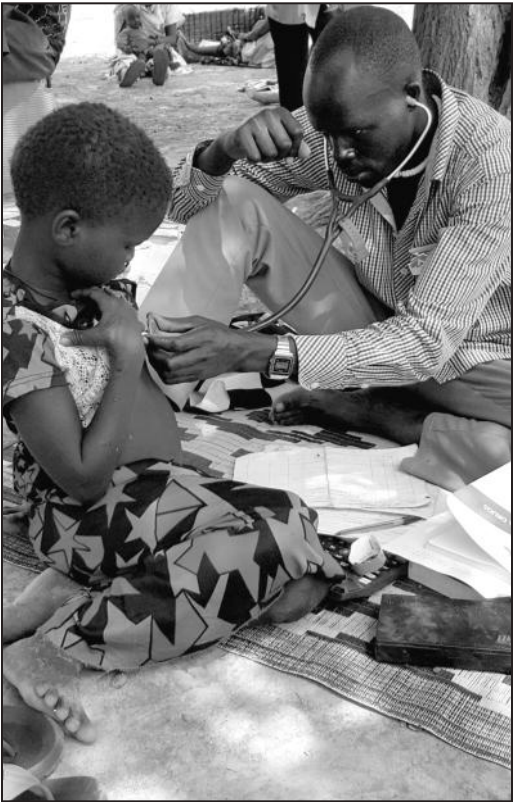
Costelloe reiterated earlier testimony that, in the past, the church “was a law unto itself, that it was somehow or other so special and so unique and, in a sense, so important that it stood aside from the normal things” that would exist in society. That kind of culture often trickled down to priests in parishes, he said.

Hart said bishops operated differently in past decades.

“They just sort of floated above it, and it just didn’t — you know, the awful reality of these crimes didn’t make contact with them,” he said. “I don’t understand why, but I do know that the way we act now is very, very different, the way we consult, the way we consult with people in various areas and relate to the people . . . very little comes up to me that hasn’t been reflected on by a group, the people in social welfare or in evangelization or whatever.”

“Your honour, I’ve given evidence before about people in my situation who just couldn’t believe that a priest would do these terrible crimes,” he added. “I’m not one of them. And I think that illustrates the mindset. It doesn’t excuse it, but it illustrates what the mindset was, that it was just out there and it was left out there. That’s a serious failure of responsibility.”

Fisher spoke of a trilogy of sex, power and theology, and said “our understandings of all three have changed quite dramatically.”



**POPE APPEALS FOR SUDAN —** A health worker examines a four-year-old girl suffering from malnutrition Feb. 13 in Dablual, South Sudan. Pope Francis appealed for humanitarian assistance to South Sudan, where famine threatens the lives of millions of people already suffering due to a three-year civil war.



# Overdose crisis is ‘devastating families’: Miller

By Alicia Ambrosio

VANCOUVER (CNS) — Archbishop J. Michael Miller of Vancouver called on Catholics to respond to a drug overdose crisis that had been sweeping the city, “cutting across every segment of society, devastating families and communities.”

In a pastoral letter released Feb. 16, Miller said that following Jesus’ teaching would require Catholics to “scrutinize the sign of the times” and, in Vancouver, “these signs are calling the church to address today’s lethal crisis of drug overdoses.”

A report released by the British Columbia Coroners Service revealed that 914 people died of illicit drug overdoses in 2016; those statistics prompted the provincial government to declare a public health emergency. That number represented an 80 per cent increase in overdose deaths from the previous year.

Miller said three factors contributed to the overdose crisis: overprescription of opioid painkillers, social isolation and mental illness.

“I am inviting the church in Vancouver to respond to the overdose crisis by reaching out to our society’s suffering men, women and young people,” the archbish-

op said. He said Catholics could respond to the crisis by:

- Urging elected officials to focus more attention on the crisis and the need for more treatment facilities.
- Calling for more education about safe-prescribing practices.
- Promoting services like 12-step programs in parishes.

Shaf Hussain, spokesperson for Providence Health Care, which operates St. Paul’s Hospital in downtown Vancouver, said the surge in overdoses had created a sense of urgency around the issue “and rightly so.” However, with that sense of urgency, “it becomes a numbers thing. It is easy to lose track of what’s actually happening.”

“We need to talk of the causes, going back earlier in our society and in individuals’ lives. We need to ask, ‘Why is there a breakdown in this individual’s life?’ ” said Hussain.

While there were many community-based support services available for people addicted to drugs in Vancouver, Hussain said, “the challenge is co-ordination and integration, having a more co-ordinated system so people don’t fall between the cracks.” He said a person who was addicted to opioids could get access to methadone treatment, but if that

person also suffered from mental issues was homeless and suffered from other health problems exacerbated by homelessness, a methadone treatment program could prove to be ineffective.

Hussain said there were many community-based support groups that needed volunteers with a variety of skills and praised the archbishop’s pastoral letter for offering “pragmatic suggestions” for Catholics to respond to the crisis.

“The need and the opportunity to fill that need is seemingly endless,” he said.

St. Paul’s Hospital offered patients a “rapid action addiction clinic,” an inpatient addiction recovery program aimed at helping drug users transition to a Suboxone treatment program. After a patient completes the recovery program, the hospital’s addiction team would put patients in contact with community-based support programs.

A specialized clinic also run by Providence Health Care offered medical-grade heroin and the painkiller hydromorphone to about 150 patients for whom methadone treatment had not been successful. The clinic, developed by Providence Health Care’s BC Centre for Substance Use, was the only clinic of its

kind operating in North America.

Public health officials attributed the surge in overdose deaths to fentanyl, an opioid painkiller 100 times more powerful than morphine.

Drug users who bought fentanyl from drug dealers on the streets could receive a version of the drug made in an illegal pro-

cessing lab. That would make it difficult to ensure a safe dosage. Fentanyl could be used to cut other illicit drugs like heroin or oxycodone.

Treatment for opioid addiction would include a substitution treatment program, during which the patient would be given methadone or Suboxone.



CNS/Akhtar Soomro, EPA

## Fully funded palliative plan saves money

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Timely, fully funded and widely available palliative care could save Canada’s health care system between \$7,000 and \$8,000 per patient, claims a new paper from the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians.



Charlie Angus

“The savings in direct health care system costs are consistently reported to be around 30 per cent,” said the report, which summarizes recent peer-reviewed literature on palliative care economics.

“Palliative Care: A Vital Service With Clear Economic, Health and Social Benefits” has come out just three weeks after a paper in the Canadian Medical Association Journal claimed assisted suicide could reduce costs to public health care by between \$34.7 million and \$138.8

million annually.

The Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians hopes its paper will spur action in Ottawa.

“We know, financially, health care is terribly expensive in Canada,” said society president Dr. David Henderson. “We thought it was really important to show that not only better care can be provided, but it can be done in a very cost-effective way.”

Though the studies completed so far can’t answer the question definitively, savings from universal access to fully funded palliative care probably stack up against any savings that might come from assisted suicide, Henderson said.

The report says savings would come from, among other things, reducing hospital stays, moving patients from hospital to home or hospice care, and reducing unnecessary diagnostic testing.

“You’re talking about a lot longer period of time for those savings to occur,” said Henderson. “Even people who would choose MAID (Medical Assistance In Dying), generally they’re going to choose it pretty far down the line.”

The palliative economics study points out that “U.S. Medicare data shows that a quarter of total health care costs are spent in the last year of life, with about 40 per cent — or 10 per cent of the total Medicare budget — spent in the last four weeks.”

Given the cost of the legally mandated assessment by two physicians before euthanizing any patient, and the few doctors willing to offer the service, assisted suicide costs could be significant.

The fact palliative care could save money is already known, said Sarnia-Lambton Conservative MP Marilyn Gladu, the sponsor of a private members’ bill calling for a national framework and national standards for palliative care.

Gladu’s Bill 277 has passed first and second reading in Parliament with the unanimous support of the House. It’s due for committee study in March. Gladu believes the bill will pass this year.

Timmins-James Bay NDP MP Charlie Angus supports Gladu’s bill, but worries the government won’t keep its promise to spend \$3 billion on home care and palliative care.

“What concerns me is it (Bill 277) will see all-party support and then the government will continue to take no action,” Angus said. “The issue of palliative care seems to have completely dropped off the map.”

Angus wants to see money spent on palliative care in areas where it actually delivers health care outside of provincial systems — the armed forces, veterans and First Nations.

“I can tell you, in the First Nations communities the services are almost non-existent,” he said.

The economic argument in favour of more and better palliative care should be persuasive to all politicians, according to Angus.

“Canadians deserve top-quality health care, especially at end of life. And there is a real simple economic argument to make for why that’s a smart investment.”

“It should be a no-brainer to make these investments and move forward,” said Henderson.

**OVERDOSE CRISIS — Archbishop J. Michael Miller of Vancouver called on Catholics to respond to a drug overdose crisis that had been sweeping the city, “cutting across every segment of society, devastating families and communities.”**

## Video series launched

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A new video series in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon features ordinary Catholics sharing faith as an inspiration and a witness.

The first instalment of a “My Catholic Story” video series was recently released, to mark the beginning of Lent, said Sharon Leyne, who has worked with Rev. Darryl Millette to produce the videos.

“As we enter into the lenten season this is the best time to reflect on our story, why am I Catholic? How did I get here and how can I share it with those I meet? It’s in telling our story that we can step back and see how God has been working not just in our life but in the church as a whole,” said Leyne.

“Sharon and I decided to do the series after our first diocesan Study Days with Katherine Coolidge (in October 2015),” said Millette. “One thing she (Coolidge) mentioned was the need to ‘break the silence,’ that is, to tell our stories of faith in order to give encouragement and to break the isolation that people often feel.”

The first five-minute video fea-

tures an interview with Heather Buchholz, whose experience attending World Youth Day in Brazil as a non-Catholic prompted a great hunger for the eucharist — a longing that eventually led her to join the Catholic Church. The video interview has been posted on the diocesan website and has been shared on YouTube and through social media.

Several more videos are currently in production.

“The process of interviewing has been uplifting to me, as I hear these stories from people. I feel privileged to have been able to witness and record the three interviews we’ve done so far,” said Millette.

“Audio and video along with social media have been hobbies of mine for a while and so it seemed like a natural way to share stories from people,” said the diocesan priest, who currently serves as pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Saskatoon.

More interviews are being planned, he added. “If anyone would like to share their story of faith, they can feel free to contact us. I can be reached on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram — @frdarryl,” he said.



# Palliative care is about living and celebrating life

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Palliative care is about living and celebrating life and should begin much earlier than during a patient's last days and weeks of life, palliative care physician Dr. Jose Pereira said Feb. 18.

"We need to change a culture . . . that palliative care has to do

with death and dying," Pereira told an information session in Ottawa.

Palliative care is about living, compassion, dignity and person-centred care, he said. Fear and depression associated with sickness and dying can be greatly reduced if palliative care principles are introduced earlier along with other treatments.

If the "p-word" is only introduced when physicians have given up on attempts to cure or control the disease, the anxiety will only increase, he said. "It's not a matter of taking away hope; it's a matter of reframing hope."

Introducing palliative care earlier in the disease process does not shorten life because its principles — geared toward quality of life, patient-centred care, symptom management and spiritual and personal life goals — can be applied while treatments are underway, he said. "Palliative care and treatments to cure and control are not mutually exclusive. They go hand in hand."

When palliative care is not introduced, patients can lack attention to symptom control during their treatments; they may receive inappropriate treatments; and may not have their psychological distress addressed, Pereira said. "We need to erase the old model."

Patients need to be asked what other goals they might have, such as spending time with their grandchildren, he said.

In studies where palliative care techniques that are patient-centred and more attentive to personal needs, patients have lived almost three months longer with less depression, less anxiety, with better symptom control and a much better quality of life, he said. "Palliative care early is better than palliative care late."

Early in treatment, physicians need to talk to their patients about their quality of life, he said. A patient undergoing dialysis, for example, may also experience pain, itching skin, sleeplessness and restless leg syndrome. Patients should also be urged to talk with their family about advanced care planning, since "things can change rapidly."

Many cancers that used to be terminal have become chronic conditions, he said. As life-prolonging treatments are underway, there is usually "no talk or discussion of other options or end-of-life care until the person arrives at the last days or weeks and are told, 'You are now palliative,' " he said. "That is wrong."

Palliative care needs to be

integrated with other treatment options as "part of the journey" of a patient, he said. "As the disease progresses, palliative care becomes predominant."

Pereira said too often palliative care is being restricted to a "place" such as palliative care units, and to specialized units of palliative care physicians and nurses. That model guarantees access to it will be limited, he said. "Our mission is to try to change that idea."

Instead, every cardiologist, every oncologist, every kidney specialist and every family doctor needs to start incorporating palliative care techniques into their treatment, he said. "It's up to us as a society to start effecting change."

If a doctor asks, "Do you want active care or palliative care," he or she must be challenged, he said. "Palliative care is active care."

