

God's mercy

Even though the Jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis is now over, we must continue to celebrate God's mercy and live it out in our communities, says Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI.

— page 6

Blankets for refugees

A group of volunteers from many faith traditions has gathered in Saskatoon to create warm fleece blankets for refugees crossing into Canada from the United States.

— page 7

Provincial story

Saskatchewan historian Bill Waiser remembers the forgotten peoples of this land in his new book, *A World We Have Lost: Saskatchewan Before 1905*. Gerald Schmitz reviews this 2016 Governor General award-winner for non-fiction.

— page 9

Portrait of a saint

Kate Hennessy, the granddaughter of Dorothy Day, has often spoken about her favourite memories of her grandmother.

Now Hennessy has culled those memories into a book about Day, a complex woman the Catholic Church is considering making a saint.

— page 12

Combatting fake news

The White House's "alternative facts" and the problem of "fake news" is dizzying for journalists and media consumers alike, writes Dean Dettloff. In Canada the campaign manager for Conservative leadership candidate Kellie Leitch resigned in February after admitting to intentionally spreading fake news about the Trudeau government. In light of these developments, we need to learn how to become "media mindful."

— page 13

Push for advanced directives dismays groups

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Anti-euthanasia groups have expressed dismay at a political push in Quebec for advanced directives for dementia patients, following the murder of a woman by her caregiver husband.

And if Quebec opens up euthanasia for those who sign advanced directives before they become incapacitated, the rest of Canada could follow, warns Aubert Martin, the executive director of the Quebec grassroots group Living with Dignity/Vivre dans la Dignité.

Quebec's euthanasia law is more restrictive than the federal law in that it limits the killing of patients to those who have the capacity to consent and who are terminally ill.

Martin noted the federal euthanasia law passed last year included study on contentious issues such as advanced directives, euthanasia for consenting minors, and for those with mental illness. "What's happening in Quebec will have a great impact on the ongoing studies that started in December," he said.

"The 'slippery slope' is really a logical extension," said Alex Schadenberg of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. "Once you legalize killing it becomes discrimination not to allow it for someone under 18, for mental illness alone, or for those with advanced directives."

"The mistake was allowing it in the first place," he said. "Now how do you put a lid on it?"

Schadenberg expressed con-

cern that groups like his are not part of the study the federal government is doing, but instead seems to be relying on research from euthanasia advocates.

The pressure to open up euthanasia to the mentally incapacitated follows the laying of second degree murder charges against Michel Cadotte for the death of his wife, Jocelyne Lizotte, 60, who had Alzheimer's disease.

"It's going at a very fast speed, the pressure to include advanced directives," said Martin. "At first, we were shocked by the reaction of the Quebec government and all parties, actually."

He noted the investigation into the death is only beginning and Cadotte had admitted on Facebook that he had "cracked" under the pressure of caring for his wife.

"Instead of questioning the lack of resources to support caregivers, the government and all parties jumped to the conclusion that we should open euthanasia to incapacitated people," Martin

said. "It's quite shocking. It's not the kind of reaction we would expect a government to have. It's like they are eager to open the

debate, as if they were waiting for that somehow."

— SOLUTION, page 5



Frank Flegel

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER — "Women of the Philippines" was the focus of this year's World Day of Prayer observed in Christian churches around the world. New Hope Lutheran Church in Regina hosted this year's ecumenical observance, which attracted participants from nearby churches in Regina's northwest.

World Day of Prayer observed in Regina

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — "Women of the Philippines" was the focus of this year's World Day of Prayer observed in Christian churches around the world. New Hope Lutheran Church in Regina hosted this year's ecumenical observance which attracted participants from several nearby churches in Regina's northwest. Holy Trinity, Holy Family, and St. Peter's Roman

Catholic churches had large representations of their Filipino communities. Kennedy Presbyterian church also participated.

The service was prepared and written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of the Philippines and adapted for use in Canada by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. Some of those attending the service wore representations of their local costumes and read stories that were

written by women and children contained in the service booklet.

Several stories told of Typhoon Yolanda, known internationally as Typhoon Haiya, which struck on Nov. 8, 2013. The storm devastated Southeast Asia and set a record as to the most severe tropical storm ever to make landfall.

The Philippines was the hardest hit, causing billions of dollars in damage and killing over 6,000 people. Stories described their hardscrabble life, on farms and in cities, even before the typhoon hit; some people in the hardest-hit areas still live in makeshift huts.

The stories talked about the need for fair laws both in the Philippines and in the countries to which Filipino women migrate looking for work and a better life. The theme of this year's observance, "Am I being Unfair to You?" fits with the stories and prayers written by the women.

The Philippines is among the largest of migrant countries of origin in the world. In Canada, Tagalog, the official Philippine language, is the fastest-growing language group in the country. Filipino women are visible as servers in many fast food outlets and restaurants, and there is a large number of Filipino nurses in Saskatchewan thanks to an aggressive recruitment campaign by the Saskatchewan government.

There is also a large number of Filipino religious and clergy who provide ministry in the Regina archdiocese. The service booklet states that about 80 per cent of Philippine people are Roman Catholic.

Parishioners set up blessing boxes for needy

By Maryanne Meyerriecks

VAN BUREN, Ark. (CNS) — A marquee with a large yellow arrow sits on the lawn of St. Michael Church.

Since January, two blessing boxes flank the sign, one filled with food, the other with hygiene and first aid items. The boxes also are a symbol that St. Michael is a community that lives out Jesus' message.

"Heritage United Methodist Church operates a big food pantry right across the street," parishioner Annie Woody, who began the blessing box project, said, "but it's only open one day a month. When I saw a story about blessing boxes on TV, I saw this as a small way our church could help the hungry on a daily basis."

The 600-family parish hasn't operated a food pantry but saw the unmanned "pantry" as a good alternative.

"Sometimes we need to listen and be open to the call of the



CNS/Maryanne Meyerriecks

ARKANSAS BLESSING BOXES — Betty Rose Neumeier and Annie Woody, members of St. Michael Church in Van Buren, Ark., pictured in a Feb. 23 photo, are two of the volunteers who stock the parish's blessing boxes.

Gospel," Rev. Rick Hobbs, St. Michael's pastor, told the Arkansas Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Little Rock. "The blessing box helps us do that because we don't have the resources of some of the larger

parishes, but in a smaller way we're able to be an example to the community and our people, especially our youth."

The blessing boxes are based

— ANYONE, page 8

Vatican forum calls for church to heed women's voices

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Women and men from around the globe gathered for an event inside Vatican City that celebrated and encouraged the need for women's voices to be heard in the church and in the world.

The annual Voices of Faith conference was held March 8, coinciding with the celebration of International Women's Day.

According to its website, the Voices of Faith event "provides what has been notably absent — the voices of Catholic women and their capacity to exercise authority within and outside the church and faith that emerges not from abstract theological ideals but in confronting the reality of the poor."

The event featured several guest speakers, including Dr. Mireille Twayigira, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide, and twin sisters Nagham and Shadan, whose last name was not given; the two are refugees from Homs, Syria, who work with Jesuit Refugee Services helping others forced to flee violence in their homeland.

Jesuit Father Arturo Sosa Abascal, superior general of the Society of Jesus, said in the open-

ing address for the conference, that women and men of faith need to stand together in today's difficult political and social climate.

Faith, he said, gives the audacity "to seek the impossible, as nothing is impossible for God."

The participation of women is also necessary in positions of leadership, especially in areas of conflict such as the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Colombia, he said.

While it is "hard to imagine peace, can we have the audacity to dream to bring peace to these countries?" he asked.

Among the examples of the need for the voice of women in the political spectrum, Sosa cited German Chancellor Angela Merkel who "has been the most courageous and visionary leader in Europe."

"She had the compassion to look at those who were in need and the vision to see that they would make a contribution to Germany and Europe," he said.

He also cited the example of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, for bringing peace and reconciliation "to her wartorn country in a way that for most men would be impossible."

Although Pope Francis has voiced his support for broader participation of women's voices in the decisions of the Catholic Church, Sosa acknowledged "that the fullness of women's participation in the church has not yet arrived."

"We have to work harder to develop a profound theology of women," he said. However, their "inclusion — which will bring the gift of resilience and collaboration — remains stymied."

Among the presenters at an afternoon panel discussion was Sister Simone Campbell, a Sister of Social Service and executive director of Network, a Catholic social justice lobbying organization that sponsored the Nuns on the Bus tour in the United States.

Campbell explained it was "essential for women to work for peace" and social justice, particularly for the poor and the marginalized, and she praised Pope Francis' efforts to bring their plight to the forefront of Catholic social teaching.

"We rejoice in *Laudato Si'* that (says) care for the earth and care for the poor come from the same reality of exploitation of both and that until we learn to end the exploitation, we will not care for



CNS/Massimiliano Migliorato

VOICES OF FAITH EVENT AT VATICAN — Kerry Alys Robinson and Sister Simone Campbell, a Sister of Social Service, speak during the Voices of Faith gathering March 8 at the Vatican. The event, held on International Women's Day, had the theme "Stirring the Waters-Making the Impossible Possible."

those at the margins, we will not care for our earth. And that is what moves me in such a deep way," she said.

Highlighting four virtues young women need to make their voices heard, Campbell said that joy and a holy curiosity to "listen, ask questions and learn from others" was important.

She also encouraged women to engage in "sacred gossip," explaining the need to share the stories they have learned from others so that those stories "can multiply" in others.

Finally, Campbell also called on women to pray so that they discover what their role is within the body of Christ.

Recalling a moment of prayer, Campbell said she "realized that my role is to be stomach acid in the body of Christ."

"That is because I'm called to nourish, to break down food, release energy. But I can be toxic in large quantities so I need to be contained. But if we each do our part, then the body is whole and it all gets done. So, I urge you to do your part," she said.

Pharmacists fear dispensing lethal drugs

By Simon Caldwell

MANCHESTER, England (CNS) — The Catholic Church has predicted that British pharmacists could be forced to dispense lethal drugs under plans to prohibit conscientious objection on the grounds of religion.

Proposals by the General Pharmaceutical Council, the regulatory body that sets professional standards for the industry throughout Britain, were criticized by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, a Catholic institute serving the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The pharmaceutical council announced in December that it wished to change "the expectations of pharmacy professionals when their religion, personal values or beliefs might . . . impact on their ability to provide services, and shift the balance in favour of the needs and rights of the person in their care."

It intends to order pharmacists to "take responsibility for ensuring that person-centred care is not compromised because of personal values and beliefs."

"We understand the importance of a pharmacy professional's religion, personal values or beliefs, but we want to make sure people can access the advice, care and

services they need from a pharmacy, when they need them," said Duncan Rudkin, chief executive of the General Pharmaceutical Council. "We recognize that this represents a significant change."

Interested parties were given until March 7 to express their views on the proposed changes.

In an undated submission, Anscombe director David Jones suggested that the changes would force pharmacists to dispense the morning-after pill, which in some cases acts by preventing a fertilized ovum from implanting into the uterus.

"In relation to termination of pregnancy, most abortions are now medical rather than surgical, and the drugs which cause an abortion are dispensed by pharmacists," Jones said in a paper posted on the Anscombe website.

He also warned the regulator that if assisted suicide laws were changed in the United Kingdom to permit the practice, then pharmacists would have no right to object to dispensing lethal drugs to customers who wished to kill themselves.

"In the future, requests could even include requests to dispense drugs for assisted suicide: requests with which many pharmacists will rightly be reluctant to comply," Jones said. "Having conceded so much in terms of the wishes of the person using the pharmacy, the council may find it difficult to retrace its steps and re-establish professional control centred on the person's genuine health interests."

The proposals, he continued, risked "eviscerating the profession of concern for the genuine health interests of people using the pharmacy."

A change could also "create an atmosphere that is hostile to religious people in particular," Jones added.

Humility needed to hear God's voice, pope, Curia told

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Humility is needed in order to recognize the voice of God in others, especially those who are perceived to be weak or subject to prejudice, a Franciscan friar told Pope Francis and members of the Roman Curia during their lenten retreat.

God not only speaks through Jesus, but also speaks to him through Peter, who recognizes Christ as the Messiah "by revelation," Franciscan Father Giulio Michelini said March 6, according to Vatican Radio.

"Do I have the humility to listen to Peter? Do we have the humility to listen to one another, paying attention to prejudices that we certainly have, but attentive to receive that which God wants to say despite — perhaps — my closures? Do I listen to the voice of others, perhaps weak, or do I only listen to my voice?" he asked.

The pope and top members of the Roman Curia attended their annual lenten retreat March 5 - 10 at the Pauline Fathers' retreat centre in Ariccia, 40 kilometres southeast of Rome.

Michelini was chosen by Pope Francis to lead meditations on the Gospel of Matthew's description of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Franciscan delivered two meditations March 6, with the first reflecting on "Peter's confession and Jesus' path toward Jerusalem."

According to Vatican Radio, Michelini called on the 74 people present for the retreat to reflect on the criteria on which they base their discernment and whether "I place myself and my personal benefit before the kingdom of God."

To listen and act upon God's will, he said, Christians must have "courage to go into the deep to follow Jesus Christ, taking into account that this involves carrying the cross."

Jesus, he added, not only proclaimed the joy of the resurrection "but also trial" when he said "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

In the afternoon, Michelini delivered his second meditation, "Jesus' last words and the beginning of the Passion."

He explained that the reading of Christ's Passion reveals two distinct types of logic: Jesus, an observant Jewish layman preparing to celebrate the Passover, and the high priests, who are concerned with the outward appearance of the feast but, at the same time, "prepare to murder an innocent man."

The question Christians must ask themselves, he said, is if they are "sacred professionals resorting to compromise in order to save the facade, the institution at the expense of individual rights."

"This is about an attitude that loses the right perspective, believing they are serving God," Michelini said.



CNS/Jose Cabezas, Reuters

EL SALVADOR MINING PROTEST — Protesters participate in a march convened by the Catholic Church March 9 against mining in San Salvador, El Salvador.

South Sudan refugees look to Pope Francis for hope

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Before South Sudan was a country, Luciano Moro was a refugee from South Sudan building a new life alone in Canada.

Today, as outreach manager for the Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto, Moro looks back on his disintegrating homeland and worries over his family — dozens of cousins, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters — who have fled across South Sudan’s southern border into refugee camps in Uganda.

Pope Francis’ proposal to visit South Sudan with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby at some point this year represents a flicker of hope for Moro as he anxiously texts cellphone messages back and forth with his mother and siblings in a refugee camp near Yumbe, about eight hours’ drive north of Kampala, Uganda’s capital.

“By the pope publicly declaring he would want to consider visiting South Sudan, it’s a sign that maybe his presence there might help to ensure that the warring parties can organize — the people are suffering, that they need to come to the table and dialogue, maybe a national reconciliation process,” said Moro, who has also been working to reunite with his Ugandan wife and five-month-old daughter who live in Kampala.

“We’re looking at whether it is possible, or if the situation down there is too dangerous,” Pope Francis told Rome’s Anglican community as he visited their church Feb. 26. “But we have to do it because they — the three (Christian communities) — together desire peace and they are working together for peace.”

While many will be anxious about Pope Francis entering a war zone that was further declared a famine zone by the United Nations on Feb. 20, it’s clear the

pope wants to encourage ecumenical efforts to end a confusing and vicious ethnic and civil war tearing apart the world’s youngest country, which was granted independence from Sudan in 2011.

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates there are 7.5 million South Sudanese who need help and protection. That includes 3.4 million who have fled their homes — 1.9 million internally displaced inside South Sudan and 1.5 million who have crossed borders, mainly into Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Starting out in the town of Yei, Moro’s relatives mostly walked the 130 kilometres south to safety. Eventually, some of Moro’s cousins were diverted into eastern Congo — one of the most lawless, wartorn places in Africa — when the Ugandan border closed. But Congo was still a better option than staying put, said Moro.

“The road itself is not safe,” he

said. “There are ambushes, gangs, robbers. You just hope that when you move you don’t fall into the wrong hands. People, when they are desperate, they will do whatever. If it means walking even at night, or sending family members in different groups, it can happen.”

Food rations within the refugee camps strung out along Uganda’s northern border are barely sufficient to sustain life, which has left Moro scrambling to get money to his mother and other family members.

“When I was there in December, almost 1,000 people arrived every single day (in Uganda). They were loaded onto trucks and then they were taken to the transit camps to be registered,” said Moro.

South Sudan’s Catholic bishops have been working with other churches to get political leaders

to agree to an “Action Plan for Peace.”

But activism for peace has made the church a target. Sister Veronika Rackova, a medical doctor, was gunned down by soldiers while driving a clearly marked ambulance last May. More recently, government forces have shut down church-affiliated radio programs, closed a Catholic book store and harassed priests and sisters. Churches have been burned.

Moro, whose job is to help parishes get ready to sponsor refugees for resettlement in Canada, now wishes he could resettle his own family.

“People mainly would want to go back home and just live normal lives — have dreams, have their children in school and so on,” he said. “We also know this is not realistic given the current situation.”

D&P’s aid work given three-year boost

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — A \$28.5-million vote of confidence from the federal government will help the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace deliver aid to refugees and war-affected Syrians, Iraqis and others over the next three years.

As part of \$239.5 million in humanitarian aid International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau announced Feb. 27, Development and Peace was awarded:

- \$12 million for emergency health care, maternal and neonatal

- care and other services to refugees in Jordan;
- \$8.5 million in programs to help displaced people inside Syria grow food and earn a living where they are;
- \$8 million to support clinics, provide emergency health care and deliver vocational training among refugees in Lebanon.

In total, the aid will reach over 200,000 people — not just Syrian refugees but Iraqis and other long-term refugees caught in the region. The programs in Jordan are projected to serve 160,000 people. Funding to Caritas Lebanon will help that organization reach 41,000. In Syria the

programs will help 36,800.

The three-year term of the funding agreement is particularly significant, Development and Peace co-ordinator of humanitarian programming Guy Des Aulniers told *The Catholic Register*.

“It’s the first time that the government of Canada allowed, for a humanitarian crisis, three years of funding,” he said.

The longer term of the funding agreement will allow for more planning and better distribution of resources, “providing the consistent support and services needed for people to rebuild their lives,” said Caritas Jordan executive director Wael Suleiman in a press release.

Most of Development and



Reanne Lajeunesse

GIVING WITNESS — Agatha Mutongolo, a Congolese refugee and Grade 11 student at E.D. Feehan High School in Saskatoon, recently gave witness to the support of Development and Peace/Caritas Canada in her home country of the Democratic Republic of Congo in regard to making water more accessible. At the beginning of the eucharistic celebration during the First Sunday of Lent at St. Mary Parish, she walked up the aisle with a water jug on her head and briefly told her story about how she used to walk for miles to get water and sometimes had to wait until midnight to obtain it. Mutongolo is a member of the Development and Peace team at St. Mary’s Parish.

Peace’s partners in the Middle East are other members of the *Caritas Internationalis* network of Catholic agencies. Development and Peace is one of more than 160 Caritas members, the second-largest humanitarian network in the world.

For security reasons, Development and Peace is withholding the names of its partners inside Syria.

Sudbury Development and Peace member Ruva Catherine Gwekwerere said she was grateful to see Global Affairs Canada recognize the effectiveness of Development and Peace partnerships in the Middle East.

“It’s so encouraging that the government is recognizing the important work of organizations like Development and Peace and funding them,” Gwekwerere told *The Catholic Register* via Facebook. “Development and Peace’s strategy has been ahead of its time.”

Gwekwerere hopes to see local Development and Peace groups educate themselves about the complex issues at play throughout the Middle East.

“Understanding this can lead to citizens understanding the possibility of a peaceful solution,” Gwekwerere said. “Learning about the root causes of these issues not only allows us to look outside ourselves and understand the world better, but also to lobby our own governments to find truly just actions to take.”

Development and Peace has been involved in the Middle East since its founding in 1967 and has been responding to the Syrian crisis for almost six years. In recent years, Development and Peace’s focus has shifted from Latin America to Africa and the Middle East, said Des Aulniers.

“We’re responding to the need. We’re going wherever there’s a need,” he said. “People are so tired. When you speak with Syrians, they are just tired of everything. They think they don’t have the solution in their hands. It’s really over their heads.”



Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert

GUADALUPE TOUR — The pilgrimage group from the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon gathers at the top of Tepeyac Hill, at the *Capilla del Cerrito* (Chapel of Tepeyac), site of the first three appearances of Our Lady of Guadalupe to San Juan Diego.

Pilgrims tour Mexico City

By Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert

MEXICO CITY — A group of 16 pilgrims took part in the third annual pilgrimage and tour to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City Feb. 2 - 11 with Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon.

“This pilgrimage will hopefully deepen your appreciation for your ministry of enculturated evangelization,” Bayda wrote in an opening letter to the pilgrims.

“How are you called to evangelize others? The Holy Family prepared Jesus for his ministry. Likewise, your family, the domestic church, has prepared you for your ministry. Your family was not perfect, perhaps, but it is where God nurtured you and taught you to love, forgive, hope, dream, pray, work and learn so much about the kingdom of God,” Bayda wrote.

As part of the pilgrimage, participants visited a number of places to better understand the full impact of the miracle at Tepeyac in 1531, when Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to a humble indigenous man, San Juan Diego.

The Saskatchewan group visited the National Museum of Anthropology, the Plaza of Three Cultures, the Teotihuacan Pyra-

mids, and the *Centro Historico* Downtown Zocalo, in order to understand the many traditions and cultures that existed prior to Our Lady appearing to San Juan Diego.

The miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe contains symbols that immediately spoke to many in that place and time. Understanding the past traditions and cultures is integral to fully appreciating the magnitude of the transformation to faith after Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared, the pilgrims learned, as they explored this miracle of “enculturated evangelization.”

A highlight of the pilgrimage included a visit to the bishop’s crypt underneath the Metropolitan Cathedral Zocalo — the resting place of Bishop Juan de Zumarraga. San Juan Diego went to the bishop many times until Our Lady sent the tilma filled with roses as the proof Zumarraga requested.

The group also visited the site of Our Lady of Ocotlan (also referred to as the “*Lourdes of Mexico*”) and San Miguel del Milagro (the apparition of St. Michael in Mexico), as well as stops at several other beautiful churches.

Organized by Bayda, Marlene Bodnar and Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert, the next pilgrimage will be held in February 2018.

Trust needs \$1 million to restore heritage building

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — After saving the house of Ontario's first bishop from the wrecking ball, a small private trust is now racing against the clock to raise funds to

restore the heritage building and resurrect the memory of Bishop Alexander Macdonell.

The Glengarry Fencibles Trust must raise \$1 million before the end of March to qualify for a matching grant from Parks

Canada.