Change needs to begin at medical schools, as well, he said.

Canada is recognized internationally for its expertise in palliative care, but because it is often reserved to specialized teams, coverage is like a patchwork, he said. "We have areas of amazing excellence, among the best in the world." But only an estimated 30 per cent of Canadians have access to it.

The federal government needs to set national standards so provinces can meet them, he said.

"What if every family doctor had this training?" he said. "Then access would grow to almost 100 per cent."



CCN/D. Gyapong

Dr. Jose Pereira

## Wife's faith won out in cycling's doping scandal

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Betsy Andreu likes to carry around two prayer cards — one for St. Padre Pio and one for St. Thérèse of Lisieux. They are crumpled and worn, but each crease is a souvenir of a time when she was tested by the world.

"Every single day, I just prayed 'God, use me to get the truth out,'" said Andreu. "It was really hard. I didn't understand why, but I persisted and I hoped to God the truth comes out."

Andreu found herself in the middle of a media storm in 2005 when she and her husband, Frankie, testified that champion road racing cyclist Lance Armstrong had admitted to his cancer doctors in 1996 that he had been doping with EPO (Erythropoietin), growth hormone and steroids.

At the time, Armstrong vehemently denied these claims. He swore under oath it never happened and attacked the Andreus for perpetrating these claims.

"I was up against this beloved athlete who had become a famous celebrity," said Andreu. "And because of that, you had all these fans who just adored him. . . . When people are telling you 'Kill yourself because you're a loser because you must be the bitter, lying, fat bitch that he says you are,' you have to have some pretty thick skin."

She and her husband endured very public character assassinations from Armstrong, his sponsors and his fans. But even amidst the darkest of times, she stood firm in herself, in her husband and in her faith in God.

This is the testimony, Andreu said, she hopes to share with the women who will attend this year's Dynamic Women of Faith

conference in Mississauga, Ont. This annual women's conference, which takes place on March 25 at St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, is organized by the Catholic Moms Group ministry in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

"I really was drawn to her not because she was a professional Catholic speaker. She's not that. She's a stay-at-home mom who took on the world with her faith and she wasn't afraid of the repercussions," said Dorothy Pilarski, founder and executive director of the Dynamic Women of Faith conference.

Armstrong, who had won the Tour de France seven straight years (1999 - 2005), eventually admitted to doping offences in 2013 and was banned for life. Andreu said he has never personally apologized to her.

The most important message Andreu said she could impart on the women and girls at the conference is the importance of choosing the right man to be their husband.

"The biggest risk, I think, anybody will make in their life is choosing their husband or choosing their wife," she said. "You better make sure you do a really good job because there are a lot of ups and downs in marriages."

Andreu said she could not have endured the public backlash if she did not have the support of her husband.

Frankie faced immense pressure to dope in order to stay competitive in the sport, but Andreu stood firm against it. Andreu gave her husband an ultimatum and said she was ready to leave with their child if he did not stop doping.

Andreu said Armstrong had Frankie fired from the team in 2006 when he refused to continue doping. She said Armstrong also made sure that no other team

would take him.

"Lance couldn't fathom the fact that Frankie chose me over him," said Andreu. "Lance couldn't fathom why I couldn't be like the other wives because it afforded them with such a luxurious lifestyle at a young age. Because it was wrong."

Andreu said everyone blamed her for the end of Frankie's cycling career. Her father and her in-laws tried to convince her to back down and even some of her cousins opposed her.

"I don't want to say to women

'Everything's going to be great, just trust in Jesus,'" said Andreu. "Maybe I can offer some hope to women out there . . ."

Andreu said she doesn't want to portray herself as a perfect Christian because she is not. She only hopes that her testimony will bring a message of hope to other women.

Andreu will be the keynote speaker at both the Dynamic Women of Faith conference (March 25) and the Calling All Girls mother-daughter event (March 24).



Betsy and Frankie Andreu

### OBITUARY

**SCHOMMER, Sister Doreen**  
(formerly Sister Andrene)  
**School Sister of Notre Dame**

Sister Doreen died at Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown, Ontario on February 8, 2017 at the age 90, in her 71st year as a School Sister of Notre Dame. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Rev. Pablito Labado, chaplain, on February 16. Predeceased by her parents Andrew and Anne (Thielges) and brothers Henry, Joseph, Alfred and Andrew, and sisters Josephine Schommer, Agnes Connor, Mary Frances, Anne Squires, Gabriella Scherman, Rose Verbeck and Rita Engel. After graduating from Hamilton Teachers' College, Sister Doreen taught in schools in Kitchener, Cambridge and Elora. In 1954 she moved to British Columbia where she taught at Sacred Heart School in Ladner. She then returned to her home province, Saskatchewan, to teach in Leipzig and Wilkie. After a few years at St. Charles School, Mearns, Alberta, Sister Doreen attended the University of Alberta. Her last classroom teaching assignments were at St. Martin and St. Angela Schools in Edmonton. On several missions she also taught music, gave piano lessons, directed the church choir and played the organ for church services. Following studies at Newman Theological College, Sister Doreen became involved in pastoral ministry in Edmonton, Pine Point in Northwest Territories, Owen Sound and Burlington, and, in Saskatchewan, parishes in Kerrobert, Viscount and Oxbow. From 1996 - 1998 Sister Doreen was assistant librarian at St. Augustine's Seminary in Jos, Nigeria. Due to serious illness, she returned to Waterdown. When she was fully recovered she moved to Saskatchewan where she volunteered at Sacred Heart Parish, Regina and later in Saskatoon, where she was involved in prison ministry. During her years in pastoral ministry, she was especially attentive to comforting the sick. In 2007 she retired at Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown. May she now enjoy the fullness of God's love.



# Churches ramp up pressure to suspend ‘Safe’ agreement

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — As the flood of refugees slipping across the Canada-U.S. border continues, churches are stepping up their calls for the government to suspend Canada’s Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States.

“The U.S.A. does not properly protect the rights of refugee claimants,” said Jesuit Refugee Service country director for Canada Norbert Piché.

The Safe Third Country Agreement assumes that refugees who first land in the U.S. can safely make a claim for asylum and receive a fair, impartial hearing to determine their status because, like Canada, the U.S. is a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention and Protocol Regarding the Status of Refugees. The Kino Border Initiative told *The Catholic Register* U.S. Immigration officials and border guards are sending people back across the Mexican border before they have an opportunity to make an asylum claim.

“Asylum isn’t necessarily accessible in the U.S.,” Kino Border Initiative spokesperson Joanna Williams said from Nogales, New Mexico. “You might have seen some of the news about the U.S. government just turning them away altogether in violation of international law.”

The Kino Border Initiative is part of a Jesuit network that helps migrants in Central America, Mexico and the U.S.

Suspending or getting rid of the Safe Third Country Agree-

ment would put an end to irregular border crossings which have spiked along ungarded sections of the border in Manitoba and Quebec, Piché said.

“If Canada withdrew from the Safe Third Country Agreement, refugee claimants could arrive at regular border crossings and claim refugee status without putting their lives at risk, as they are doing now,” he said in an email.

The flood of recent border crossings is “a situation the Government of Canada takes seriously,” an Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship spokesperson told *The Catholic Register* in an email.

“The STCA (Safe Third Country Agreement) remains an important tool for Canada and the U.S. to work together on the orderly handling of refugee claims.”

In Quebec, which has seen the largest number of illegal border crossings, there has been a 250 per cent increase in refugees arriving across the land border, with 2,527 claims for asylum in 2016, compared with 1,054 in 2015. In January, 452 people made claims in Quebec compared with 137 in January 2016, according to the Canada Border Services Agency.

Recently the Christian Reformed Church in North America joined the chorus of churches demanding Canada scrap the Safe Third Country Agreement.

“The influx of refugees from the U.S. to Canada in recent weeks, sometimes risking their lives to make the journey, demonstrates that due to recent refugee policy developments in the



CNS/Christinne Muschi, Reuters

**BORDER CROSSINGS — A woman and her family from Sudan is taken into custody by a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer after arriving Feb. 12 by taxi and walking across the U.S.-Canada border into Quebec.**

U.S., such as the recent executive order, not all refugees feel safe there,” Reformed Church leaders said in a message to their faithful on both sides of the border.

At press time the McClatchy newspapers in the U.S. were reporting that lawyers working for President Donald Trump’s administration were debating how far a new executive order limiting refugees from the Muslim world could go after the courts blocked

his original order banning migrants from seven Muslim-majority countries.

The Safe Third Country Agreement is not the only concern the Council of Churches has about how refugees are faring in Canada. In a letter to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister Ahmed Hussen, general secretary Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton also asked that the government lift its cap on the number of refugees

who may be privately sponsored. Canada will only accept 1,000 applications from private sponsorship groups this year to resettle Syrian refugees.

Hamilton also complained about how processing for privately sponsored refugees has slowed down and asks Hussen how the government is working to expedite the process.

So far the CCC has received no reply from Hussen’s office.

# Groups defending conscience rights granted intervenor status

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Groups defending conscience rights and religious freedom have been granted intervenor status in a court case challenging the Ontario physicians’ college.

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Christian Legal fellowship have been granted leave to file a joint intervention in the lawsuit brought by five Ontario doctors, the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada, Canadian Physicians for Life, and the Canadian Federation of Catholic Physicians’ Societies against the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO).

The case challenges the College’s policy requiring physicians to make an effective referral in cases of euthanasia and assisted suicide, abortion and other potentially morally objectionable treatments. The policy would also force doctors to perform procedures against their conscience in some undefined emergency circumstances. It will be heard in a Toronto courtroom June 13 - 15.

The Catholic Civil Rights League, in a coalition with the Faith and Freedom Alliance and the Projection of Freedom Project, has also been granted leave to intervene.

League president Phil Horgan said this is the same coalition which intervened together in the Supreme Court of Canada’s Carter decision that struck down Criminal Code provisions against assisted suicide.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Phil Horgan

“What we propose to focus on is the freedom of conscience arguments that are subject to the Charter,” Horgan said. “There are others that are focusing on freedom of religion arguments.”

“The League, the Faith and Freedom Alliance and the Pro-

jection of Freedom Project have been heavily focused on conscience rights in response to the unfortunate introduction of assisted suicide and euthanasia that is now engaged in our law,” Horgan said.

He noted that Ontario is the only “province that has brought forward an ‘effective referral’ regime.”

This might be due to the recognition a clear majority of doctors would object to being involved in euthanasia or assisted suicide, he said.

“We have argued, as have the bishops and many others, that effective referral as laid out by the CPSO engages a physician in the wrong of the act to which they object,” Horgan said. “So it is in our view wrong to compel a physician at the risk of professional discipline to participate in moral evil.”

Because the judge has limited interveners each to a single factum of 15 pages maximum and one set of oral arguments of no more than 20 minutes, Horgan said the various parties have been discussing the focus of their arguments to avoid duplication.

The Evangelical Fellowship, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, and the Christian Legal Fellowship will focus on religious freedom arguments and aspects of the Charter’s section 15 equality

provisions, Horgan said. The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, another group intervening on its own, will address freedom of association arguments.

Horgan expects the League and its Coalition partners will address the “social contract theory of medicine” being promoted by proponents of the other side.

“They argue since this is now a legal service, therefore, it’s the obligation of a medical professional to provide it,” Horgan said. “It’s a complete divorce from the Hippocratic tradition and, more importantly, it puts physicians in the role of mere service providers as opposed to professionals.”

Sean Murphy, the administrator of the Protection of Freedom Project, said his organization has “avoided from the beginning getting into the debate on the acceptability or morality of particular procedure.”

“The focus of the Project has always been strictly on conscience.”

Though the Project is based in Canada and Murphy, a Catholic, lives in British Columbia, the Project is an international, non-denominational, non-profit organization founded in December 1999 that has Muslim, Catholic, and Mormon experts on conscience rights on its advisory board, among them Catholic philosopher J. Budziszewski,

author of *The Revenge of the Conscience*. Murphy said in the past, the board has also included Jewish experts and hopes to include one again soon.

Murphy said the Project was “developed initially as an online resource” and is “primarily there to support people who are on the front lines.”

“It’s most regrettable that the federal government has taken a position of enabling this,” said Murphy. “And that’s quite a deliberate position in my view.”

When efforts were made to ensure the protection of conscience rights in the euthanasia legislation, the federal government kept insisting conscience rights fell under human rights law and were therefore under provincial jurisdiction, Murphy said.

The Project sent proposals to the committees studying the euthanasia law, advising the federal government could make a law “to make it a crime to force someone to be a party to homicide and suicide.”

Though the euthanasia law makes euthanasia non-culpable homicide when certain conditions are met, it was within the federal government’s power to enact a law making it a crime to force someone to participate that would have had the effect of protecting conscience rights of doctors, Murphy said.



# Pollster reveals trends in religion and education

By Agnieszka Krawczynski  
The B.C. Catholic

VANCOUVER (CCN) — There’s a bumpy but promising road ahead for Catholic education, according to Canadian pollster and sociologist Angus Reid.