"This whole proposition of raising a million dollars is a little daunting in the time frame we have," said Brenda Baxter, president of the trust's seven-member board.



CCN/D. Gyapong

HERITAGE BUILDING — The Glengarry Fencibles Trust hopes to raise \$1 million by the end of March to qualify for matching funds from Parks Canada to restore the house of Ontario's first bishop, Bishop Alexander Macdonnell.

Trudeau policy deemed 'reprehensible'

By Catholic Register staff

TORONTO (CNS) — In a biting letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the president of the Canadian bishops' conference called the government's new overseas abortion policy "a reprehensible example of western cultural imperialism."

In a separate letter to Trudeau, Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto expressed "deep concern and

disappointment" and called it "arrogant for powerful, wealthy nations to dictate what priorities developing countries should embrace."

Collins and Bishop Douglas Crosby of Hamilton, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, were responding to a March 8 announcement that the government would invest \$650 million over three years to provide sexual health initiatives including abortion and other services in the developing world.

C a n a d i a n money will now be earmarked to support foreign advocacy organizations working to make abortion legal in nations that currently ban the practice.

Crosby's letter cited a *Globe and Mail* article that revealed a major part of the funding would be directed toward removing "judicial and legal barriers to the fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and rights." The article cited a federal official who confirmed that "these barriers include the anti-abortion laws in many countries."

"Such a policy is a reprehensible

example of western cultural imperialism and an attempt to impose misplaced but so-called Canadian 'values' on other nations and people," Crosby wrote in his letter.

"It exploits women when they are most in need of care and support and tragically subverts true prenatal health care. It negates our country's laudable efforts to welcome refugees and offer protection to the world's homeless, when the youngest of human lives will instead be exterminated and the most vulnerable of human beings discarded as unwanted human tissue."

Collins said that while it was "commendable and necessary" to support the rights of women and young girls, the prime minister's "public comments suggest that unless a woman has access to abortion or contraception, she is not empowered or able to realize her full potential."

"It is praiseworthy to offer international aid; it is arrogant for powerful, wealthy nations to dictate what priorities developing countries should embrace," he wrote. "Pope Francis has cautioned the rich and powerful West against the danger of 'ideological colonization,' in which such countries and organizations offer funding to help further a particular social agenda."

Trudeau announced the plan March 8, International Women's Day. The new initiative will support abortions, contraception, sexual education and reproductive health, according to a government statement.



Art Babyeh

HONORARY AWARD — Sharon Johnston, wife of Gov. Gen. David Johnston, received an Honorary Inspiration Award at the Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health's annual awards gala in Ottawa on March 3. The award recognizes her advocacy for those living with mental illness. Over the past six years, Johnston has added her voice to reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness and visited many organizations with innovative mental health practices, programs, services and research projects across Canada.

If the trust is successful, the heritage building in the small town of St. Raphael's, Ont. — about 95 kilometres southeast of Ottawa — will become an interpretative centre to recount the multifaceted contribution to Canadian history by the first bishop in English-speaking Canada.

When Great Britain and France went to war in 1794, then-Father Macdonell, a Scot, contributed to the establishment of the first Catholic regiment in the British army. As chaplain of the newly formed Glengarry Fencible Infantry that fought in the Napoleonic Wars, his duties included caring for the wounded.

When Macdonell came to Canada in 1804 to serve the Gaelic-speaking settlers in Glengarry County, Ont., the Diocese of Quebec was the sole Catholic diocese in the country. The priest quickly set about creating schools and parishes.

After his stone house was built in 1808, he oversaw construction across the street of the massive St. Raphael's Church. The church caught fire in 1970, but its stone exterior has been preserved as a national historic site that is already attracting visitors, Baxter said.

The War of 1812 between Britain's Canadian colonies and the United States prompted

Macdonell to raise another Glengarry Fencibles regiment. Though in his 50s, the priest was with the regiment when it skirmished with the Americans.

Known as "the Big Bishop," Macdonell was six feet four and "very charismatic," Baxter said.

He was named the first bishop of Ontario in 1819 and became ordinary of the second diocese in Canada in 1826, when the Diocese of Kingston was established. In 1819, he founded the town of Alexandria, which is named after him, as are many streets in towns across Ontario.

The bishop was named to the Legislative Council of Upper Canada in 1831 and died in 1840. He was declared a National Historic Person of Canada in 1924.

The Glengarry Fencibles Trust bought the bishop's house in 2016 from the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall. The trust recently raised \$100,000 and received a matching grant from Parks Canada to pay for a new roof.

The trust is approaching charitable foundations and philanthropic organizations for funds. More information about the building and Bishop Macdonell can be found at www.bishops-house.ca

Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre

Retreats & Workshops

Queen's House Lenten Series — *Walking the Lenten Journey*

Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 12 noon. Program cost: \$20 (lunch \$12 optional extra)

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

Ignatian Spirituality — Linda Labelle

Saturday, March 18, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cost: \$40 per session (includes lunch).

Tension & Trauma Release Exercises

Marie Graw & Jackie Maloney

Saturday, March 18, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Cost: \$125 (lunch available at \$12 extra).

Exploring the Soul Energies of the Enneagram Centres

Rick McCorrister

Saturday, March 25: Thinking Centre (5, 6, 7: Head) 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 29: Feeling Centre (2, 3, 4: Heart) 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$95 per session (includes lunch).

The Book of Exodus — Fr. Paul Fachel, OMI

Wednesday, April 5, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Cost: \$15; \$25 (includes lunch).

Taizé Prayer for Christian Unity

Second Tuesday of each month, April 11, May 9, June 13, 8 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Donation at the door.

Quiet Day for Prayer & Reflection — Gisele Bauche

Wednesday, April 12, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Cost \$25/with lunch.

Easter Community Weekend — Family-oriented celebration of the Triduum (children welcome).

Thursday, April 13, 7 p.m. - Sunday,

April 16, 1 p.m. Cost: Donation & pot luck & active involvement.

Registration: Taylor Ritz at taylorl8@hotmail.com

Iconography Retreat — Anne Mycyk & Gisele Bauche

Monday, May 15 - Friday, May 19, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Cost: Commute \$525 (includes lunches).

For program details visit www.queenshouse.org

To register please call 306-242-1916

or email: receptionist@queenshouse.org



www.facebook.com/Queens-House-Retreat-and-Renewal-Centre

601 Taylor Street West, Saskatoon, SK S7M 0C9
tel: (306) 242-1916 fax: (306) 653-5941

DO YOU NEED A FACILITY FOR:

Inservices, seminars, workshops, retreats, or any occasion? **BOOK QUEEN'S HOUSE TODAY!**
(306) 242-1925 or bookings@queenshouse.org

B.C. pharmacist celebrates updated code of ethics

By Agnieszka Krawczynski
The B.C. Catholic

WEST VANCOUVER (CCN) — After 17 years of championing the freedoms of British Columbia pharmacists, Cristina Alarcon is celebrating a victory.



B.C. Catholic/Agnieszka Krawczynski

CODE OF ETHICS — Cristina Alarcon, pictured in a Feb. 17 photo, is celebrating after 17 years of championing the freedoms of British Columbia pharmacists. The code of ethics of the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia was finally updated, so Alarcon said she and her peers are finally free to act according to their consciences.

The code of ethics of the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia was finally updated, so Alarcon said she and her peers are finally free to act according to their consciences.

“The reason we have freedom of conscience is not just to protect ourselves,” Alarcon told The B.C. Catholic, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Vancouver. “It is to protect the public. If you cannot tell a patient what your concerns are about a certain product, how is that protecting the public?”

Alarcon began speaking up for the conscience rights of her peers in 2000.

One year earlier, the morning-

after pill had been re-branded and promoted as a good thing for women and pharmacists. Alarcon, who does not dispense birth control for reasons of conscience, wanted the public to know not every pharmacist was thrilled with the product.

Around the same time, she reread the provincial pharmacists’ code of ethics.

“I realized I couldn’t work according to this code of ethics because it’s telling me that if no one is available to dispense a product, I have a moral objection to, I must dispense it,” she said.

Alarcon decided something needed to be done so pharmacists with moral objections to certain drugs would not be forced to dispense them.

She started attending the College of Pharmacists’

annual general meetings. For seven years, she brought forward suggestions to amend the code of ethics to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience. Every year the proposals were shot down.

She wrote letters to the editors of local newspapers, sent out press releases, and got interviews with national media.

“No freedom of conscience means little protection for the public,” she explained. “It certainly is not protecting women not to tell them all the possible side-effects of a certain product” like the morning-after pill.

“This was one of my concerns:

no studies. Absolutely no oversight at all as to what effects this overdose of birth control pills has on women’s health, on their future fertility, and on their future offspring,” Alarcon said.

She teamed up with like-minded pharmacists and formed Concerned Pharmacists for Conscience. Team members sent out press releases sharing their views on various ethical issues.

At times, Alarcon said the media misquoted her or portrayed her as a “hooligan pharmacist who was totally practising contrary to her code of ethics.”

She also published articles in pharmacy journals and wrote a blog for the Canadian Health Care Network.

“This gave me the ability to influence public opinion” and “find out how pharmacists feel.”

In 2005, Alarcon flew to her home country of Spain and pursued a master’s degree in

bioethics. She said most of her peers were also health care professionals.

When she returned to Vancouver in 2008, she went with a lawyer to her college’s ethics advisory committee to discuss conscience rights. The pair explained the danger of keeping the current code of ethics if assisted suicide became legal.

“It made people think. Some of them said: ‘No, I would not dispense euthanasia drugs!’ ” The presentation went well, but not far enough. So, Alarcon took a break from one-issue activism.

She made connections with pharmacists who disagreed with her on ethics, but it turned out, had much in common with her when it came to running a business. Together, they discussed professionalism, regulations, and fair treatment of staff.

In June 2016, the ethics advisory committee’s chair stepped

down and Alarcon, after five years on that team, was asked to chair the next meeting.

She did, and used the opportunity to bring up the code of ethics in light of the recent legalization of assisted suicide.

“The college realized that the code of ethics would not work with the new situation. They realized you can’t force someone to kill.”

And so, the code was changed.

Alarcon said she is aware that other health care professionals are not as fortunate. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, for example, is behind a push to force doctors who disagree with abortion and assisted suicide to either perform them or refer the patient to someone who will.

Even some B.C. pharmacists are not aware of their rights yet, said Alarcon. “There’s still a lot of educating to do.”

Correa looks to build on energy of WYD

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — World Youth Day is not an isolated event, said newly appointed WYD national co-ordinator Isabel Correa. Rather, the international event is one opportunity among many for the church to celebrate with young people.

Like her predecessor Rev. Thomas Rosica, who held the post since WYD Toronto in 2002, Correa intends to be an advocate of harnessing the energy of WYD and injecting it back into the life of local youth ministry.

WYD has played a significant part in Correa’s own life. She attended her first international WYD in 1993 in Denver, Colorado. She was 18 years old and was travelling with a local parish in Montreal. Correa described her experience as a “very powerful force of change.”

“I thought I was the only one in my parish, in my own little corner that believed,” she said. “And then you experience World Youth Day and you realize that ‘Wow, you’re not alone.’ That was the overwhelming feeling and what I still hear many young adults today exclaim.”

Correa, 42, said the experience introduced her to the universal church and at the same time opened the doors to her own local church. When she returned home, she was inspired to become more involved in parish life.

Since then, Correa has attended seven more international WYD events — Rome 2000, Toronto 2002, Cologne 2005, Sydney 2008, Madrid 2011, Rio de Janeiro 2013 and Krakow 2016. In 2004, she was appointed youth ministry director in the Archdiocese of Montreal and has organized its youth delegations to WYD.

“Right now I don’t go to World Youth Day for me personally. I go to make it easier for young people to be able to participate,” said Correa. “I work with a team of young adults and our mission from the very beginning



Photo courtesy of Isabel Correa

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR — World Youth Day national co-ordinator Isabel Correa at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

is one of service.”

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops appointed Correa as national co-ordinator last month after the resignation of Rosica, Salt + Light Media CEO and English-speaking attaché to Vatican’s Synod of Bishops. As Correa learns to fill Rosica’s shoes, she is eager to bring her own vision to the role.

“I’d love to put together best practices across the country,” said Correa. “Not just for World Youth Day or the pilgrimage itself, but all of the supportive activities and all these pastoral initiatives that are there to promote the development of their relationship with Christ for young adults.”

Her main role will be to act as liaison for the WYD organizing team and the Canadian youth leaders and to facilitate events during the week of celebrations, including the Canadian youth gathering.

Canadian delegations to international WYD events can vary across the country. There are many delegations, like Montreal, Vancouver and Edmonton, that co-ordinate hundreds of pilgrims on a diocesan level. However, there are also dioceses, like Toronto and Charlottetown, where delegations are organized

by individual parishes or groups.

Correa hopes her role will allow her to connect with youth leaders across the country and share ideas.

“We’re all very unique. It’s beautiful and it’s a big country,” she said. “There’s a lot of people on the ground who are doing amazing things and if there could be more links and more networking, I think we’d be working in less isolation.”

Correa, who continues to lead the youth ministry office Montreal, said preparations for WYD must be integrated into the ministry life of the diocese.

“We’re so used to seeing World Youth Day for only those that go to a specific country, but World Youth Day is a lot more than that,” she said. “It’s an opportunity for the church to celebrate, be with young people, and pray with young people and work with young people.”

As young Canadians gear up for WYD Panama in January 2019, Correa said the preparatory document for the 2018 synod of bishops needs to be part of the conversation. The 20-page text on “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment” is a detailed reflection on how young people live in today’s society.

Killing is no solution

Continued from page 1

The Physicians’ Alliance Against Euthanasia expressed sadness at Lizotte’s death and outrage at the “loneliness her husband experienced, and that of so many other caregivers, relatives or spouses of patients suffering from Alzheimer’s,” in a Feb. 27 news release. “But what is most disturbing is the reaction of politicians for whom the ‘solution’ to this tragedy is to propose euthanasia by advance directive for people suffering from dementia.

“Imagine killing a person, who does not ask to die, with composure, because earlier in her life she wrote that she did not want to get where she is now,” the Alliance said, noting a case like this happened recently in the Netherlands where a woman had to be held

down by her family while a doctor administered a lethal injection she resisted receiving.

“That woman, even though she had mental disease, clearly she didn’t want to die, so they had to struggle with her,” said Martin. “Her family had to help the physician to forcibly restrain her.”

“Most people with dementia quickly lose consciousness of their condition,” the Alliance said. “The vast majority are happy, in a safe and welcoming environment, whether in society, in family or in specialized residences.”

“These people suffer when they are treated with contempt,” the Alliance said. “In our medical practice we see extraordinary examples of patients who are loved and well cared for; we also see heartbreaking examples of neglected and abused people.”

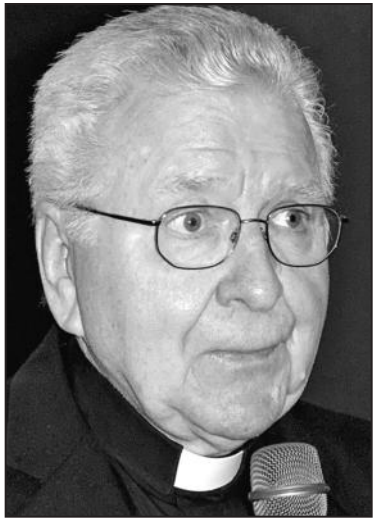
Continue to celebrate God's mercy: Wiesner

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Even though the Jubilee Year of Mercy has ended, we must continue to celebrate God's mercy and live it out in our communities, said Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, during the first in a two-part lenten series hosted by the Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together program in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Lent is a perfect season to focus on the message of God's mercy, reflecting on what it means for our lives, and what it means for our relationships, Wiesner said March 8 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family.

In exploring the reality of God as "a gracious God, a God rich in mercy," it is necessary to begin with Scripture and discover what "God shares about God's self and God's relationship with us," said Wiesner, the retired bishop of



Kiply Yaworski

Bishop Gerald Wiesner, OMI

Prince George, who is now living in Saskatoon.

Beginning with Exodus, where Moses discovers a God "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness," Wiesner explored the scriptural concept of *hesed*,

which expresses God's unconditional love.

"We don't merit it, we don't earn it, we don't deserve it," he said of God's boundless love. "It surpasses human imagination and human thought."

God puts up with a great deal and remains faithful to the covenant, even when we do not, stressed Wiesner: "God is faithful. All the time. God keeps that steadfast love."

God's mercy is manifest in Jesus Christ, he said. Again Wiesner turned to Scripture,

exploring the parable of the Good Samaritan and describing the compassion that Our Lord has for the widow of Nain whose only son has died. Compassion is not pity or sympathy, but a profound walking with someone through pain or suffering.

The mercy of God is not only proclaimed and revealed by Jesus; it is lived by Jesus, Wiesner stressed. "Pope Francis says that Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy . . . it is the compassion of God that we find in Jesus."

At the heart of the Lord's prayer

is the reality of a divine person who knows us, hears us, and loves us, stressed Wiesner. "Our Father in heaven is not distant from us." In pouring out love and mercy, God is being true to God's self, he said. "No one is excluded."

"It is not by creation or by the providential care of creation, but above all by pardoning and showing mercy" that God manifests who God is, Wiesner summarized, quoting an opening prayer from the 26th Sunday of Ordinary Time.

"God will never tire of being merciful to anyone."

Shroud of Turin: real or not?

By Frank Flegel

WEYBURN, Sask. — No one knows for sure how long the Shroud of Turin has been around, but the first documented evidence of its existence dates to about AD 1353 in a small village south of Paris, France. Since then it has held the attention of the world with many believing it is Christ's burial shroud and the faded, vague image is indeed that of Jesus Christ.

That fascination was in evidence the evening of March 2 at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Weyburn, when James Richards gave a PowerPoint presentation to about 40 fellow parishioners. He showed photos of the shroud and presented information about the various research projects that provide evidence both for and against the image being that of Christ.

Richards is not a recognized expert on the shroud, but admits to a fascination with it since he first heard about it as a teenager. He firmly believes the image is that of Christ.

"The evidence in favour of its being Christ's image, to me, is more compelling than evidence against. It is agreed by many

who have studied the shroud that it is not a painting, as some believe, because there is no evidence of brush strokes anywhere on the shroud," Richards said in speaking with the *Prairie Messenger* a few days after his presentation.

Radio-carbon dating has placed the linen in the Middle Ages but, as Richards points out, other researchers have suggested the linen may have been repaired at some point using more current materials. He also notes that the shroud does contain pollen of plants that grow nowhere else except in the Jerusalem area.

Most who study the shroud believe the image is of a Roman man because it contains marks that show the man was flogged with an instrument known to be used by Roman soldiers, but whether it is Christ's image is something else.

Richards also notes that, thus far, no one can explain how the image got on the linen. The church will not allow any further testing in fear of destroying the image, and so far as it is known, nothing has been scraped off the image for analysis.

The shroud is kept in a hermet-

ically sealed container in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Turin and is not on display; it is brought out only on special occasions. Richards explained that when the last of the Savoy family that previously ruled Italy died in the 1980s the shroud was willed to Pope John Paul II and his successors.

Richards urged his audience not to base their faith on whether or not the image on the shroud is Christ.



Kiply Yaworski

RITE OF ELECTION — Catechumens and their sponsors came forward to sign their name in pages for the diocesan Book of the Elect as part of the Rite of Election held March 5 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. Thirty-two catechumens from 11 parishes across the diocese are journeying toward baptism, confirmation and first eucharist at this year's Easter Vigil. Those in attendance heard the Word of God, signed their names in the Book of the Elect, and received affirmation and a blessing from diocesan administrator Rev. Kevin McGee and the diocesan faith community, as part of the RCIA process (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.)

Filipino women tell their stories at Day of Prayer

By Linda Yaskowich

WYNYARD, Sask. — World Day of Prayer 2017, written by the women of the Philippines, was hosted in Wynyard by St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.

The World Day of Prayer is an interdenominational service organized by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and is held on the first Friday of March.

This year's service was written by the women of the Philippines, and because St. Mary's has a large membership of Filipino Catholics, hosting this year's service was a perfect fit for the Wynyard parish. There was a large participation by the Filipino members of the congregation, as well as by other parishioners and members of other Wynyard churches.

Highlights of the service included: local Filipino women telling their stories and describing how they came to be living in Canada, the national dress of the

Philippines worn by many to the service, the choir singing the Our Father (Ama Namin) in their own language, and an array of Filipino foods to choose from after the service.

It was heartening to see a large number of people come out to World Day of Prayer this year. The March 2018 service will be hosted by the Wynyard Gospel Church.

The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women focused on prayer and action for peace and justice. The origins of the day go back to the 19th century when Christian women of Canada and the United States initiated a variety of co-operative activities in support of women's involvement in mission at home and around the world. The title for the event came into use in 1927, the same year that those organizing the event first focused on praying with women from a different country.



Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert

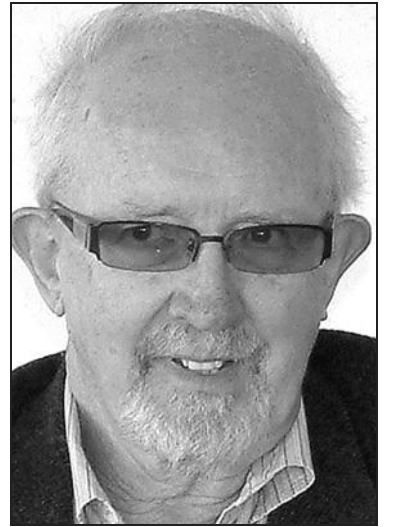
FISHING DERBY — St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church Camp at Madge Lake, Duck Mountain Provincial Park, held its first-ever ice fishing derby Feb. 25, with families braving chilly weather for fishing and fellowship. Volunteers drilled holes, set up a curling rink on the lake, prepared hot meals, collected prizes and silent auction items, and set up an indoor children's activity area. Prizes were awarded in both youth and adult categories. Funds raised will go to support children's summer camps at the Ukrainian Catholic facility.

Peace Pen goes to Murphy

SASKATOON — Michael Murphy, peace and justice advocate and former animator for Development and Peace in Saskatchewan, has been presented with the 2016 Peace Pen Award. Murphy's letters to the editor of the *Prairie Messenger* centred on Palestine, Syria and international policies that affect peaceful settlements to conflict and unjust aggression in various parts of the world.

The award was established in 2013 to honour Leo Kurtenbach, relentless peace-seeker, researcher and writer. An independent group reached consensus on the writer chosen to receive the engraved, hand-crafted pen which hopes to show that "the pen is mightier than the sword."