“There is every reason to believe, as we look in the future, that the demand for Catholic education will be strong and get stronger,” he told a crowd of 1,300 principals, teachers, and staff at the Catholic Educators’ Conference Feb. 10.

“Obviously there are a lot of tough issues that you’re going to have to navigate through as you look at the coming decades,” but “it’s not all bad.”

Since 1993, there’s been a lot of change in Canada. Fewer people are going to church, the public has a lower view of clergy, and there’s been a rise in “hostile atheism,” Reid said.

“When I grew up in the ’50s and ’60s, atheists tended to be quiet people who sat off in a corner and would maybe have a philosophical discussion with you about the existence of God,” he said.

But in a 2015 poll on religion in Canada, the Angus Reid Institute found that while 30 per cent of respondents were inclined to embrace religion, 26 per cent were inclined to reject it.

“This is a group that is significantly larger than it was 30 years ago,” he said, arguing this group is also more likely to be more vocal about its negative views of religion.

The other 44 per cent fell somewhere in the “mushy middle.”

Other rising challenges include differing values and a growing list of contentious ethical issues. In a study with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation last year, Reid found “we are in a society that does not consist of a single set of values.”

The study found Canadians put themselves in one of five categories: Cautious Skeptics (25 per cent), Free Enterprise Enthusiasts (22 per cent), Faith-Based Traditionalists (20 per cent), Public Sector Proponents (19 per cent),

and Permissive Reformers (14 per cent).

Because of polarizing values, emerging issues such as transgenderism and assisted suicide are also difficult for Catholic teachers to navigate in the classroom, he said.

Recent polls, however, also indicate there is some good news for the Catholic Church in general and for Catholic education specifically.

“We are the most positively viewed religion in the country,” Reid said.

One year ago, one of his institute’s polls found that 49 per cent of respondents thought of Catholicism positively. The next closest groups were Protestantism and Buddhism at 44 per cent each, and Judaism at 30 per cent.

Pope Francis also had the respect of 75 per cent of respondents.

“Canadians are not as cut off from faith as statistics of church attendance would indicate,” he added.

Though church attendance has been dropping, Reid argued a bet-



B.C. Catholic/Agnieszka Krawczynski  
**TRENDS IN RELIGION AND EDUCATION — Angus Reid addresses the Catholic Educators’ Conference in Vancouver Feb. 10.**

ter indicator of faith is how often Canadians pray.

“Prayer is in my view probably the single most important action that individuals take in terms of connecting themselves with some idea of a divine Creator who has an interest in their lives.”

In a national poll in 2016, Reid found 86 per cent of Canadians pray; 42 per cent do so once a week, and another 44 per cent do so about once a month. Only 15 per cent of respondents said they never pray.

An even more intriguing discovery, he said, was the impact of prayer during childhood.

“If you prayed as a child, the odds that you would pray later in your life is 90 per cent,” he said. By contrast, if a person did not pray as a child, there was an 80 per cent chance that person would not pray as an adult, either.

“Catholic educators have a tremendous responsibility to reinforce prayer,” he told the large audience of educators at the

Vancouver Convention Centre.

“One magic thing you can do ahead of anyone else is instill a sense of prayerfulness and to deal with prayer as a fundamentally learned thing.”

A piece of bad news for public schools may also be good news for private schools. In a recent quarterly study on things like public education and the popularity of Canadian premiers, the Angus Reid Institute found 40 per cent of B.C. residents give public primary schools a poor or very poor rating.

This is not just a temporary dip due to recent teacher strikes. “B.C. has consistently tracked lower than other provinces on this particular measure,” Reid said.

“At no point in the last six years has the quality of primary education in B.C. been perceived by 50 per cent of residents as being good or very good.”

That may mean there is a “promising future” for private schools, he said.

Msgr. Gregory Smith, pastor of Christ the Redeemer Parish, said, “The church needs to know contemporary reactions to ideas and events, whether they be Catholic or not,” he said, quoting a 1971 document from Vatican II.

## CCCB pamphlet published

Continued from page 1

Champagne said the CCCB had published a pamphlet to educate the Catholic faithful about Islam and to help them “to be careful and not to be prejudiced and not to generalize.”

The bishops began working on developing a positive relationship after 2014 terror incidents in Saint Jean sur Richelieu, Que., and Ottawa, involving converts to Islam.

The goal of the Feb. 14 meeting was to help the religious leaders get to know each other better and to discuss areas where there “could be a common commitment on questions of justice and peace

in our society,” Champagne said. They also discussed how both groups represent “believers in a society where many people are saying ‘we are without religion.’”

The bishops and imams examined how “we could live together in peace, to be enriched by the other,” he said. “At least there was that openness to know each other.”

Though developing a national dialogue is “a financial challenge,” Champagne said the idea will be proposed at the next Permanent Council meeting in March. He stressed the February meeting was done with the support and help of the Permanent Council.

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**Queen's House Lenten Series — Walking the Lenten Journey**  
Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 12 noon. Program cost: \$20 (lunch \$12 optional extra)  
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Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers  
**March 11: Journeying Through Lent with Dementia**  
Rev Marilyn Fowle-Neufeld  
**March 18: Lent — A Very Human Journey**  
Rev. Deborah Walker  
**March 25: Journeying to Jerusalem**  
Rev. Gyllian Davies  
**April 1: Called to be Agents of “Hope”**  
Rev. Mike Dechant, OMI & Brendan Bitz  
**The Book of Exodus** — Fr. Paul Fachel, OMI  
First Wednesday of each month, March 7, April 5, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
Cost: \$15/session; \$25 including lunch.  
**Quiet Day for Prayer & Reflection** — Gisele Bauche  
Second Wednesday of each month, March 8, April 12, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Cost \$25/session with lunch.  
**Taizé Prayer for Christian Unity**  
Second Tuesday of each month, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, 8 p.m. - 9 p.m. Donation at the door.  
**Silent Directed Retreat: Be Still and Know**  
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Cost: \$345 (Facilitation, meals, accommodation, spiritual direction).  
**Ignatian Spirituality** — Linda Labelle  
Saturday, March 18, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cost: \$40 per session (includes lunch).  
**Exploring the Soul Energies of the Enneagram Centres**  
Rick McCorrister  
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Bolen plans to visit all Regina parishes

Seemann marks 70 years as NDS

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen has revealed his plan to visit and celebrate mass at all 142 archdiocesan parishes plus the missionary churches including churches on First Nations reserves in the Regina archdiocese.

Bolen explained, “It’s a desire of a bishop to get out to all the parishes. It’s begun in a very humble way in the sense that whenever there is an opportunity to be in a parish on a weekend I get out there. Some of those opportunities to this point have been for the 25th anniversary of a priest and other special celebrations, and then I just try to take in parishes in the region if I can.”

He began this odyssey shortly

after his installation as archbishop of Regina, but admits it could be two years or more before he actually completes these planned visits.

In addition, he is committed to do all the confirmations this year, and there are 54 scheduled. In the past several years, this duty has been shared with local priests.

During the winter months he has visited several parishes in and around Regina, and “When the weather gets better and the roads get better, it will be time to start hitting the rural areas.”

He said this plan has been his goal since his installation. “Every weekend I have been out somewhere.” That puts a lot of kilometres on a vehicle and opens the possibility for some misadventures, but thus far the trips have been uneventful.

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Seventy years of witness and service by Sister Catherine Seemann, NDS, was celebrated at Trinity Manor in Saskatoon on the World Day of Consecrated Life, marked on the Feast of the Presentation Feb. 2.

Seemann made her first profession of vows as a Sister of Sion in 1947 in Prince Albert, at the age of 21.

The celebration included eucharist with Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner presiding, with many representatives of several religious communities, as well as Sisters of Sion, participating.

“In his homily, Bishop Wiesner spoke of this day as being the day of the Consecration of Religious Life and thanked Sister Catherine for her fidelity, her witness to the community and to the church. After the homily Sister Catherine

renewed her vows in a strong, clear voice. Everyone applauded with joy,” reported Sisters Josie Germaine and Phyllis Kapuschinski, NDS, who helped organize the celebration. An anniversary tea was held later that afternoon.

Sister Maureen Fritz, NDS, who made her first profession along with Seemann in 1947, was celebrating in Jerusalem, and the two connected by phone.

“To both of these wonderful women we can say, Rejoice greatly, daughters of Sion. The Lord has done marvels for you — and through you — and we love you,” said Germaine.

Seemann grew up with six brothers and three sisters on a farm at Mazenod, Sask. In Grade 11 and 12, she attended Our Lady of Sion Academy in Moose Jaw, where she came to know the Sisters of Sion.

“They were kind and loving, and cared for the children very much,” she said.

Seemann had already developed an interest in teaching, which began in Grade 9, after she was permitted to help fellow students whenever the teacher was busy with older grades in a combined Grade 9-12 classroom.

Seemann entered the Sisters of Sion in 1944, as soon as she finished high school, spending two and a half years in Prince Albert, completing her novitiate.

She was trained as a piano teacher, but began her teaching career as an elementary school teacher, teaching grades 2, 3 and 4 in the Academy of Sion in Saskatoon, and then Grade 2 in Moose Jaw, before being sent to Dearborn, Mich., in 1951 to serve in a parochial school beside the Ford factory. There was a lot of poverty in the area, and many of the children came from immigrant families, Seemann recalled. Classes were large: one year she taught a class of 63 children, including four who couldn’t speak English.

She worked on her BA in the summer, taking a couple of subjects each year at the Academy of Sion in Kansas City. In 1960, she moved to Kansas City permanently, where she taught for the next 30 years, earning a master’s degree in librarianship along the way.

In 1976 she travelled to Rome for a catechetical meeting with other catechetical teachers of the NDS congregation, and in 1983-84 she went to Spokane, Wash., for a year of renewal that ended with a trip to Israel — an unforgettable experience that brought new insights into the congregation’s commitment to Jewish-Christian relations, she said.

In 1987 she was asked to take on the role of principal for Notre Dame de Sion School on Locust Street in Kansas City — a temporary assignment that went on for three years. On her retirement, she spent a year in Rome, assisting wherever needed and setting the NDS library in order.

“I just saw everything,” she said, describing her love of Rome. After another visit to Israel, she began serving in Toronto, in work related to Jewish-Christian relations.



Josie Germaine  
Sister Catherine Seemann, NDS

In 1996 she arrived in Saskatoon, assisting the elderly in the retirement home of the Sisters of Sion, until it closed. After a 12-year term at St. Ann’s Residence, in 2016 she moved to Trinity Manor. She has also served as a longtime volunteer at Queen’s House, assisting with the retreat house library beginning in 1996.

Over the years in her spare time, Seemann has pursued a longtime interest in her family history, producing five books about her family tree. Her deep and abiding interest in the “how and why” of things also led Seemann to look more deeply into the history of the Sisters of Sion in North America.

A French order, the sisters came to Maine in 1892 and moved into other parts of the United States and Canada. In 1904, four sisters went to Australia and a large group went to Brazil to support work that had begun there, she related. A group of 24 arrived in Prince Albert in 1904, braving prairie winters and pioneer conditions.

“Wherever I went, I tried to find out more about the how and the why of these things,” Seemann said. During her time in Rome, she went through the NDS house journals on file there, making copies and later translating them into English.

Reflecting on the charism of the Sisters of Sion in relation to the Jewish people, Seemann expressed her conviction that the Blessed Virgin Mary inspired this charism in the hearts of the order’s founders in 1842.

“Our Lady knew the Holocaust was coming. She could see that something was drastically wrong,” said Seemann. “Something had to be done for her people.”

“The focus on Jewish-Christian relations is no longer the charism of just our religious congregation. Even though our numbers are declining, the work itself has been taken up by the church after Vatican II.” Most dioceses now have at least one interfaith group working to bring about understanding among all peoples and faiths, she noted.

Reflecting on her 70 years as a Sister of Sion, Seemann said, “To me, the important part is God. God has been so faithful, through thick and thin. Without God, there would have been nothing. So to God all thanks and praise is due.”

Lives of consecrated celebrated

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Feb. 2 is the day established by Pope Francis to annually recognize and celebrate the lives of consecrated men and women and the work they do in their communities. For the sixth year in a row, the Regina Catholic School Division hosted a luncheon for those serving in the Regina area.

“We are so grateful for all that you do in helping us do what we do,” said board chair Donna Ziegler to about 30 guests who attended the luncheon held in the Catholic Education Centre, headquarters for the Regina Catholic School Division.

“In this room, there are thousands of years of living out the Gospel,” said Ziegler, referring to the many religious communities represented at the luncheon.

Religious communities have a history on the prairies for establishing schools and health care facilities in Saskatchewan, and some members continue to teach in the Regina Catholic School Division while others serve in capacities such as teaching religion and providing and leading retreats for staff and students.

The Regina Archdiocese Directory lists 14 female religious communities and 10 male congregations serving in the archdiocese. Representatives from most of the religious communities attended the luncheon. Some could not attend as they had commitments to carry out in their respective ministries.