Thanks are offered to each contributor in the past year and others are encouraged to join in the efforts to share their opinions and promote peaceful solutions through the written media, to worldwide injustice, war and hostile aggression.



PM file

Michael Murphy

Volunteers make blankets for refugees from U.S.

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Saskatoon volunteers from many faith traditions recently gathered to create soft, warm fleece blankets for refugees coming to Manitoba across the Canada-United States border.

Blanket workshops were held March 6 - 10 in six different settings: Queen's House of Retreat and Renewal, St. John's Anglican Cathedral, Congregation Agudas Israel, Holy Covenant Evangelical Orthodox Church, the Cathedral of the Holy Family and Baitur Rahmat Mosque.

Volunteers exceeded the goal of creating 50 blankets, said project leader Cecilia Rajanayagam of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Saskatoon.

In the fall, Rajanayagam was

part of an initiative at Emmanuel Baptist to create similar blankets for shelters and charities in the city of Saskatoon.

"We had already worked out the logistics and some willing workers," she said, noting it was not difficult to mobilize volunteers to take on the new project.

In an email to faith communities, she described watching news reports about refugees and others seeking sanctuary in Canada, crossing the border into Manitoba in search of safety, security and protection.

"I was so very proud at that moment to be a Canadian and grateful for the tiny community of Emerson, Manitoba (for) 'stepping up to the plate,'" she wrote. "I know that my faith beliefs call me to welcome the stranger in our midst so it was no question that

we were doing the right thing. Out of that reality branched the idea of showing some gesture of love, support and welcome to these our brothers and sisters, our new neighbours."

Rajanayagam worked with local volunteers from various faith groups — such as Teresa Field of the Holy Family Craft Guild — to organize the various workshops. Klaus Gruber of the Saskatoon Refugee Coalition was also part of the project: he will deliver the blankets to Winnipeg where new arrivals are being sheltered.

Gruber said a highlight of the week was when two Syrian refugee families came to a workshop to help create the blankets. A woman who came to Canada as a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo was a

volunteer at another workshop session, sharing some of her own story.

"What was most touching was hearing her say that this is love."

To do something for people you don't even know, people with different-coloured skin, people you have never met — this is love," Rajanayagam said.



Kiply Yaworski

BLANKETS FOR REFUGEES — Volunteers gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Family March 10 for one of six workshops held in Saskatoon to create fleece no-sew blankets for refugees crossing the border into Manitoba.

Pelletier bidden farewell in Saskatoon

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Colleagues and friends gathered March 2 to honour Agnes Pelletier on her retirement after eight and a half years as the bishop's assistant in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Since July 2008, Pelletier has served as executive assistant to two bishops and two diocesan administrators: Bishop Albert LeGatt, now Archbishop of St. Boniface; diocesan administrator Rev. Ron Beechinor, now retired; Bishop Donald Bolen, now Archbishop of Regina; and Rev. Kevin McGee, presently serving as diocesan administrator as the diocese again awaits the appointment of a bishop.

Pelletier is known for her calm, gentle presence and spirit of hospitality, said Blake Sittler, director of Pastoral Services during a brief program during the reception held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family.

ing his time as chair of the Council of Priests, as vicar-gener-

"Day in and day out, Agnes and I worked closely together in navigat-



Tim Yaworski

PELLETIER FAREWELL — At a retirement celebration March 2, diocesan administrator Rev. Kevin McGee expressed thanks on behalf of the Diocese of Saskatoon to Agnes Pelletier, who has served as executive assistant to the bishop since 2008.

al and now as diocesan administrator, McGee also read messages from former bishops LeGatt and Bolen.

"Nine years ago you accepted to take on the many responsibilities of being my executive assistant. I am sure you didn't quite know what that would all entail. However, you took on the challenge with openness and generosity, with professionalism, and especially with a smile," wrote LeGatt.

Bolen said that working with Pelletier for six and a half years was a privilege and a blessing.

bishop's administrative assistant is at the hub of much of that activity — at the hub of almost everything that involves the bishop."

"I am truly overwhelmed," said Pelletier, expressing her gratitude at the conclusion of the program. She described the richness of encountering "the folks" across the diocese during her years of service. "As Bishop Don and I travelled to confirmations and rural parishes where I thought I wouldn't know anyone, there was a familiar face — someone from Lay Formation — and I just felt at home."

Colette Chantler will serve as executive assistant to the bishop effective Feb. 1. A member of St. Philip Neri Parish in Saskatoon, a graduate of Lay Formation, and an active member of the Lay Formation Alumni Association, Chantler has served as the executive assistant to the CEO of Genome Prairie in Saskatoon for the past eight years.

Pastoral care ministry unique in Regina

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — No one is quite sure when it all began, but Christ the King Parish in Regina has developed and sustained a highly organized, well-trained ministry that involves 60 people who provide lay ministry services and visiting to about 260 sick and elderly people who live mostly in care homes within the parish boundaries.

There are 16 lay ministry teams, each with a commissioned lay minister, reader, and "hopefully" a musician," says Linda Lucyk, Parish Pastoral Care coordinator, in describing the ministry to the *Prairie Messenger*.

The teams provide weekly lay ministry services to all the care homes within the boundaries of Christ the King Parish. About 15 commissioned visitors bring weekly, and in some cases bi-weekly, communion to individuals who can't leave their homes. Every individual receives a card and/or a rosary. The cards and rosaries are placed on the walls in the homes and hospitals near patient beds.

That kind of support allows her to produce various materials, including cards, rosaries, the parish calendar, prayer shawls, and recently a hymnal/mass book with larger print organized in accordance with the seasons of the church year, with minimal or no cost. The students and a few adults who create the cards and the women who knit the prayer shawls, donate or use donated materials; Staples, an office supply and technology firm, bound the book and encased it in plastic for less than five dollars each.



Frank Flegel

Linda Lucyk

"They are a sign of our love for them; that God cares for them and they are a valuable part of our parish community," said Lucyk. She eschews the term "volunteers" to describe her people. "They are part of a ministry!" she says emphatically.

"This is very unique that not only has Christ the King a parish to serve, but a whole parish of people who never come into the building, that we are committed to serve and it's a common mission that creates a lot of enthusiasm within the parish," said Lucyk.

She is animated and enthusiastic as she describes the various programs that support the ministry and how the parish — including elementary and high school students — is involved.

"The pastoral leadership here is incredible. Fr. Antony Sathiadis (pastor), our pastoral council — they are all completely committed to this ministry."

Lucyk does create a budget which must be approved by parish council, "but I try to find different ways to cover my costs." Prayer shawls contain a small card — "Made with love by Christ the King Parish" — and they are blessed in conjunction with the Compassionate Healers Mass in October or the World Day of the Sick in February, then distributed to people who "would benefit from the warmth, blessings and caring prayers the shawls represent."

All participants receive special training in line with Regina archdiocesan protocols and the rules and regulations of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.

Small packages

Small Packages welcomes prepaid ads re parish events. Rates: \$17.65 for the first 60 words, \$4.75 for an additional 25 words. Second and subsequent insertions half-price. Please include cheque with ad and mail to: **Small Packages, Prairie Messenger, Box 190, Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0**

The land beckons, and memories are revisited

Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



The new Hutterite colony is all straight lines — buildings, hedges, and fences impeccably neat. I stop along the colony road beside the cemetery, three brick markers per side, gateposts slightly higher — the barest outline of a boundary — and in the far corner, a single gravestone lettered in old Germanic script: Justina Wollman, 1912 - 1997.

A stiff wind is blowing foul smells from the lagoon. I stop again at the Hutterites’ massive modern workshop to ask permission to visit the river flat, the farmland that five generations of my family knew intimately. Inside the workshop door I startle a young couple washing up for *Mittag* and chattering in their tongue. A friendly-faced elder says hello, I introduce myself as a relative of the people from whom they bought the land, and make my request.

“Oh *shure*, sir,” he says.

Driving downhill brings a wash of familiarity. Poplars line the sides of the trail, and through the trees I catch blurred glimpses of the North Saskatchewan River, then the bend

Ratzlaff is a former minister, counsellor, and university lecturer. He has authored three books of literary non-fiction published by ThistleDown Press, and edited an anthology of seniors’ writings published by READ Saskatoon. He has been short-listed for three Saskatchewan Books Awards, won two Saskatchewan Writers Guild literary non-fiction awards, and served on local, provincial, and national writing organization boards.

Anyone can take items they need

Continued from page 1

on the Little Free Pantry project started by Jessica McClard at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Fayetteville in May 2016. Providing free food, drinks and personal care items is similar to the Little Free Library concept that now dots the country. Anyone can take whatever items they need any time of the day or night, but visitors are also able to leave items if they wish.

Since the first St. Michael blessing box, built by Leonard Blaschke, was installed in January, the project has grown. Encounters with people using the box alerted parishioners to other ways they could help.

Confirmation and religious education students held food drives. A second blessing box for hygiene and personal items, built by Dewey Woody, was installed.

“Volunteers put out a few things at a time and restock several times a day,” Woody said. “We don’t want one person to empty the box, leaving nothing for the next per-

son. Sometimes parishioners put something in the box and see it disappear within an hour.”

Woody has a team of parishioners helping with the project, including Betty Rose Neumeier, Emily Dickinson and Veronica Lane.

One day a homeless man came to the church office and reported that the blessing box was empty. Woody gathered some food items into a plastic bag — Vienna sausages, cereal, applesauce, power bars and a plastic spoon.

“He opened the bag and said, ‘Is all this for me?’ It just broke my heart,” she said. “I told him ‘Yes, it’s all for you.’”

The encounter inspired Woody and Dickinson to make brown bags for people who came for an immediate meal.

“Emily (Dickinson) thought we should put Bible verses on the bags,” Woody said, “and this led me to gather some freebie booklets and holy cards left at the church library and add them to the blessing box. It gives people something good to read, food for their souls.”

relatives gathered countless times over most of a century. Now it’s where the cattle can wade down for a drink. Out in the middle of the river, three swans rest on a sandbar beside a new growth of willows.

I follow the cow path back to the dilapidated buildings. The Hutterites haven’t had time to straighten things out down here, the fence around the structures is gone, animals have free run of the yard — shit everywhere, better watch your step. And the residues of culture: wrecked metal chairs, green couch without legs, cushions rotting on the ground, steel tractor rim in lieu of the stone firepit I loved. A crooked maple tree from my childhood is still standing, bent in two directions from the ground, not long for this world, already showing new shoots at the V. And here’s an old swing on which I pushed my daughters when they were kids, overturned now and rusting in the grass.

It’s what I get for coming here.

The swans on the sandbar fly into the wind. A small bird with a gold belly flits to another tree. I hear my first crow of the day. I wish my father were with me today — of course he is, but I mean in the former way.

I sit down on a small patch of grass and open a lunch bag. Cold pizza, cucumbers from my mother’s village garden, cherry tomatoes from my city patio. All unbidden comes this childhood table grace I’d almost forgotten: *Segne Vater diese Speise, uns zu Kraft und Dir zum preise, Amen.*

And don’t forget the little box of *Sunpac Real Fruit Beverage Fruit Rhapsody (An Excellent Source of Vitamin C)*, with a plastic straw to poke a hole and suck up the juice. I once met the businessman who sold these Tetrapaks throughout Western Canada. We sat together on a flight to Kelowna, and he stopped just short of buttonholing me with his “gospel” — as much as he enjoyed his job, it was perfectly

clear to him that the world was going to hell, and wasn’t that just what the Bible said?

A sound of a going — almost roaring — of wind in the trees on the hillside. I climb up toward the commotion, to where the river panorama begins. The wind has travelled on, the trees are silent again. People once lived here, laboured and loved and wept, and are gone. Previous versions of myself walked here, on former paths, among other trees. “Person”

is merely another word for “instability.” I forgive my ancestors for whatever I supposed they did wrong.

One thing to which the wind has called me on the hillside is a saskatoon berry bush. I eat a few sweet ones on behalf of my scattered tribe, and a few more for the Hutterian sisters and brothers above. Then I begin the descent to my car, in order to drive back uphill, and I’ll take a wistful ride to the distant city in which I have chosen to live.



L. Ratzlaff

BELOVED LAND — Dilapidated buildings mark the land where Lloyd Ratzlaff spent his growing-up years.

clear to him that the world was going to hell, and wasn’t that just what the Bible said?

A sound of a going — almost roaring — of wind in the trees on the hillside. I climb up toward the commotion, to where the river panorama begins. The wind has travelled on, the trees are silent again. People once lived here, laboured and loved and wept, and are gone. Previous versions of myself walked here, on former paths, among other trees. “Person”

is merely another word for “instability.” I forgive my ancestors for whatever I supposed they did wrong.

One thing to which the wind has called me on the hillside is a saskatoon berry bush. I eat a few sweet ones on behalf of my scattered tribe, and a few more for the Hutterian sisters and brothers above. Then I begin the descent to my car, in order to drive back uphill, and I’ll take a wistful ride to the distant city in which I have chosen to live.



BOSCO FOUNDATION

John Bosco
Child & Family Services Foundation

The John Bosco Child and Family Services Foundation (Bosco Foundation) is a public foundation dedicated to the provision of buildings and facilities used for the treatment, education and housing of children, adolescents and adults who are in need of support.

Bosco Foundation believes in assisting non-profit and charitable organizations who provide vital services which aid vulnerable people in our society. We do this by providing our facilities to various non-profit and charitable agencies at below market level rental rates.

Our facilities are used for social services group care, foster care, adult mental health care, the St. Francis Food Bank, two AA groups and a NE Edmonton cadet core among others.

In addition, we provide volunteer services to assist two small non-profit organizations working with low income seniors and victims of stroke with fundraising and volunteer recruitment assistance.

The Bosco Foundation is currently working with a large service organization on a joint project with the aim of providing affordable housing for low-income seniors.

100% of donations go toward charitable purposes. Administrative expenses are covered by other sources.

Please forward your donation to:
Bosco Foundation
315-6770 129 Avenue NW,
Edmonton, AB T5C 1V7
Tel: (780) 809-8585 ♦ Fax: (780) 809-8586
www.boscofoundation.com
Charitable Tax Number: 85985 8664 RT0001

Historian remembers forgotten peoples of this land

Readings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



The Ides of March is a good time to consider historical turning points. The First Nations who inhabited the Canadian prairies for millennia could surely never have imagined how utterly marginalized they would become in their own land. By the time my late beloved mother Denise was born to pioneer parents on March 19, 1913, much of the Aboriginal world had already been swept

flung Dominion. It's a fascinating narrative told through 16 chapters enhanced by over 30 maps and tables as well as a number of illustrations and photographs.

Henry Kelsey is considered the first European to see the Saskatchewan plains. The Hudson Bay Company (HBC) servant undertook an inland trek from the coastal fort of York Factory in 1690 - 92. But as Waiser observes, he was "a passenger, not a pathfinder," totally dependent on his Cree and Assiniboiné guides. Within the vast mostly uncharted royal concession of "Rupert's Land" the HBC sought to expand relations with indigenous hunters and trappers to feed the growing fur trade in beaver pelts. Colonial mythology minimized the role of the "savage" races and elevated the exploits of these early visitors to legendary status. Equally it is mythology to portray the pre-contact prairie as a pristine peaceful "Eden." Humans had been present in the region for 10,000 - 12,000 years, impacting an environment subject to climatic variability over some 300 generations of habitation. We learn about their evolving social relations and complex belief systems from the archaeological and anthropological record — a history that includes tribal rivalries and warfare. Megafauna had become extinct by 11,000

years ago. But the prairie grasslands were home to millions of bison and as many as 35 million pronghorn antelope in Kelsey's time. The boreal forest supported other ruminants and fur-bearing animals. Despite harsh winters and periodic droughts, the region's wildlife resources must have seemed inexhaustible.

Waiser's first chapters describe the extensive European-indigenous trade patterns (accompanied by ceremonial rituals) that developed over many decades of imperial British-French contestation for territorial control. The introduction of the horse to the northern plains after 1730 intensified rivalries. To meet French competition the HBC pushed its reach further inland. To the southwest Anthony Henday entered Blackfoot territory. To the northwest Samuel Hearne went as far as the Arctic Ocean. In 1774 Cumberland House became the first HBC outpost established within what is present-day Saskatchewan. At the same time the HBC was increasingly being challenged by the formation of the North West Company trading through Montreal. Both were reliant on the relationships they established with indigenous peoples. Among the effects of this European penetration into Aboriginal lands was the practice of fur traders and voyageurs taking Indian partners as "country wives," thereby creating a growing mixed-blood "Métis" population (commonly denigrated as "half-breeds").

Europeans also introduced diseases to which Indians had no immunity. Smallpox epidemics decimated some tribes. Add to that the plague of alcohol as a trade item. Guns and horses expanded the bison hunt, which was essential as a source of pemmican — the non-perishable mixture of pounded dried meat and berries that sustained the trading economy. Horse raiding provoked inter-tribal violence. By the time the fur trade wars subsided with the 1821 merger of the HBC and North West Company: "Entire districts had been stripped of fur-bearing animals with a single-minded efficiency, while bison had been reduced to tens of thousands of bags of pemmican at factory-like provisioning posts. Indians had been demeaned, abused, beaten and debauched by alcohol."

In chapter 11 Waiser writes about the influence of Catholic and Protestant missionaries from 1840 onward. While initially their presence was not welcomed by the HBC's "little emperor," governor George Simpson (the Métis were much more receptive), the colonial powers came to see the usefulness of religion as a pacifying and "civilizing" force. With the churches came the establishment of hospitals, orphanages and schools. The Sisters of Charity or "Grey Nuns" arrived in 1860. (One of Louis Riel's sisters became a nun.) The mission at Ile-à-la-Croix became known as the "Bethlehem of the north."

At the same time the mass slaughter of the bison herds continued apace (two-thirds were gone by mid-century), and in this

ravaged "emptied" land attention increasingly turned to its agricultural potential.

Capt. John Palliser's 1857-59 expedition famously declared that a "triangle" to the south of a "fertile belt" was too arid. But the

award-winning book, James Daschuk's *Clearing the Plains*.)

The N.W.T.'s capital was moved to Pile of Bones (Regina) in 1883 but Ottawa was slow to grant the region a significant measure of responsible government. "The

Bill Waiser, *A World We Have Lost: Saskatchewan Before 1905*

Markham, Fifth House, 2016, 717 pages
<http://billwaiser.com/>

prospects of immense tracts of arable land proved a powerful lure. Post-Confederation Canada was also keen to resist any incursion of American manifest destiny. The new dominion entered into negotiations with the HBC and in 1869 Rupert's Land came under its control as the "North-Western Territory" (N.W.T.). The rule of law (in the form of the North-West Mounted Police) and the railway bringing settlers would follow. This was the promise of a new West, which pointedly "did not include Aboriginal peoples. . . . They were to be pushed to the sidelines and left behind, if not exorcised from the region's history."

The most developed part of the prairies was the Red River settlement that became the transportation gateway of Winnipeg. Although Manitoba was created in 1870, this "postage-stamp province" was kept deliberately small with no control over public lands and resources. The Northwest beyond remained a "colonial appendage." In the northern parts the HBC continued a fur trade (now focused on muskrat rather than beaver). Ottawa's main interest was in the southern belt above the 49th parallel as the Dominion Lands Survey mapped out townships containing future homesteads to be offered to settlers like my grandparents. Existing overland routes, like the Carlton Trail that passed near Humboldt where I was born, would be replaced by the "national dream" of a transcontinental railroad (not to forget the political corruption scandal associated with its financing). The Canadian Pacific Railway's decision to choose a route closer to the U.S. border had a profound impact by bypassing established centres like Prince Albert and Battleford.

To pave the way for peaceful agricultural settlement the federal government sought to negotiate a series of numbered treaties with the First Nations — seven were signed in the Northwest between 1871 and 1877. The treaty process was nonetheless "imbued with an imperialist ideology that held that Indians would inevitably vanish as a distinct race in the face of the white man's 'superior' civilization and that it was the Crown's duty to remake them into loyal subjects of the Crown." Aboriginal people surrendered the land except for small "reserves" to which they were relegated. As we know treaty obligations were often unfulfilled and the disappearance of the bison and other traditional resources resulted in famines. (The shameful history is detailed in another

unfortunate result was disillusionment, alienation, grievance, and resistance." Racist policies contributed to divisions between treaty Indians, the Métis, and whites, between Anglophones and Francophones. Indians were regarded as "deadbeats" on whom too much money was already being spent; let them submit or starve. The Métis wanted recognition of land rights. Desperation was the backdrop to the rebellion led by the return of the French Catholic Métis Louis Riel who proclaimed a provisional government at Batoche on March 19, 1885. His messianic crusade was doomed to failure, and its suppression was used as an opportunity to assert the central government's firm control, to make clear, as Waiser puts, it that "the White Man rules."

A "Half-Breed Commission" was formed to look into some of the Métis grievances. But it was clear for whom the land was being readied as "the government's promotion machine went into high gear." A pass system was instituted to control off-reserve movements by Indians. Some of their traditional practices were criminalized. Meanwhile the N.W.T.'s political evolution favoured a growing Anglophone majority population. The region gained representation in Parliament in 1886 and limited responsible government in 1897 with Frederick Haultain as its first, and only, premier. A particularly vexed issue was the education rights of the French Catholic minority. That controversy carried over into the new century. Indeed it was a main reason why the bills creating the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta provoked the longest debate in Canadian parliamentary history.

Waiser's epilogue observes how the westward flood of settlers — Saskatchewan's population doubled between 1905 and 1911 — created a narrative that all but obliterated what had gone before.

For many of the newcomers that took up homestead land or moved to booming communities along an ever-expanding network of rail lines, Saskatchewan's past had no meaningful place in their memory. All that remained in 1905 were the few physical reminders on the ground that over time were either destroyed, removed, or simply neglected and left to deteriorate and disappear. . . . Saskatchewan's rich history before provincehood had become . . . a world we have lost. And the people of the province were poorer for not knowing that past or choosing to ignore it.