Miles Meyers, Religious Education co-ordinator for the Regina Catholic School Division, led a brief prayer service at the end of the luncheon.

Mass celebrated

A mass to celebrate the lives of men and women living a consecrated life in the archdiocese was



Frank Flegel

**CONSECRATED LIVES — The lives and ministries of consecrated men and women were celebrated in a special luncheon hosted by the Regina Catholic School Division Feb. 2.**

held in Holy Rosary Cathedral Feb. 12. The event was organized by Rev. Timothy Scott, CSB, executive director of the Canadian Religious Conference from Montreal.

“It’s a pretty typical thing that we organize these types of activities right across the county,” said Scott, speaking with the Prairie Messenger, “and I rather thought that with the installation of Archbishop Donald Bolen, it was an appropriate time to have a meeting involving him and the consecrated men and women of the diocese.”

Most of those attending the mass were members of a community of religious women. Scott explained that there is some confusion in the terminology that describes who are living a consecrated life. “The original term was ‘religious life’ and the root of the word ‘religious’ is Latin for rule, so only those living in a con-

gregation of men, like Jesuits, Oblates, or communities of women like RNDMs who live by the rules of their community are considered to be living a consecrated life.

“Pope John Paul II, after reading Vatican II documents, wrote *vita Consecrata* using the term ‘consecrated life’ and broadened the original definition. Distinctions remain but they’re not that great,” said Scott. Most religious are included in the term “consecrated life.”

Scott is originally from Regina, where he attended St. James elementary school (now closed) and Campion College high school. He then attended St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, where he came to know the Basilian Fathers who ran the college, and decided his vocation was with that congregation.

The Canadian Religious Conference was founded in 1954 and is a voice for the leaders of about 250 congregations of women and men religious in Canada.



# The ultimate lie of the freeway: it doesn't feel fast

## Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



There's an expression that goes, "The ultimate lie of the freeway is that it doesn't feel fast." Driving along the highway or the freeway, going just as fast as the other cars (or faster), doesn't always give us a true appreciation for the speed. That only happens once we get off the freeway and watch the vehicles whizzing by.

Life is like that. It passes much too quickly. Sometimes we wish it away, hoping for it to go faster, but when we look through life's rearview mirror, we lament the passing of time.

It seemed like yesterday my kids were excited about hot lunch days at school, back rubs at night, and playing at the park. Now the pleasures are more sophisticated — cafeteria lunches in high school, group chats with friends, and *hanging out* at the park.

Life was so much simpler when they were younger. Treehouse TV at night, bedtime stories that went on without end,

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

and the excited anticipation of a new day and all the adventures just waiting to be discovered.

Presently we're well into the world of teenage angst, and life gets more complicated with school, friends, and the politics of team sports.

Life picked up even greater speed in our family this past Valentine's Day when my son Nathan took his road test for his driver's licence. He got it! He shares the distinction with his mother of getting his licence on the first try.

Norma got her licence on her first road test attempt. I reminded Norma, though, that her road test was taken in her small hometown where they have angle parking and one main street. An easy road test, perhaps, but Norma is also quick to remind me of her 30 years of accident- and incident-free driving. I don't share that honour, and it took me two attempts to get my licence.

Nathan has significantly more freedom now that he's a licensed driver. His new freedom is going to have a positive impact on our family. First, we can dump a lot of driving errands on him. Second, he can drive himself to practices and games. Third, he

can fill the car when it's empty and wash it when it's dirty. I'm sure all that will change when he doesn't feel like dropping off or picking up his sister.

I remember, like it was yesterday, when Nathan learned to walk. We thought that that was independence. The only thing we were worried about was his stumbling and bumping his head, or running too fast in the house. Now that Nathan has his licence, the worries take on much greater significance. He's always been cautious about everything in life, and I know he will exercise that same caution now that he's driving. However, it's not about simply driving for himself, he also has to drive for everyone else. He's still a child speeding toward adulthood, but the remainder of his childhood contains an adult responsibility.

The years go quickly. Time travels along without obstacle. It doesn't yield to our moods and experiences. At times like this it's easy to get nostalgic and long for the "good ole days" of early childhood — those moments of innocence, uncomplicated demands, and easier solutions to



Design Pics

**LIFE IS A FREEWAY** — Like traffic on a freeway, life seems to fly by much too quickly.

problems. Even the not-so-good moments are filtered.

Nostalgia is the past enhanced by an editing machine. It's easy to take those past moments and edit them to make us believe the times were better than they actually were. However, that doesn't do much for allowing us to immerse ourselves in the present. Perhaps that's what makes living in the present so difficult — longing for what was instead of enjoying what is. At this time we are present and attentive to a significant life event and all that holds for Nathan — picking up his friends, going through the drive-thru at McDonalds, driving himself to

practice, or asking if we need him to pick anything up at the store with *our* money!

Yes, time moves at freeway pace. It's given a permanent green light in life's free-flowing lane. We're all helpless in this regard, and we can't do anything but be attentive to its speed, mindful of its power and embrace those times of new beginnings when they arrive.

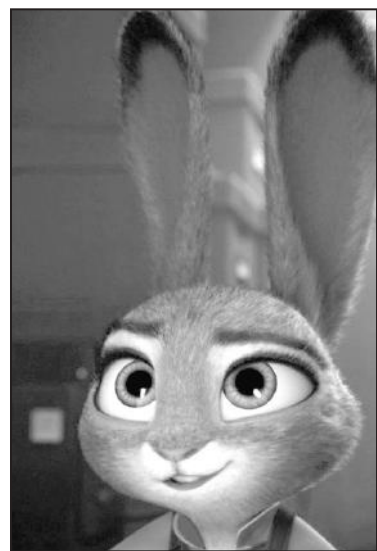
We did well embracing this rite of passage and new phase in Nathan's life. We also reminded Nathan that even though time may disregard the stop signs and yield signs of our lives, he'd better not when he's behind the wheel.

## The envelope please: top films, including family films, from 2016

By John Mulderig

NEW YORK (CNS) — The quality of the best Hollywood films was higher in 2016 than in some recent years. But the outstanding movies of the 12 months just past tended to deal with challenging subject matter. Assassination, the exactions of combat, even religious repression

*Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.*



Disney

**ZOOTOPIA** — In the Oscar-winning *Zootopia*, a rabbit, Judy Hopps (voiced by Ginnifer Goodwin), has the dream of becoming a police officer so she can make the world a better place.

enforced through torture were all dealt with in a skilful way — but also in a manner not likely to appeal to the casual moviegoer.

Following are the Media Review Office of Catholic News Service's top 10 movies overall and top 10 family films of 2016. The selections in each category are listed in alphabetical order.

### The top 10 overall:

— Amy Adams delivers an excellent performance as an American linguist trying to communicate with aliens in the gripping and unusually intimate science-fiction drama *Arrival*. Director Denis Villeneuve's adaptation of a short story by Ted Chiang finds profundity on a human scale as well as in the cosmos.

— Suffering mingles with brutal honesty and joy in unexpected moments in the first screen version of August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning 1983 play *Fences*. Director Denzel Washington stars as an embittered Pittsburgh garbage collector while Viola Davis plays his compassionate and understanding wife, the moral centre of this family drama.

— The extraordinary heroism of Second World War Army medic Desmond T. Doss (Andrew Garfield), a committed Christian and conscientious objector who refused to bear arms but was nonetheless eager to serve his country, is vividly realized in the inspiring, though bloody, fact-

based drama *Hacksaw Ridge*, directed by Mel Gibson.

— *Hell or High Water* is the morally intricate tale of two brothers (Ben Foster and Chris Pine) who go on a bank-robbing spree to save their family farm. Their cat-and-mouse game with a duo of Texas Rangers (Jeff Bridges and Gil Birmingham) has tragic consequences in director David Mackenzie's hardscrabble story of exploitation and desperation.

— Director Theodore Melfi successfully recreates the tension of the Cold War space race and the struggles of the civil rights era in the appealing fact-based drama *Hidden Figures*. Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer and Janelle Monae star as extraordinarily gifted mathematicians working for NASA, while Kevin Costner plays Henson's hard-driving boss.

— Luminescent and respectful of religion, director Anne Fontaine's drama *The Innocents*, about a fictional Benedictine convent in post-Second World War Poland, gently explores the conflicts between duty to the living and the shattered faith that can result from acts of depravity. Lou de Laage stars as a French Red Cross doctor.

— Director Pablo Larraín's fact-based historical drama *Jackie* features a mesmerizing performance by Natalie Portman as Jacqueline Kennedy, reflecting on loss while building the Camelot

myth in the weeks following her husband's (Caspar Phillipson) 1963 assassination.

— The incredible true story of Saroo Brierley (Dev Patel) and his 20-year odyssey to locate his birth mother (Priyanka Bose), is retold in the uplifting and emotional drama *Lion*, directed by Garth Davis. A celebration of family, the movie also sends a strong pro-life message by underscoring the joys and merits of adoption.

— *Silence* is director and co-writer Martin Scorsese's dramatically powerful but theologically complex adaptation of Catholic author Shusaku Endo's 1966 fact-based historical novel about two 17th-century Jesuit missionaries (Andrew Garfield and Adam Driver) facing persecution in Japan. Often visually striking, the film is also deeply thought provoking.

— In *Sully*, director Clint Eastwood crafts a satisfying profile of US Airways pilot Capt. Chesley Sullenberger (Tom Hanks), whose 2009 feat in landing his crippled plane on the Hudson River gained him instant fame. What emerges is the portrait of a morally deep-rooted and honourable man with a heartfelt concern for those in his charge.

### Top family films:

— *Finding Dory*, writer-director Andrew Stanton's dandy animated sequel to 2003's *Finding Nemo* sets that film's trio of main characters (voices of Ellen

DeGeneres, Albert Brooks and Hayden Rolence) on another epic journey. Their adventure conveys life lessons about family loyalty, teamwork and the proper balance between courage and caution.

— Director Jon Favreau's adaptation of British author Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* follows the exploits of a "man-cub" (Neel Sethi) raised by animals and offers delightful, good-natured, heartfelt entertainment for the entire family, the most easily frightened tots possibly excepted.

— A captivating animated fable about a Japanese street urchin (voice of Art Parkinson) whose troubled family history launches him on a quest for a magical set of armour, director Travis Knight's *Kubo and the Two Strings* features rich visuals and deep emotional appeal.

— The eponymous heroine of Disney's 56th animated film *Moana* is a spunky Polynesian princess (voice of Auli'i Cravalho) who joins forces with a demigod (voice of Dwayne Johnson) to vanquish evil. Directors Ron Clements and John Musker's entertaining romp offers good lessons about family, friendship and the need to be responsible.

— The classic boy-and-his-dog story assumes outsized proportions in the generally warm-hearted fantasy adventure *Pete's*

— **ZOOTOPIA**, page 10



# Sundance delivers with timely documentary excellence

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



How do we get to the truth of what really matters? While the Internet has exponentially increased information flows, it can also be used as an instrument of “post-truth” politics, a convenient channel for spreading disinformation and “fake news.” That’s why serious investigative journalism and documentary films committed to seeking the truth of the matter are more important than ever. Of course there are always selective judgments to be made. A 90-minute film may be edited from thousands of hours of footage, as was the case with the Sundance premiere *Trumped: Inside the Greatest Political Upset in History*. What is shown may not be the whole truth or the only truth. But the intent of the filmmaker(s) is key: to deliver content that is truthful in contradistinction to propaganda. (A recent article in *Film Comment* — <http://www.filmcomment.com/article/steve-bannon-films/> — analyzes the film industry background of President Trump’s far-right “chief strategist” Steve Bannon and his involvement in producing propagandistic pseudo-documentaries.)



The best documentaries put before our eyes verifiable evidence and eyewitness testimonies. They challenge us to a deeper understanding of these realities. It’s not about telling viewers what to think. It’s about making audiences think harder about the subject in question. What we do with that knowledge is up to us.

I’ve already noted several important documentaries in my overview of Sundance festival highlights (PM Feb. 8). Within its “New Climate” program, the most prominent and widely discussed title was *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*, which follows the global climate activism of former U.S. vice-president Al Gore over the past decade. In addition to underlining the need for collective action to address the accelerating impacts of the climate crisis, it offers an optimistic outlook of the potential to transition to affordable and sustainable renewable energy sources. (Among New Climate films I should also mention one I

was not able to see. *Chasing Coral*, winner of the audience award for U.S. documentary, is a global investigation of the climate impacts on the reefs that are vanishing at an unprecedented rate. I hope to catch it at Austin’s South By Southwest festival later this month.)

Significantly, some of the struggles over major resource extraction and carbon-intensive energy projects involve the traditional territories of indigenous peoples. In that previous column I also highlighted the Canadian-produced television series *Rise*, the first episodes of which premiered at Sundance focus on North American sites of resistance. I’ll have more to say in a forthcoming feature exploring indigenous perspectives on screen.