Gerald Schmitz

RENOWNED HISTORIAN — Denise Schmitz with Saskatchewan historian Bill Waiser in 2005. Renowned historian Waiser's centennial volume *Saskatchewan: A New History*, the 2016 Governor General's award for non-fiction, "performs a great service in bringing to light, through an Aboriginal and environmental lens, the enormous transformations that reshaped life on the prairie prior to Saskatchewan's new political status within a far-flung Dominion," writes Gerald Schmitz in his review.

aside by the influx of white settlers to the fledgling province. Renowned historian Bill Waiser's centennial volume *Saskatchewan: A New History* enriched that provincial story. This new work, recipient of the 2016 Governor General's award for non-fiction, performs an even greater service in bringing to light, through an Aboriginal and environmental lens, the enormous transformations that reshaped life on the prairie prior to Saskatchewan's new political status within a far-

legendary status. Equally it is mythology to portray the pre-contact prairie as a pristine peaceful "Eden." Humans had been present in the region for 10,000 - 12,000 years, impacting an environment subject to climatic variability over some 300 generations of habitation. We learn about their evolving social relations and complex belief systems from the archaeological and anthropological record — a history that includes tribal rivalries and warfare. Megafauna had become extinct by 11,000

Saint Anne's Parish in Saskatoon is hiring

- ❖ Full-time Coordinator of Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation
- ❖ Full-time Caretaker
- ❖ Part-time Coordinator of Sunday Experience and Volunteers

for more information or to apply visit:
www.saintannes.ca

Blind spots can block our vision to God’s glory

Liturgy and Life

Gertrude Rompré



Here we are at the fourth Sunday of Lent. At this stage in the liturgical year, the intensity is ramping up. Those going through the process of Christian initiation are being “scrutinized.” The gospel readings are getting longer and more poignant. The symbols we reflect on begin to foreshadow the Easter mysteries — light overcoming darkness, blindness giving way to sight, life triumphing over death. We’re getting close to the heart of our Christian faith and our liturgical life pumps with emotion and profundity.

This week we are asked to reflect on the blind spots that plague our human experience. Blind spots are pernicious things. They sneak up on us. They are natural consequences of our limited human capacity to perceive the

Fourth Sunday in Lent March 26, 2017	1 Samuel 16.1b, 6-7, 10-13 Psalm 23 Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41
---	---

whole of reality. Our blind spots can wreak havoc on many of our human relationships. The readings this week challenge us to attend to our blind spots and seek ways to come to a deeper understanding of the world around us.

In the first reading we see Samuel commissioned to anoint a new king from among the sons of Jesse. He comes to this task with his own set of blind spots. He assumes that a king will be one of the older sons, one of

Rompré is the director of Mission and Ministry at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

the more established and stronger men. In his preconceived notions of what a king looks like he misses the young David whom the Lord has anointed. Because of his preconceived notions of leadership, Samuel at first overlooks David’s promise and potential. He needs to be reminded that God does not see as humans see, but that God looks on the heart. Herein lies the lesson for us today. How do we allow our own preconceived notions of others prevent us from seeing their full promise and potential? Who do we see as insignificant and, in the process, deny them the opportunity to share their gifts to the fullness of their capacity?

I am writing this column on International Women’s Day. It would seem to me that women throughout history have suffered from what I’ll call the “Samuel effect.” The fact that women have been seen as insignificant, as less than full persons, has denied us the opportunity to live to our full promise and potential. In many parts of the world, and in the structures of our own church and society, our preconceived notions around the role of women still serve to place our light under a bushel. That’s why this year’s Share Lent theme put forward by Development and Peace — “Women at the Heart of Change” — is so prophetic. It reminds us of the promise and potential of women to transform the worlds in which they live. The work of Development and Peace gives them the tools and resources they need so they can be anointed as leaders within their communities. Celebrating women at the heart of change is one way we can overcome our blind spots, just as Samuel did so long ago.

The gospel also asks us to reflect on our blind spots. In this wonderful account of the blind man’s miraculous cure, we see just how blind we can be to the work of God. Even as the blind man rejoiced in the gift of sight, those around him sought to corral him in their preconceived notions of who they thought he should be. He should be the blind beggar bearing this punishment for his own sins or that of

his family. He should stay in his familiar, dependent role. Even his own family didn’t want to stand by him in his new reality for fear of the authorities. Everyone wanted to keep him in his place, the box set out for him by society because of his disability.

Again, we are asked to think about who we keep in boxes. Whose growth is stifled because we fail to imagine them as anyone different from who they have been



before? Whose new sight is questioned because we are too afraid to let go of the status quo? The answers may differ for each one of us. It may be the troublesome child who continually gets labelled as the black sheep of the family. It may be the person who has been in prison struggling to reintegrate into society. Our blind spots don’t allow us to consider that people can grow and change. The gospel asks us to challenge those assumptions.

We are coming upon our greatest celebration of the year. As we prepare to contemplate the joy of the resurrection, we are called to reflect on the blind spots that can block our vision of God’s glory. May these last few weeks of Lent allow us to go beyond our preconceived notions of who others should be so that we can see them for who they truly are, full of promise and potential, and examples of God’s grace at work in our lives.

The exuberance of children speaks to the energy of the Creator

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



All things considered, I believe that I grew up with a relatively healthy concept of God. The God of my youth, the God I was catechized into, was not unduly punishing, arbitrary, or judgmental. He was omnipresent, so that all of our sins were noticed and noted, but, at the end of the day, he was fair,

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

loving, personally concerned for each of us, and wonderfully protective, to the point of providing each of us with a personal guardian angel. That God gave me permission to live without too much fear and without any particularly crippling religious neuroses.

But that only gets you so far in life. Not having an unhealthy notion of God doesn’t necessarily mean that you have a particularly healthy one. The God whom I was raised on was not overly stern and judgmental, but neither was he very joyous, playful, witty, or humorous. Especially, he wasn’t sexual, and had a particularly vigilant and uncompromis-

ing eye in that area. Essentially he was grey, a bit dour, and not very joyous to be around. Around him, you had to be solemn and reverent. I remember the assistant director at our Oblate novitiate telling us that there is no recorded incident, ever, of Jesus having laughed.

Under such a God you had permission to be essentially healthy, but, to the extent that you took him seriously, you still walked through life less than fully robust and your relationship with God could only be solemn and reverent.

Then, already a generation ago, there was a strong reaction in many churches and in the culture at large to this concept of God. Popular theology and spirituality set out to correct this, sometimes with an undue vigour. What they presented instead was a laughing Jesus and a dancing God and while this was not without its value it still left us begging for a deeper literature about the nature of God and what that might mean for us in terms of a health and relationships.

That literature won’t be easy to write, not just because God is ineffable, but because God’s energy is also ineffable. What, indeed, is energy? We rarely ask this question because we take energy as something so primal it cannot be defined but only taken as a given, as self-evident. We see energy as the primal force

that lies at the heart of everything that exists, animate and inanimate. Moreover, we feel energy, powerfully, within ourselves. We know energy, we feel energy, but what we rarely recognize is its origins, its prodigiousness, its joy, its goodness, its effervescence, and its exuberance. We rarely recognize what it tells us about God. What does it tell us?

The first quality of energy is its prodigiousness. It is prodigal beyond our imagination and this speaks something about God. What kind of creator makes billions of throwaway universes? What kind of creator makes trillions upon trillions of species of life, millions of them never to be seen by the human eye? What kind of father or mother has billions of children?

And what does the exuberance in the energy of young children say about our creator? What does their playfulness suggest about what must also lie inside of sacred energy? What does the energy of a young puppy tell us about what’s sacred? What do laughter, wit, and irony tell us about God?

No doubt the energy we see around us and feel irrepressibly within us tells us that, underneath, before and below everything else, there flows a sacred force, both physical and spiritual, which is at its root joyous, happy, playful, exuberant, effervescent, and deeply personal and

loving. That energy is God. That energy speaks of God and that energy tells us why God made us and what kind of permissions God is giving us for living out our lives.

When we try to imagine the heart of reality, we might picture things this way: At the very centre of everything there sit two thrones, on one sits a king and on the other sits a queen, and from these two thrones issues forth all energy, all creativity, all power, all love, all nourishment, all joy, all playfulness, all humour, and all beauty.

All images of God are inadequate, but this image hopefully can help us understand that God is perfect masculinity and perfect femininity making perfect love all the time and that from this union issues forth all energy and all creation. Moreover that energy, at its sacred root, is not just creative, intelligent, personal, and loving, it’s also joyous, colourful, witty, playful, humorous, erotic, and exuberant at its very core. To feel it is an invitation to gratitude.

The challenge of our lives is to live inside that energy in a way that honours it and its origins. That means keeping our shoes off before the burning bush as we respect its sacredness, even as we take from it permission to be more robust, free, joyous, humorous, and playful — and especially more grateful.

Healing After Abortion

Rachel’s Vineyard Spring Retreats

Saskatchewan Retreat ~ April 7 - 9, 2017

r.vineyardsk@sasktel.net 306-480-8911

www.rachelsvineyard.org

Kelowna, British Columbia ~ April 21-23

info@rachelsvineyardkelowna.com 250-762-2273

www.rachelsvineyardkelowna.com

Memoir paints complicated portrait of Dorothy Day

By Judith Valente
©2017 Religion News Service

One of Kate Hennessy’s favourite memories of her grandmother, Catholic social justice activist Dorothy Day, is of sitting in a bedroom at the Catholic Worker farm in Tivoli, N.Y., watching her use an old manual typewriter to answer people’s letters.

“Each letter would of course provoke a story,” Hennessy recalled. “She was a fabulous storyteller with a mesmerizing voice. I could listen to her for hours, just being raised by her voice.”

Watching her grandmother compose what would become famous columns for the Catholic Worker newspaper also impressed Hennessy, the youngest of Day’s nine grandchildren.

“She always said to everyone, ‘Keep a journal.’ So I took her advice. I started keeping a journal, probably from when I was 12 years old. It was really a lifeline for me,” Hennessy said.

Now Hennessy has culled those memories into a book about Day, a complex woman the Catholic Church is considering making a saint.

Many biographies describe Day’s social justice work and her tumultuous life both before and after founding the Catholic Worker Movement. In *Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved by Beauty*, Hennessy presents Day as a matri-

arch with a close but complicated relationship with her daughter and only child, Tamar Hennessy, as well as her nine grandchildren.

The book’s title comes from one of Day’s favourite quotes from Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Day would often add her own coda to the Dostoyevsky quote: “The world will be saved by beauty, and what is more beautiful than love?”

“When I heard this, I thought this is a prayer; it’s like sending out a prayer,” Hennessy said. “We can’t quite define what beauty is. But maybe it’s a feeling of being transported, of having some kind of change within us that makes us observe and see the world around us in a much more sacred way.”

Day, she added, had an “unerring eye that went straight to those things that I or other people would not find beautiful, and that would make us look at something more closely.”

In a review in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Peter Lewis wrote: “Hennessy’s biography unspools slowly, though not leisurely or even comfortably, as it is genuinely questing after personal and familial enlightenment, and tests of willpower, of facing the human weaknesses, blind errors, and hurtfulnesses of one you love.”

Hennessy recalls both her mother, who died in 2008, and grandmother, who died in 1980, as women of contradictions.

Tamar was a talented craftswoman and voracious reader



Stanley Vishnewski

MEMORIES OF A GRANDMOTHER — Dorothy Day during her final summer at the cottage in Spanish Camp on Staten Island in New York in 1978.

who felt self-conscious about not having a college degree. She raised nine children and ran a farm in Vermont, but failed for years to separate herself from a troubled marriage with an alcoholic husband who suffered frequent bouts of depression. Her sense of self-worth often depended on what her mother thought of her.

Day, who was born in 1897, was a convert to Catholicism who dabbled in communism, had an abortion as a young woman, and

never married Tamar’s father. She loved taking to the road for speaking engagements, but also craved silence and solitude. Condemned by some American bishops in the early days of her work, she managed to turn a radical belief in welcoming strangers into a chain of “houses of hospitality” that still house and feed homeless people in 250 cities around the world.