Below are other Sundance docs that impressed. The first three are examples of great courage in getting out the stories of ordinary people caught in Syria’s ongoing civil war. They merit further commentary beyond these brief notes, especially in light of the Trump administration’s legally challenged ban on the entry of Syrian refugees to the United States.

**Last Men in Aleppo** (Denmark/Syria)

Last week I praised the Oscar-nominated short *The White Helmets*, about the brave frontline humanitarian workers who come to the aid of the casualties of Syria’s civil war. Here directors Feras Fayyad and Steen Johannessen take incredible risks to capture the experience of several white helmet volunteers in the besieged city of Aleppo, Syria’s largest. These are the men without guns whose mission is saving lives amid the chaos of war. We get to know them as they put their own lives on the line. It’s an unforgettable devastating portrait that was awarded the grand jury prize for world cinema documentary.

**Cries from Syria** (Syria/Czech Republic)

Scheduled for a March broadcast on HBO, this is the most comprehensive and penetrating documentary yet made about the Syrian conflict and its consequences. Director Evgeny Afineevsky’s previous film was the Oscar-nominated *Winter on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom*. *Cries*, which carries a warning about extremely graphic images, especially those of child victims, consists mainly of eyewitness accounts filmed at great peril by Syrians themselves. It is unsparing in showing the atrocities by both Islamist extremists and the Assad regime with the collaboration of outsiders including Putin’s Russia. We see the plight of ordinary Syrians — those forced to flee and those still caught in the unrelenting violence.

**City of Ghosts** (U.S.)

Director Matthew Heineman earned a 2016 Oscar nomination



Gerald Schmitz

**PANEL DISCUSSION** — The Al Gore documentary *An Inconvenient Sequel* was followed by a major panel on Jan. 22. From left: moderator Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!; Mohamed Nasheed, former president of the Maldives; Jeff Skoll, founder of Participant Media; former U.S. vice-president Al Gore; Native American filmmaker Heather Rae; Canadian scientist and broadcaster Dr. David Suzuki.

for *Cartel Land*, an exposé of U.S.-Mexico cross-border drug trafficking. Here he turns the camera on an even more dangerous territory: that of the part of Syria controlled by the so-called Islamic State, and specifically what has been happening in its proclaimed capital of Raqqa, a city closed to any western media since its takeover in 2014. The focus is on the efforts of the anonymous network of citizen journalists, operating in secret inside and outside Syria under the banner “Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently,” who risk everything to bring the story to the world.

**Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World** (Canada)

Directors Catherine Bainbridge and Alfonso Maiorana received a special jury award for “masterful storytelling” for their eye-opening account of the often overlooked role of indigenous people in the evolution of the North American music scene — from the seminal guitar virtuosity of Link Wray to that of superstars like Jimi Hendrix who was proud of his part-Cherokee ancestry. Artists with indigenous roots have made a remarkable contribution to contemporary music history, and some of the “Native Americans” profiled (Robbie Robertson, Buffy Sainte-Marie) are Canadian.

**Trophy** (U.S.)

Part of the “New Climate” program, directors Shaul Schwarz and Christina Clusiau explore the lucrative and controversial business of big-game hunting in Africa, a showcase for which is the annual convention of the Safari Club International in Las Vegas. Arguments rage over the ethics of this expensive “sport” and how best to protect endangered wildlife species like lions and rhinos. Among those profiled are a Texan biblical fundamentalist hunter and a wealthy South African conservationist seeking to legalize the sale of rhino horn in order to support his herd.

**Icarus** (U.S.)

Director Bryan Fogel received a special jury “Orwell award” for his astonishing personal account of how the Russian state system from Putin on down has corrupted its anti-doping program as required by international sports

competitions. Fogel’s own relationship with the head of that program, Grigory Rodchenkov, forms a key element in the backstory of what led to the scandal of Russia being banned from the Olympics. It plays like a thriller in which Rodchenkov’s fall from grace, followed by secretive exile in the U.S., is an unfinished chapter of a larger story.

**500 Years** (U.S.)

Director Pamela Yates looks at Guatemala’s long struggle to come to terms with the systematic oppression of its indigenous Mayan population, though efforts at truth and reconciliation, the trial of former military dictator Rios Montt, and recent popular protests. A particular focus is on the role of strong indigenous women in leading movements of resistance, five of whom came to Sundance for the world premiere.

**Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman** (U.S.)

In this “New Climate” title, directors Susan Froemke and John Hoffman profile American families who are setting an example in their conscientious approach to working the land and sea. These “rugged co-operators” are dedicated to conservation, biodiversity, and protecting wildlife habitats. It pairs well with another title from directors Laura Dunn and Jef Sewell, *Look and See: A Portrait of Wendell Berry*, which delves into the farmer-writer-philosopher’s trenchant critique of industrial agriculture.

(The latter is a revised version of “The Seer” which premiered at the South By Southwest festival in March 2016.)

**Dina** (U.S.)

Winner of the grand jury award for U.S. documentary, directors Dan Sickles and Antonio Santini take a direct cinema approach to recording the unusual relationship between two middle-aged adults: Dina Buno, a survivor of attempted murder who suffers from a “smorgasbord” of mental challenges, and Scott Levin, an autistic man who works as a Walmart greeter. The moments captured range from the poignant to the humorous to the chilling. Underlying them is an appeal for the acceptance and understanding of difference

though the raw intimacy can make for uncomfortable viewing.

**The New Radical** (U.S.)

Writer-director Adam Bhala Lough profiles young American and British radical activists who are using digital technologies and the dark recesses of cyberspace to pursue their challenges to established authorities. Prominent among them are libertarian and self-described “total zealot” Cody Wilson, the inventor of a 3D-printable assault weapon, and anarchist Amir Taaki, a Bitcoin promoter and hacker. So far, at least, surveillance by the national security state seems to have spurred rather than deterred this new breed of anti-establishment radical.

**Honourable mentions**

*The Force*: Peter Nicks was awarded the U.S. documentary directing award for this powerfully instructive look at the struggle to reform the Oakland police department that has involved federal review, leadership changes, public protests and a push for civilian oversight.

*This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous*: Master documentarian Barbara Kopple records the transgender journey of Canadian Gigi Lazzarato, born Gregory, from challenging childhood to YouTube video stardom.

*Bending the Arc*: We follow young doctor activists who worked together to bring health care to Haiti’s rural poor and have since risen to prominent roles (one is the current president of the World Bank) in advocating a global right to health.

*Water and Power: A California Heist*: Director Marina Zenovich examines the state’s water crisis through the lens of money, power and regulatory control as agribusiness continues to expand while groundwater resources are depleted at an unsustainable rate.

*Oklahoma City*: Director Barak Goodman takes a deeper look at the far-right fanaticism that led to the 1995 bombing of the city’s federal building, killing 168 people; a timely reconsideration of America’s worst act of domestic terrorism given that



# A role model for how to live one’s faith in the world

## Confessions of a Night Owl

Alisha Pomazon



Confession: I have always wanted to be like my grandma. Pretty much my whole family wanted to be like her. I, however, was lucky, because my mother and I lived with my grandmother for most of my childhood. Grandma was a warm, funny, giving, loving woman. She gave me homemade play dough from her bread mixture, and would colour it with my favourite colours because she knew it made me happy. She taught me how to pray. I would kneel beside the bed, and she would sit with me, and we would pray: “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.” I don’t think she realized I watched her while we prayed. Sometimes I would watch to get the words right. Sometimes I would watch to get the actions right. But mostly I would watch because she glowed when she prayed. Her love for God, her love for Mary, was written all over her. And I wanted to be just like her.

Of course, even as a child, I knew I was not. I realize now it was because I did not have her

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faith. I did not have her commitment. I did not have her experience. She was, after all, almost exactly 64 years older. But I tried my best to follow her lead, hoping that, one day, I would be just like her.

As I grew up I learned more about the words I prayed alongside her at night. The first part of that prayer, “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep,” became the roadmap for my prayers. I developed my own relationship with God by talking to God through my prayers. Many of the words to my childhood prayers are long forgotten, but now, every night when I pray, I talk to God, and I do theology. I let those prayers and theologies shape my soul, my understandings of my failings, my desire to grow, and my gratitude for life, grace, and forgiveness. As Grandma always said when I had a problem: “Alisha, offer it up to God.” So I do. Every night. In the dark, in the moonlight, in the star-shine.

To pray at night, in the light of the heavenly bodies, is to pray in the light of the heavenly host. It is to pray in the light of the community of saints. It is to pray having faith that God will keep my soul close no matter what I confess. It is to pray knowing that whatever the darkness, there is still light.



Design Pics

**PRAYING BY STARLIGHT** — “To pray at night, in the light of the heavenly bodies, is to pray in the light of the heavenly host,” writes Alisha Pomazon. “It is to pray in the light of the community of saints. It is to pray having faith that God will keep my soul close no matter what I confess. It is to pray knowing that whatever the darkness, there is still light.”

We lost my grandma nearly seven years ago. In the years since she died, I have realized that my grandma’s life was revelation to me. She herself was a revelation of what I came to learn is the sacramental imagination — the idea that God can reveal through any moment, anything, and anyone. Grandma is how God came to me. She is how I came to God. She taught me to pray. She taught me how to be. Grandma was, and still is, my role model in faith. She was, and still is, my role model for how to live my faith in the world.

My grandma was always welcoming. She always had food to

give, and laughter to share. To me, she was the embodiment of the command to love one’s neighbour. Her whole life showed the importance of taking care of others and taking care with others. Why do I know this? Because she told me: “Love is what you do.” She taught me that when you love, it shows in your actions.

Love is coloured play dough. Love is quoting your grandma in your childhood drawings (my mom kept a drawing of mine with “Love is what you do” inside a heart from when I was seven). Love is taking seriously the lessons the lives of others teach. Love is putting those lessons into

action. I still want to be just like my grandma. I want to treat others the way she did — with care, kindness, and love.

It is said that all theology is personal. I believe this is true. It doesn’t mean so much that all theology is done from a personal standpoint, although that may be true too. Rather, I believe all theology is personal because it *must* be personal, personal to each of us. It must penetrate to the depths of us. We must feel its truth. And we, in turn, must be a witness to it, in our words and in our actions.

And now when I pray, I hope I pray in my grandmother’s light.

## Alternative festival includes good films

Continued from page 9

some 500 militant extreme-right groups are currently active.

**Slamdance docs**

Deserving of notice are several documentaries from this alternative festival that takes place during Sundance. Its top jury and audience award went to *Strad Style*, directed by Stefan Avalos who trained as a classical violinist. The film’s subject, Daniel

Houck, is a penniless, eccentric rural Ohio recluse obsessed with the famous Italian violin-makers Stradivari and Guarneri. A great stranger-than-fiction true story unfolds as, incredibly, he succeeds in making a replica of a priceless Guarneri violin for the virtuoso concert violinist Razvan Stoica.

In *What Lies Upstream* director Cullen Hoback presents the disturbing findings of his investigation into Americans’ health

concerns over the safety of water supplies. The focus turns from the scandal over lead in Flint, Michigan, to the widespread abuses in West Virginia where scientific evidence of contamination from chemical, industrial and coal-mining sources is up against state-corporate collusion including by regulators charged with protecting the public. It’s a situation the Trump administration’s agenda could make even worse.

## Zootopia received Oscar nomination

Continued from page 8

*Dragon*, a “reimagining” of the 1977 Disney musical. This very tall tale about an orphaned toddler (Levi Alexander) raised by a friendly green dragon is directed at a gentle pace by David Lowery with pleasantly fanciful results.

— A glorious drama that applies the traditional formula of an uplifting sports film to the real-life story of Ugandan chess prodigy Phiona Mutesi (Madina Nalwanga), *Queen of Katwe* — director Mira Nair’s adaptation of Tim Crothers’ book — then goes in unexpected directions. The result is a remarkably inspirational movie.

— Track and field legend


Jesse Owens (Stephan James), whose performance at the 1936 Berlin Olympics dealt a devastating blow to Nazism, is the focus of *Race*. Director Stephen Hopkins’ entertaining film provides a valuable history lesson for adolescents as well as their parents.

— Interstellar derring-do is the order of the day in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. Director Gareth Edwards’ rousing prequel to the 1977 kickoff of the saga stars Felicity Jones, Diego Luna and Alan Tudyk as gallant rebels fighting the evil Empire (PG-13).

— *The Young Messiah*, director and co-writer Cyrus Nowrasteh’s engaging screen ver-

sion of Anne Rice’s novel *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*, remains faithful to Scripture even as it speculates about the childhood of Jesus (Adam Greaves-Neal). This sensitive exploration of the mystery of the Incarnation will intrigue and entertain viewers of most ages.

— Anthropomorphism runs amok in the animated comedy-adventure *Zootopia*. Directors Byron Howard and Rich Moore, together with co-director Jared Bush, promote tolerance as hard work and optimism as they tell the story of a rabbit police rookie (voice of Ginnifer Goodwin) and her battle to win the respect of her co-workers.



## BOSCO FOUNDATION

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**Child & Family Services Foundation**

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# An invitation to move through suffering to forgiveness



## Liturgy and Life

Sylvain Lavoie, OMI

In the second reading today St. Paul invites us to join with him in *suffering for the sake of the Gospel*. Do we have the faith to respond to this invitation by dealing with suffering in a redemptive way?

It is fitting that the first reading is all about faith. Abraham had the strong, trusting faith in the providence of God to set out on a journey into the unknown that made him our ancestor in faith.

The invitation from St. Paul invites us also to a journey of faith. St. Paul met Jesus in person, on the road to Damascus. Paul, who was persecuting the followers of Jesus, experienced the compassion, the forgiveness, and the acceptance of Jesus. The one he thought was dead appeared to him, spoke to him and forgave him. Jesus invited Paul to believe in him, and to follow him in suffering for the sake of the Gospel. That encounter transformed him from Saul to Paul, and eventually empowered him to, like Jesus, give his life for the sake of the Gospel.

The transfiguration of Jesus in the Gospel links with Paul's invitation. The purpose of that scintillating theophany was to take away the scandal of the cross, to prepare the disciples for how God often works best in our lives through suffering. In the midst of all that glory, brightness and exhilaration which Peter wanted to cling to, Moses and Elijah appeared speaking to Jesus about his imminent suffering, his death on the cross, his passing in Jerusalem. The message is clear — the way to that glory, for Jesus, and for us, is through the cross, through some kind of faithful suffering.

Rabbi Harold Kushner, who wrote the book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, concludes that the best

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answer to the mystery of suffering in life is that God does not take away our pain. Rather, God gives us the faith and the strength to go through that pain and find both blessing and profound meaning in that suffering that now becomes redemptive.

The way of the world is to try to avoid pain and inconvenience. Is that not at the root of the plague of abortion in our society, and also rampant addictions? Children are now seen as an inconvenience by many, rather than as a gift from God. And addiction can be defined as “an attempt to avoid legitimate suffering.” We seek to medicate our pain, rather than choosing to be fully human and deal with our pain. Too often we try to ignore the suffering within, rather than facing it and finding meaning, thereby transforming it into redemptive suffering for the sake of the Gospel.

That pain begins usually at a young age, when the love we need to flourish as a human being is not there in our family of origin, or in our surroundings as a child. There may be neglect, abuse, ridicule, lack of appreciation and affection — a myriad of ways that our needs to be loved, to belong and to be valued, are not met.

Psychologists tell us we can respond to that hurt in two ways: fight or flight. If we are anger-based people, we will

**Second Sunday in Lent**  
**March 12, 2017**

**Genesis 12:1-4**  
**Psalm 121**  
**Romans 4:1-5, 13-17**  
**John 3:1-17**

immediately and instinctively retaliate and fight back. If we are fear-based people, we will flee. We can do that in a myriad of ways — alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, silent treatment, etc.

Jesus offers us another way, based on faith, and that is forgiveness. He teaches us to have faith, to enter into that pain, to hold that pain, to pray about it, to share our pain with trusted others, and to give that pain back to those who caused it with love that is pure forgiveness. That alone breaks the cycle of violence that rules much of our world. That alone is the way to freedom, peace, new life, and even joy.

As impossible as that may seem, St. Paul reminds us that we are not on our own: “This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ

Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”

Paul is saying that the One who had power over even



death, gives us that same power not to fight back or run away, but to deal with our suffering and pain in a way that will be light to the world.

Velma's future brother-in-law sexually molested her at the age of 14. She carried resentment toward him for 14 years, until this man's son molested her daughter. They moved to another community. Later, her granddaughter was abused by one of her own sons, the victim's uncle. Then Velma fell apart. The memory of what she went through, all her anger and resentment, became too much for her to carry. She sought help from her pastor, who put her through a 12-step healing process. She learned to express her hurt toward her abuser following Matthew 18:15. She met with him in the presence of the pastor, read a letter to her abuser sharing her feelings at what happened, and forgiveness took place on both sides, leading to healing.

Velma's story shared at a 12-step pilgrimage revealed the underlying truth that her actions *were impossible*, except through the power of the Holy Spirit. This truly is the new way that Jesus brought about, the transfigured way he invites us all into, the way of the cross.

The eucharist makes present for us the sacrificial love of Jesus on the cross that Moses and Elijah addressed on the mountain. It also empowers us to be like Jesus, to deal with our own pain as he did, through forgiveness, rather than to fight or flee.

So let us have faith, believe in Jesus and accept St. Paul's invitation to join with him in suffering for the sake of the Gospel.

# We are infected with virus of categorizing people as winners or losers

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Our society tends to divide us up into winners and losers. Sadly, we don't often reflect on how this affects our relationships with each other, nor on what it means for us as Christians.

What does it mean? In essence, that our relationships with each other are too charged with competition and jealousy because we are too infected with the drive to out-do, out-achieve and out-hustle each other. For example, here are some slogans that pass for wisdom today: *Win! Be the best at something! Show*

*others you're more talented than they are! Show that you are more sophisticated than others! Don't apologize for putting yourself first! Don't be a loser!*

These phrases aren't just innocent axioms cheerleading us to work harder; they're viruses infecting us so that most everything in our world now conspires with the narcissism within us to push us to achieve, to set ourselves apart from others, to stand out, to be at the top of the class, to be the best athlete, the best dressed, the best looking, the most musically talented, the most popular, the most experienced, the most travelled, the one who knows most about cars, or movies, or history, or sex, or whatever. At all costs we drive ourselves to find something at which we can beat others. At all costs we try to somehow set ourselves apart from and above oth-

ers. That idea is almost genetically ingrained in us now.

And because of that we tend to misjudge others and misjudge our own meaning and purpose. We structure everything too much around achieving and standing out. When we achieve, when we win, when we are better than others at something, our lives seem fuller; our self-image inflates and we feel confident and worthwhile. Conversely, when we cannot stand out, when we're just another face in the crowd, we struggle to maintain a healthy self-image.

Either way, we are forever struggling with jealousy and dissatisfaction because we cannot help constantly seeing our own lack of talent, beauty, and achievement in relationship to others' successes. And so we both envy and hate those who are talented, beautiful, powerful, rich, and famous, holding them up for adulation even as we secretly wait for their downfall, like the crowd that praises Jesus on Palm Sunday and then screams for his crucifixion just five days later.

This leaves us in an unhappy place. How do we form community with each other when our very talents and achievement are cause for jealousy and resentment, when they are sources of

envy and weapons of competition? How do we love each other when our competitive spirits make us see each other as rivals?

Community happens only when we can let the talents and achievements of others enhance our own lives and we can let our own talents and achievements enhance, rather than threaten, others. But we're generally incapable of this. We're too infected with competitiveness to allow ourselves to not let the achievements and talents of others threaten us and actualize our own talents in a way so as to enhance the lives of others rather than to let ourselves stand out.

Like our culture, we too tend to divide people into winners and losers, admiring and hating the former, looking down on the latter, constantly sizing each other up, rating each other's bodies, hair, intelligence, clothing, talents and achievements. But, as we do this, we vacillate between feeling depressed and belittled when others outscore us, or inflated and pompous when we appear superior to them.

And this becomes ever more difficult to overcome as we become more obsessed with our need to stand out, be special, to sit above, to make a mark for ourselves. We live in a chronic,

inchoate jealousy where the talents of others are perennially perceived as a threat to us. This keeps us both anxious and less than faithful to our Christian faith.

Our Christian faith invites us not to compare ourselves with others, to not make efforts to stand out, and to not let ourselves be threatened by and jealous of other's gifts. Our faith invites us to join a circle of life with those who believe that there is no need to stand out or be special, and who believe that other people's gifts are not a threat, but rather something that enriches all lives, our own included.

When we divide people into winners and losers, then our talents and gifts become sources of envy and weapons of competition and superiority. This is true not just for individuals, but for nations as well.

One of these competitive slogans within our culture tells us: *Show me a good loser and I will show you a loser!* Well, seen in this light, Jesus was a loser. People were shaking their heads at his death, and there was no championship ring on his finger. He didn't look good in the world's eyes. A loser! But, in his underachieving we all achieved salvation. Somewhere there's a lesson there!

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# Colloquium interruptus: keeping conversations safe

By Edna Froese

Communication diseases come in many forms. What they have in common is their unfruitfulness. Or just call it failure, if you like. Because we talk to each other in so many languages (verbal, visual, tonal), and interpret what we hear and see according to what we think we already know, entire books cannot exhaust the catalogue of ways our speech might go astray or explain why messages miss their mark.

So for now, let me hold forth on one communication disease — *colloquium interruptus* (my invented label), which in my experience presents itself in two main forms. Neither of these dialogue destroyers is deliberate, as lying usually is. Speakers infected with *colloquium interruptus*, unlike lovers who engage in *coitus interruptus*, operate without conscious decision. Indeed, most seem blissfully unaware of the devastation their speech habits leave behind. And they are habits. *Colloquium interruptus* is not an occasional misspeaking, at least not for primary practitioners.

The most common manifestation is what we usually think of when we talk of interruption: someone begins speaking before his or her interlocutor has finished the sentence or idea or story, sometimes using as pretext an introductory “that reminds me of” or “speaking of which” — signal phrases that identify a chronic interrupter who has long since mastered the art of dominating conversations through aggressive colonization of verbal space. More frequently, the evil begins through mere eagerness to rebut whatever is being said. Some phrase, some small bit of the story triggers a memory or provokes disagreement, and the interrupter takes over the dialogue, often talking more loudly over the other, much as small children do

Froese taught English literature at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon for many years until her retirement. She currently works part time as academic editor while relishing the freedom to read and write for pleasure.



Design Pics

**CONVERSATIONAL SPACE** — If we are listening to hear, rather than listening to speak, then we are more likely to be patient and even more likely to gain a friend as well as information.

when determined to be heard. The less common presentation of *colloquium interruptus* is more subtle, because it masquerades as attentive listening. Rather than breaking in on the speaker, the interrupter gains control through questions that imply active listening. Quite possibly, the practitioner perceives herself or himself as a good listener. The problem is that the questions resemble a multiple choice exam, and thus fence the initial speaker into the interrupter’s frame of reference. Let’s imagine two people talking about wintertime leisure activities. Speaker 1: “We’ve joined an international folk dance club,” and before she can explain anything further, Speaker 2 has picked up the conversational ball, which hadn’t been dropped yet: “So do you learn Irish step dancing or Ukrainian dancing?” Speaker 1, pushed immediately into specifics, replies, “No, those dances are done in specialized groups. We learn dances from a variety of countries.” Speaker 2 leaps in again, “Oh, do you get to do Spanish flamenco dancing? That would be so cool.” “No, that’s too difficult for

beginners.” But Speaker 2 will not relinquish control. Every question includes limited choices, forcing the first speaker to keep changing direction and to begin every reply with “No.” It hardly matters that Speaker 1 is permitted to finish sentences and answer questions. The conversation still feels like a verbal grilling, or even a fencing match. What’s more, the continual necessity of first negating assumptions prevents new information from gaining space in the air between the two people. Nevertheless, if we take into account the complexity of human communication during which choice and order of words, facial expressions, and unspoken assumptions all become part of the dialogue, it’s clear that something does get through. The chief message of both varieties of *colloquium interruptus*, unfortunately, is that the interruptees have nothing of value, nor of interest, to say to the interrupters. It is a form of self-aggrandizing control that silences those who might otherwise puncture the illusion of wis-

dom and competence. I have over-simplified and exaggerated the problem here, although not much. I have also laid bare my own desire to be accurately understood (according to my lights) by my conversational partners. As John Durham Peters, in *Speaking into the Air* (a comprehensive and philosophical historical overview of human communication) observes, “Communication is a term that evokes a utopia where nothing is misunderstood, hearts are open, and expressions are uninhibited” (2). Even the first chapters of Peters’ book are sufficient to convince the reader that we are always “speaking into the air” and that our transmissions are

inevitably contingent, temporary, and incomplete. And that is before the bearers of *colloquium interruptus* have infected the conversations. I have no easy fixes, not even any charming, all-purpose ripostes that will skewer — or cure — offenders. What keeps echoing in my mind, however, whenever I’ve had to spend too much time resisting conversational colonialism, is a statement about listening that I cannot attribute to any source: “there is a difference between listening to speak and listening to hear.” If we are listening to speak, then we are focused too much on our own pending replies, and that carries a high risk of treating our dialogue partners as backboards against which we can bounce our wisdom into the world. If we are listening to hear, then we are more likely to be patient and even more likely to gain a friend as well as information. If we practise that kind of listening, we and our conversation partners will probably still communicate imperfectly, even at our best. On the other hand, we can at least keep our conversational space safe enough that we can, together, seek to discover what we really think and feel.

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# Outreach program explores issues related to poverty

By Kate O’Gorman

The Justice and Outreach Year (J.O.Y.) of Formation program continues to awaken and surprise. The program offers 10 weekends to learn about and explore various social justice issues. Participants are offered the opportunity to consider how Catholic social teaching and our baptismal call to discipleship are connected to each issue. There is also an invitation to discern how we are all individually called by God to respond to the needs of others. Each participant enters the weekend with an open heart and a deep desire to be of service. Often, through these encounters, we find ourselves humbled, our perspectives and worldviews broadened and our hearts broken open just a little bit wider. This was the case in December when we focused our attention on the issues of poverty in our city.

There is something about poverty that can cast a shadow of trepidation and an element of fear when it is examined up close. Learning about poverty, listening to facts and statistics across a boardroom table, while a necessary and important part of the dialogue, can restrict understanding to a sanitized and one-dimensional tableau. It is far riskier to come face-to-face with the people who live and wrestle with the effects of poverty on a day-to-day basis. Seeing, hearing, smelling and touching poverty begs a vulnerability that most of us tend to shy away from, myself included. And yet, it is here, within this place of discomfort and vulnerability, that Jesus calls to us.

The J.O.Y. program was designed to invite us precisely into this space of discomfort so

that we could push past our well-developed biases and begin to see brokenness with resurrection eyes. Nevertheless, it was with nervous apprehension that our J.O.Y. community went to visit The Lighthouse, a non-profit organization that offers emergency shelter, supportive living and affordable housing for men, women and families in Saskatoon.

We had each driven by this agency numerous times before — maybe we’d hurried past as we went to catch a movie at the theatre on the opposite corner or edged by it on our way to dinner somewhere downtown. We all had a peripheral awareness of the former hotel that now played host to many of Saskatoon’s marginalized but few of us had ever been inside. Perhaps, like me, some of us had made a deliberate detour to avoid the man huddled in the corner to keep warm or avoided eye contact with the panhandler asking for spare change. By walking directly into The Lighthouse, we were being asked to confront those times when we had participated in the denial of “the least of these” — don’t look and it’s not there, don’t engage and they don’t exist.

Entering the foyer, we huddled together unsure of our surrounding — eyes wide, senses pricked to the sounds, smells and sights around us — waiting for instruction. Our main job that afternoon was to trim the main hall with Christmas decorations. Eager to keep busy, we dutifully got started. We hauled large plastic bins of garlands and ornaments into the main gathering areas and began to set up trees in and amongst the crowd of people who called The Lighthouse home. The

shelter’s clientele is diverse; men and women of varying ages, races and abilities lounged and visited with one another, sharing a laugh or two while we skirted around them trying to make ourselves useful. The first half hour was an awkward dance of us versus them as we considered each other with tentative smiles, keeping an acceptable distance.

This could have been the extent of our involvement — a safe and non-threatening experience that demanded nothing of us except our time. But it wasn’t. One by one, in a brave offering of friendship, some of the clients began to initiate conversation. Many shared their story with us. We learned of one man’s interest in music and his ability to play the piano; another told us about how he had struggled with his health, showing us the surgical marks left on his body. One woman told us about how much

she loved the community at The Lighthouse, saying it was her extended family, while a young man talked about how he had become homeless in his early teens and had not been able to undo the ramifications of that. Some of us were given a lesson in Tai Chi as someone else confided that this would be the first time they had ever decorated a Christmas tree.

We found ourselves entering easy conversation and being invited into relationship. We were offered the gift of their vulnerability and being asked, in turn, to see these men and women as friends who had a story to tell.

As part of our visit we received a tour, heard the mission of The Lighthouse and learned about the issue of poverty as it is experienced by so many in Saskatoon — but, as always, it was the interaction with people that became the true gift of that day.

Biases began to be revealed for what they were, assumptions were called into question, perspectives were invited to be changed and hearts were unavoidably opened. Because of our experience through the J.O.Y. program, we were awakened to the unmistakable fingerprint of friendship, love and humanity present in the people who utilize the resources at The Lighthouse. We discovered that the divide between us and those who suffer poverty is less wide than we would like to think and, thus, our service became one of mutuality — recognizing and affirming the dignity of one another and walking together in our vulnerability and brokenness without averting our eyes.

Find more information about the Justice and Outreach Year (J.O.Y.) of Formation at: <http://www.joyformationprogram.com>

## Woman at the well brings needed dialogue

### Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



*Woman by the well  
Grace thirsting for her  
Mist veils lifted from her face  
A face every religion  
tries to remember*

The story of the woman by the well begins with Jesus feeling

very human . . . depleted and drained and in need of rest and replenishment. So he sits by Jacob’s well and, when a woman arrives with a bucket, he expresses his need: “Give me a drink of water.”

The woman is taken aback. In speaking to her, Jesus is crossing all kinds of boundaries and so she does not attend to his request, but asks instead, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman for a drink?” If she were from our “politically correct” culture, she would have been thinking or saying, “inappropriate behaviour.” Jesus responds by calling attention to a deeper level of encounter. “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

The Samaritan woman does not comprehend, resisting when faced with an agenda of the untrusted other. Her attention is on what Jesus lacks: “Sir you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave

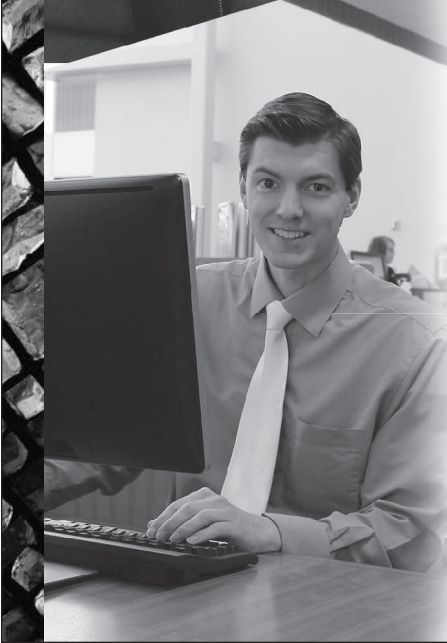

us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?”

When we see others through filters of judgment, deficiency, and comparison, it’s an isolating stance — setting us apart from them, from God, and even from ourselves. Yet the redemptive aspect of the story is that the Samaritan woman does not disregard Jesus; she continues to dialogue. At any moment she could have stopped the conversation and walked away, “setting limits” on the perceived presumption and intrusion. She doesn’t. She keeps the flow of the dialogue and the inquiry and the search for common ground going.

Yet she attempts to turn attention away from herself to a discussion of religion (something a little more abstract and not so uncomfortable): “Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” Again, Jesus reframes the communion available to all seekers: “. . . the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.” God thirsts for intimacy with us as much as we thirst to know and be known by God. One imagines the Samaritan woman as beautiful.

The Samaritan woman knows about God, yet her willingness to stay the course, to continue the dialogue with Jesus, to listen and to learn, allows her to experience God. She gets it. Something shifts in her, she who was alone and marginalized (coming as she does to draw water from the village well at high noon instead of in the cool of early morning with all the other village women). She returns to her community to draw others to Jesus.


The dialogue between Jesus and the woman transforms both of them and in turn brings healing to a whole community. Dialogue can do that. Dialogue in which each listens deeply to the other is transformative.



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### Christians offer sanctuary

Stories of Christians providing refuge to Jews during the Second World War have edified us. From afar, we admire their heroism amid the daily risks they faced. The alternative for Jews who weren't given refuge was the extermination camps of the Holocaust.

Could it be that we are facing a similar situation in North America today? Americans are moving in that direction.

A recent CNN story reported that an underground network is preparing homes in Los Angeles to hide undocumented immigrants. Pastor Ada Valiente is part of a movement that is refurbishing homes to host immigrant families.

By "host," she means providing refuge to people who may be sought by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, known as ICE. The families are undocumented immigrants, fearing an ICE raid and possible deportation.

Valiant belongs to a network formed by Los Angeles interfaith leaders in the wake of Donald Trump's election. Their intent is to shelter hundreds, possibly thousands of undocumented people in safe houses across Southern California.

Their plan is to offer another sanctuary beyond religious buildings or schools, ones that require federal authorities to obtain warrants before entering the homes.

"That's what we need to do as a community to keep families together," Valiente told CNN.

The sanctuary movement is not something new in the United States. The sanctuary movement began in the 1980s when U.S. congregations resisted federal law and provided shelter for Central Americans fleeing violence in their home countries. Many con-

gregations provided housing for undocumented immigrants; others offered food and legal assistance.

The current movement is providing additional protection in private homes. Federal agents need a warrant to enter a home. This offers a higher level of constitutional protection than houses of worship. It makes it harder for federal agents to find undocumented immigrants because churches and synagogues are technically public spaces that authorities could enter to conduct law enforcement actions.

Many Christian congregations base their involvement in the sanctuary movement on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25, which teaches disciples to feed the hungry and fight for those in prison. Jews who are part of the movement base their involvement on their experiences during the Second World War.

"It's hard as a Jew," one Jew told CNN, "not to think about both all the people who did open their doors and their homes and take risks to safeguard Jews in (a) moment when they were really vulnerable, as well as those who didn't. We'd like to be the people who did."

Catholics are also becoming vocal supporters of the sanctuary movement. Pope Francis' constant calls to support migrants is one motivation. Another is the Gospel call to resist unjust or immoral laws. The Acts of the Apostles 5:29, for example, calls on Christians to obey God rather than human beings.

This was the basis of American bishops opposing the Affordable Care Act's mandate that Catholic hospitals, universities and other institutions violate their consciences. The U.S. bishops proclaimed the following:

"An unjust law cannot be obeyed. In the face of an unjust law, an accommodation is not to be sought, especially by resorting to equivocal words and deceptive practices. If we face today the prospect of

unjust laws, then Catholics in America, in solidarity with our fellow citizens, must have the courage not to obey them. No American desires this. No Catholic welcomes it. But if it should fall upon us, we must discharge it as a duty of citizenship and an obligation of faith."

Cardinal Joseph Tobin, the newly named pastor of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., has said the current policies of the U.S. administration toward immigrants and refugees is at odds with the clear command of the Scriptures to welcome the vulnerable stranger.

San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy told participants at a recent Vatican-sponsored World Meeting of Popular Movements in Modesto, California, that President Trump was the candidate of disruption. "Well now we must all become disruptors," he said, calling immigration the key issue for Catholics in their local churches.

"We must disrupt those who would seek to send troops into our streets to deport the undocumented, to rip mothers and fathers from their families. We must disrupt those who portray refugees as enemies rather than our brothers and sisters in terrible need. We must disrupt those who train us to see Muslim men, women and children as forces of fear rather than as children of God. We must disrupt those who seek to rob our medical care, especially from the poor. We must disrupt those who would take even food stamps and nutrition assistance from the mouths of children," he said.

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago once famously said that while he would die in his bed, one of his successors could well die in prison, given the secular trends in North America today. That is the unexpected challenge facing Christians today. — PWN

## Famine ‘a tragic reality’ in South Sudan, according to UN

By Amanda Thorsteinsson, Winnipeg

Famine has been declared in parts of South Sudan, where about 100,000 people are facing starvation, says a United Nations release dated Feb. 20.

In addition, a further one million people are on the brink of famine.

The ongoing civil war in South Sudan, now in its third year, has devastated the country's economy, disrupting normal food transportation chains, and preventing countless small-scale farming households from growing their

crops and tending their herds.

This is the most serious hunger crisis there has been in South Sudan since the conflict began. The UN news release notes that 4.9 million people — or about 40 per cent of South Sudan's population, are in need of urgent food, agriculture, and nutrition assistance.

"We are deeply troubled by what we are seeing in South Sudan, and responding as we are able," says Canadian Foodgrains Bank Executive Director Jim Cornelius.

"That the food crisis has led to famine conditions for so many is

devastating," he says.

Since the beginning of the recent civil conflict in December 2013, the Foodgrains Bank has committed over \$6 million to providing emergency food and nutrition assistance to over 114,000 people.

Currently, the Foodgrains Bank is providing emergency food assistance to conflict-affected people in and around the capital city of Juba, where many people have sought safety. That response is through Foodgrains Bank member World Relief Canada.

In neighbouring Uganda,

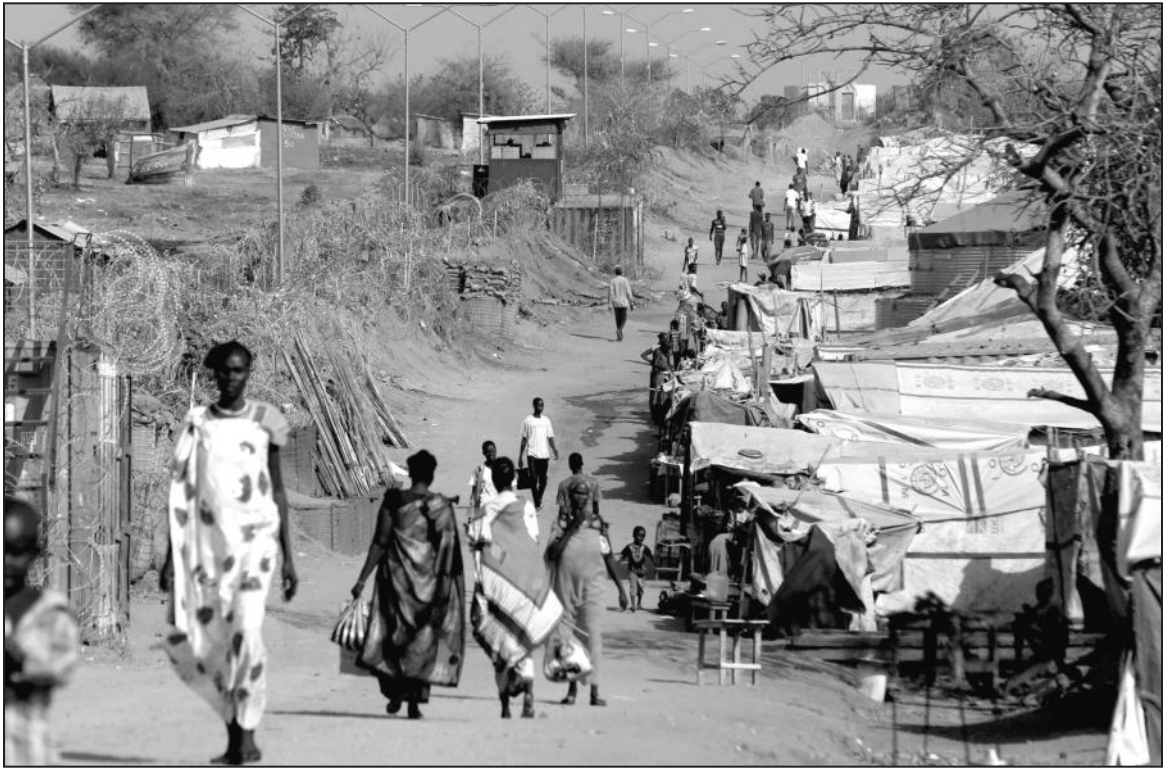
where roughly 700,000 South Sudanese have fled in search of safety, the Foodgrains Bank is responding through its member ERDO to the needs of 2,500 pregnant and nursing mothers who have arrived in the country severely undernourished.

This type of support is exceptionally critical, as children who do not receive proper nutrition while in the womb or as infants can bear the effects for the rest of their lives, long after the initial crisis has passed.

"The women, men and children in South Sudan are not forgotten, and they need urgent help," says Cornelius, noting that further immediate assistance is needed to ensure the famine does not spread.

"Please consider making a donation, and also praying for peace in South Sudan."

Donations to the Foodgrains Bank response through its members in South Sudan are welcome at <http://foodgrainsbank.ca/campaigns/south-sudan-appeal-2/>



**SOUTH SUDAN VICTIMS DISPLACED BY WAR** — Internally displaced people walk on a road close to the outer perimeter of a United Nations mission Feb. 16 outside Juba, South Sudan. South Sudan's Catholic bishops have denounced government and rebel troops for attacking the civilian population and at times operating "scorched-earth" policies in defiance of international law.

## Canadian food banks plant roots for the long term

By Sylvain Charlebois, Halifax

Facing declining donations, an increasing number of Canadian food banks are growing their own food. Canadians may feel guilty for not giving enough but they shouldn't. This is really about food banks adapting for the betterment of society.

The Mississauga, Ont., and Surrey, B.C., food banks recently launched vertical farms using hydroponics and aquaponics. The Regina food bank has a highly sophisticated LED-illuminated greenhouse. And more such projects are expected to be launched across the country.

The fact that more food banks embracing the supply chain and growing food could be seen as an act of desperation due to decreasing donations. But the trend can benefit many, starting with the food banks.

The change speaks to a seismic shift in how food banks perceive their socio-economic role. Donations have been declining for a variety of reasons.

Citizens are hard-pressed to give high-quality food away, although there's plenty of peanut butter and Kraft Dinner on hand.

Food industrials like grocers and processors have forged incredibly generous partnerships with food banks across the country. And since food banks aren't going to become obsolete anytime soon, these partnerships are key to their survival. But such partnerships rely on donations of leftover food that nobody else wants.

And farmers are as generous as they can be, given that food safety regulations and other types of constraints sometimes get in the way. Some provinces now offer incentives to farmers to entice

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# Renewal marks 50th anniversary

By Peter Finney Jr.

NEW ORLEANS (CNS) — For the past 50 years, Patti Gallagher Mansfield has kept the Champion Wiremaster stenographer's notebook, 5-by-8 inches, safely tucked away among her most cherished, sacred items in her dresser drawer.

The notebook has 80 ruled pages. It cost 25 cents. One was given to each of the 25 students from Duquesne University and La Roche College who attended a weekend retreat in February 1967 at The Ark and the Dove Retreat House just outside Pittsburgh.

Between the slightly faded, tan covers are page after page of Mansfield's handwritten reflections in blue ballpoint pen of the mysterious things that happened on that three-day retreat, a weekend that ultimately changed the course of the Catholic Church worldwide.

"Who would have ever imagined — 80 pages, Patti Gallagher — that what I would record in this notebook would have any significance to over 120 million Catholics all over the world?" Mansfield, now 70, said. "It is amazing."

The weekend — now called the "Duquesne Weekend" — is

acknowledged as the birth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement in the United States, which has spread throughout the world. The Charismatic Renewal centres on the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" in which God's Spirit renews and fills a person with grace. Mansfield talks about releasing the graces already conferred through baptism and confirmation.

"As far as I know, there were individual Catholics who had been baptized in the Spirit," said Mansfield, who added the Duquesne Weekend was the first known case in which a group had "a common experience" that then spread quickly to college campuses, rectories, hospitals and parishes across the country.

"That could not have been happened unless the Lord were behind it and that he willed for this grace of being baptized in the Holy Spirit to become more widely experienced by the whole church," she said.

She made the comments in an interview with the *Clarion Herald*, the New Orleans archdiocesan newspaper, in advance of the movement's golden anniversary celebration, held Feb. 17-19 in the same retreat house

chapel in Gibsonsia, Pennsylvania.

Mansfield, who was a 20-year-old Duquesne junior in 1967, and her husband, Al, now serve as liaisons for the Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

While at Duquesne, she had been a regular member of a Bible study group, and there was talk from two professors who had attended an interfaith prayer meeting a few weeks earlier that they had received baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The professors suggested a new name for the students' upcoming retreat — "The Holy Spirit" — and asked the group to read *The Cross and the Switchblade*, a 1962 book by pastor David Wilkerson about his ministry to youth drug gangs, and the first four chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

Mansfield recalled hearing a presentation about surrendering her life to Jesus that prompted her to write: "Jesus, be real for me!" She tore out a page from her notebook and posted a message on the bulletin board: "I want a miracle!"

That night, two members of the group were supposed to celebrate their birthdays with a party, but "there was a listlessness in the group," Mansfield recalled.

She went upstairs to the chapel, now called the Upper Room, to pray. She remembers giving her life to God.

"I'm grateful I wrote everything down," Mansfield said. "It's not like I remember everything that was said, but I remember how I felt. I remember feeling like my body was on fire. I asked the priest (on the retreat), 'Who should I tell?' and he said, 'The Lord will show you.'"

Two female students from La Roche College approached Mansfield, and one of them asked, "What happened to you? Your face looks different."

"Well," Mansfield told them, "I've experienced what we've been talking about."

Mansfield said she led the women to the front of the chapel and said, "Lord, whatever you did for me, do for them."



CNS/Frank J Meth

**CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC ANNIVERSARY** — The notebook that Patti Gallagher Mansfield has kept for 50 years contains her journal of the "Duquesne Weekend" in 1967, the acknowledged beginning of the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement. Mansfield, who lives in Covington, Louisiana, with her husband Al, says many of the 25 college students from Duquesne University and La Roche College in Pittsburgh received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the three-day retreat.

## Pope condemns Christians who lead a double life

By PM staff

In a Feb. 23 homily at *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, pope Francis denounced Catholics who live a hypocritical life, saying it would be better if they were atheists. Catholics are hypocrites, he said, when they go to mass and participate in church associations, but then do not pay fair wages to employees or they launder money.

The pope reflected spontaneously on the day's Gospel of St. Mark, in which Jesus gives a warning about anyone who "causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin."

"Cut off your hand," "pluck out (your eye)," but do not "scandalize the little ones," meaning the just ones who believe in God, the pope said, according to Vatican Radio.

"But what is scandal? Scandal is to say one thing and doing another; it's (leading a) double life," he said.

"There are those who say, 'I am very Catholic, I always go to mass, I belong to this and that association,'" he said.

But, he added, some of these people should also say, "My life is not Christian, I don't pay my employees proper salaries, I exploit people, I do dirty business, I launder money, (I lead) a double life."

"There are many Catholics who are like this and they cause scandal," he said. "How many times have we all heard people say 'if that person is a bad Catholic, it is better to be an atheist.'"

"It's enough to see the news on TV, or to read the papers," he noted. "In the papers there are so many scandals, and there is also

the great publicity of the scandals. And with the scandals there is destruction."

He gave the example of a company that was on the brink of failure. The leaders wanted to avoid a just strike, but the company had not done well, and they wanted to talk with the authorities of the company. The people didn't have money for their daily needs because they had not received their wages. And the head of the company, a Catholic, was taking his winter vacation on a beach in the Middle East, and the people knew it, even if it hadn't made the papers. "These are scandals," the pope said.

Jesus says in the Gospel that those who are the cause of scandal will knock on the doors of heaven and introduce themselves to God, saying, "Don't you remember me? I went to church, I was close to you. . . . Don't you remember all the offerings I gave?"

To these, the pope said, on judgment day God will say: "Yes, I remember those: All dirty. All stolen from the poor. I don't know you."

This, he said, will be the response Jesus will give to Catholics who lead a double life.

"All of us," the pope insisted, would benefit from asking if there is any resemblance of a double life, if there's "excessive confidence" and a tendency to say "yes, but the Lord will forgive it all," or that there will be time to convert at a later point.

"Let us think about this," Francis said, closing his homily. "And let us take advantage of the word of the Lord and remember that on this the Lord is very severe. Scandal destroys."

From news sources.

## 'Defend Ukrainian children': archbishop

By Carol Glatz

ROME (CNS) — The head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church called on the international community to "stop the aggressor" in Ukraine's "forgotten conflict" and help the one million children in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

"I am appealing to the international community to defend Ukrainian children, victims of war, keeping in mind that in our country we are experiencing a humanitarian emergency in Europe that has not been experienced since the Second World War," said Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kiev-Halych, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Despite efforts the past three years, a "stable ceasefire" has never been achieved, "therefore, we ask international organizations to continue diplomatic approaches to stop the aggressor and end the war so that true peace can be reached," he said in a written statement received by Catholic News Service Feb. 22.

The archbishop made the appeal after UNICEF released a report Feb. 17 saying that one million children in Ukraine were in urgent need of humanitarian aid — nearly double the number of kids in need the same time last year.

The increased numbers were due to the ongoing fighting and deteriorating economic situation of families, loss of housing and reduced access to health care and education, the report said. One in five schools in eastern Ukraine have been damaged or destroyed.

"Hundreds of daily ceasefire violations put children's physical safety and psychological well-being at risk," the UNICEF report said. Thousands of children face the danger of landmines and unex-



CNS/Alexander Ermochenko, EPA

**UKRAINE CHILDREN SHELTER** — Children sit in a shelter during shelling Feb. 3 in Donetsk, Ukraine. The head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church called on the international community to "stop the aggressor" in Ukraine's "forgotten conflict" and help the one million children in need of humanitarian assistance.

ploded ordinance as well as active shelling in their neighbourhoods, it said.

"Teachers, psychologists and parents report signs of severe psychosocial distress among children, including nightmares, aggression, social withdrawal and panic triggered by loud noises," it said.

In his appeal, Shevchuk said the Catholic Church has a moral obligation to speak up for the voiceless, particularly the children.

"The increasingly tragic situation of the nation — there are 1.7 million people displaced — remains invisible in the eyes of the general public," he said. Such tragedy, he said, "cannot and must not remain invisible."

Meanwhile, Archbishop Bernardo Auza, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council dur-

ing an open debate Feb. 21 that "all necessary steps should be taken to enforce the ceasefire and to implement the measures agreed upon" for Ukraine while respecting basic human rights and international laws.

All efforts must be made to end "this unresolved conflict and to find a political solution through dialogue and negotiation," he said. It is also "the obligation of states to refrain from actions that destabilize neighbouring countries and work together to create the necessary conditions for peace and reconciliation."

In March 2014, Russia annexed the Crimea region of Ukraine, and about a month later, fighting began along Ukraine's eastern border. Russian-speaking separatists with support from the Russian government and its troops have been battling Ukrainian forces.

A part of us has to die to transform; and a part of us dies if we don't. Which part will prevail?

— Jett Psaris