“She did that out of deep sense of gratitude that she was able to give birth to my mother,” Hennessy said.

“My mother believed so strongly that everyone is a child of God. She was also raised at a time when the church was very ‘either you’re a Catholic or you’re going to hell.’ It was just a relief to her to give that up,” Hennessy recalled.

Tamar’s exodus from the church followed that of all of her

Populists and ‘wannabe demagogues’



Pulpit & Politics

Dennis Gruending

The Conservative leadership race involves an unwieldy group of 14 candidates — only four of whom might be seen as fit for the office. They are former cabinet ministers, including the impressive Michael Chong, Lisa Raitt and Erin O’Toole, as well as Andrew Scheer, a former speaker of the House of Commons. Unfortunately, among them, only Chong is fluent in French. But each would encourage a bigger tent Conservative party than was possible under former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who came to politics through the hard-bitten Reform party.

Still, it’s quite possible that none among these candidates will ever win. This competition is occurring at a time when right-wing populist parties in Europe and the U.S. are being led by people with little or no experience in public life. Rather than acknowl-

Gruending is an Ottawa-based writer and a former member of Parliament. His blog can be found at <http://www.dennisgruending.ca>. This post appeared on the United Church Observer blog March 9, 2017 (www.ucobserver.org).

edging their lack of knowledge, they simply flaunt it.

Here in Canada, there are at least two Conservative leadership contenders attempting to emulate politicians, such as U.S. President Donald Trump, who never held public office prior to becoming the commander-in-chief. One candidate is Kevin O’Leary, who actually lives in Boston and spends most of his time in the U.S., even while participating in a Canadian leadership race. Of course, he makes no apologies for just visiting.

O’Leary is a fund manager and television personality who happens to be short on knowledge of policy. He claims, for example, that he’d do away with unions even though the right to free association is enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

A second candidate attempting to channel Trump’s victory to her advantage is Kellie Leitch, an MP and former cabinet minister in a Harper government. Leitch, who had decidedly limited visibility, has — in the words of one political scientist — decided to “light (herself) on fire to get attention.”

For instance, she invited profile by promising to pre-screen immigrants for their potential “anti-Canadian values.” Other candidates, in response, have accused her of playing “dog-whistle politics” and of being a “wannabe demagogue.”

Also running against the liberal “elites,” Leitch sent out a fundraising email immediately following the recent U.S. election. “Tonight, our American cousins threw out the elites and elected Donald Trump as their next president,” Leitch said. “It’s an exciting message and one that we need delivered in Canada, as well.”

But Leitch is hardly an outsider. She is an orthopedic surgeon who has involved herself in Conservative backrooms and election campaigns for years. As for the common touch, back in January, Leitch responded to a question that she didn’t appreciate by snapping, “Please understand that I do have 22 letters at the end of my name, I’m not an idiot.”

A succession of Conservative leaders, including Robert Stanfield and Joe Clark, once attempted to create a more moderate and inclusive party. Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney parlayed that effort into a decade in power. But under Harper, a right-wing cabal moved to the centre of power although governing did impose some discipline. Today, in opposition and complete disarray, the Conservatives just may turn to a self-described outsider — a “wannabe demagogue” — to lead them.

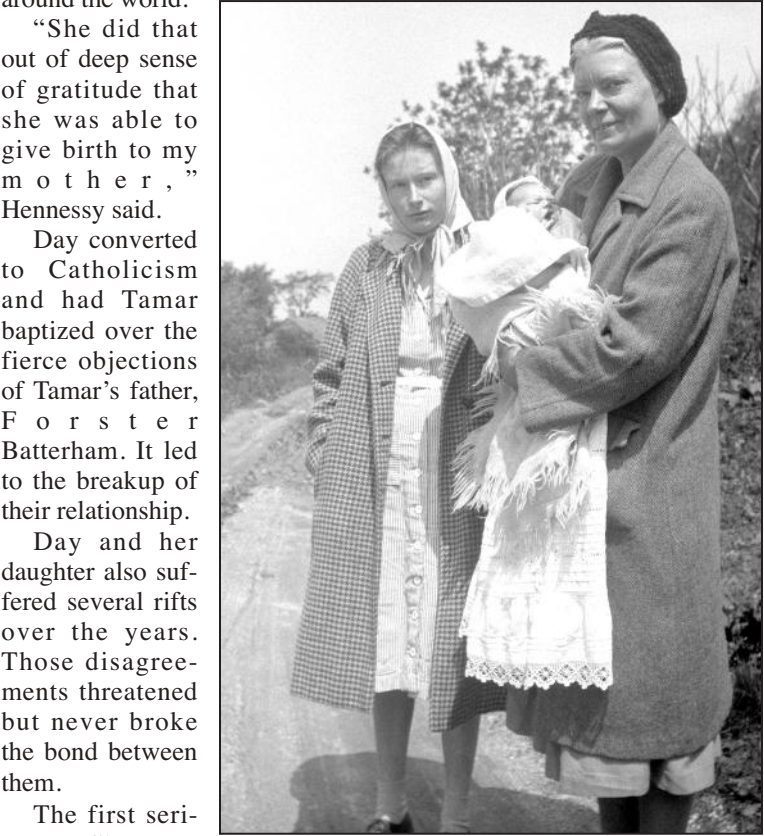


Photo courtesy of the Hennessy Family Collection

FAMILY — Tamar Hennessy, left, with her mother Dorothy Day holding Tamar’s first child, Becky, after Becky’s baptism. Seen on the Easton farm in 1945.


children, which was another blow to Day.

“For my grandmother, the worst thing that could happen to someone was to lose their faith,” Hennessy said.

Tamar insisted she hadn’t lost her faith but had moved on from the church in which she was raised.

“Of course my grandmother was heartbroken, but she never said anything. She really believed so strongly that people had to work things out for themselves. She never reproached us or tried to draw us back in. She just waited and prayed,” Hennessy said.

— SAINT, page 13


Emerald Tree
ACCOUNTING SERVICES

*Bookkeeping,
Charity Returns,
GST Filing,
FRAME Reports*

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

A clash of values

Venezuela was in the news last year for its deteriorating economy and food riots.

Recently the Venezuelan government has attacked Catholics, marking a deterioration of relations between the church and the national government. Some church leaders have openly speculated that the events could be part of a broader, co-ordinated campaign, a Catholic News Service article has reported.

The claim was made by retired Archbishop Ramon Ovidio Perez Morales of Los Teques, a town just outside of Caracas.

At San Pedro Claver Church in Caracas in late January, a pro-government collective crashed Sunday mass and shouted insults at Rev. Angel Tornado before closing the doors, standing up near the altar and prohibiting parishioners from leaving, while further criticizing the local priest.

Collectives are pro-government groups that organize community events and social projects, but they also have been accused of intimidation and violence against those who oppose the government.

“They started to shout insults, then would be calm, and then they would shout again,” said Maria Cisneros, who has attended the church for 20 years. She requested her real name not be used out of fear of retaliation.

“These were aggressive people, with aggressive vocabulary, using profanity, and they said all kinds of vulgarities; we felt very attacked,” she said.

Another churchgoer who witnessed the event said the group of people, estimated at a couple of dozen, shouted “devil in a cassock” and “fascist” at the priest. She said they claimed the priest had used the pulpit to criticize the government.

Some weeks before the incident in the Caracas church, several young seminarians were intercepted by unknown men, beaten up, and stripped, in Merida, in the Venezuelan Andes.

“This is all part of a general policy of confrontation with the church,” said Morales. “Specifically, it’s against the Venezuelan episcopal conference, and it’s nothing new.”

The bishops’ conference and Venezuelan government have had a tense relationship since the arrival of President Hugo Chavez in 1999. Trust between the two sides appeared restored late last year when the government agreed to sit down with the political opposition in a dialogue process accompanied by the Vatican.

But the short-lived talks later collapsed, with each side blaming the other for its failure and the Vatican also receiving part of the blame.

The church criticizes the government for wanting to impose a socialist and communist regime, saying this is the principal cause of the country’s crisis.

Government leaders in turn accuse the church of representing elite interests and the status quo, to the detriment of the country’s poor.

A year ago Venezuela experienced food riots and starvation. Its economic crisis was sparked by a combination of dropping oil prices and a mismanaged

economy. Runaway inflation was forecast to reach 700 per cent by the International Monetary Fund.

Reuters news service reported that some parents were giving away children they could no longer afford to feed or care for. Mothers and fathers left their children with neighbours who were in more fortunate circumstances.

One mother asked a neighbour to take care of her six-year-old daughter in October. “It’s better that she has another family than go into prostitution, drugs or die of hunger,” the mother explained.

Meanwhile, Tornado has left San Pedro Claver Church and returned to his native Peru after 22 years in Caracas. Parishioners say he continued to receive threats and insults following the January confrontation and left out of fear for his safety.

Since the church confrontation, mass has continued regularly without similar disturbances. Those who lived through the frightening experience hope the peace continues.

It’s obvious there is a clash of values between the church and state in Venezuela. It’s not unlike similar clashes in other countries, including Canada.

Most recently, it’s the Canadian government’s decision to give \$650 million over three years for “sexual and reproductive health and rights” for developing countries that church leaders are calling “reprehensible,” as reported in this issue. The money will be used to fight anti-abortion laws in many countries, reports indicate.

The church’s voice may not be heard, but who else is voicing opposition?— PWN

A tribute to Grandmother Deutscher: my hero as a woman

Building a Culture of Life

Mary Deutscher



This month marked International Women’s Day, a made-

up day of recognition I never pay any attention to. Except this year

was a little different, because a few days before March 8, my grandmother, Etta Deutscher, died at the age of 97. This got me thinking about what it really means to be a woman.

I have a bit of a chip on my shoulder about International Women’s Day because I find mainstream feminism tends to present one view of what it means to be a woman. I know there are many ways to celebrate Women’s

Day, but generally speaking I feel young girls are inundated with the message that they should desire the things men have: power, sexual promiscuity, and independence. Emphasizing these ideals has in many ways tainted feminism, and I know women who would die before they’d call themselves a feminist (Grandma certainly did!)

But there is also a version of feminism that is a lot easier to get behind because it does exactly what feminism should be doing. This feminism celebrates women for who we are rather than trying to turn us into men. It celebrates service, commitment, and healthy relationships, which are things the women I admire most have in spades. Grandma Deutscher was particularly good at all three of these things, so in tribute to her I’d like to offer the following reflection.

The first thing International Women’s Day seems to be hammering into young girls is that to be successful they need to have

power. The word “empowered” has been interpreted to mean high-level careers and having ultimate control over their destiny.

But a mature woman like Grandma could tell you this type of control is just an illusion. Like the other women of her generation, Grandma lived through the Second World War and knew she had no control over whether she would end the war a widow or a happily married wife. During this time she devoted herself to being a nurse, and I believe she found her empowerment through this life of service. Accepting her powerlessness gave her power, which is a paradox I could spend the rest of my life trying to sort out.

The second bit of misinformation modern feminism seems to push on girls is the idea that promiscuity is somehow empowering. Girls are encouraged to sow their wild oats, but this too often leads to heartbreak. Why? Because women are wired differently from men. We aren’t just looking for fun; we’re looking for commitment, for stability, and for love.

The strongest women I know are the ones who have been honest with themselves about this and have demanded a high standard from the men in their lives. They have demanded faithfulness and respect for their bodies. In turn these women have made a commitment to the people they value. Grandma demonstrated exactly what was important to her through her commitment to her family and her community. I never once heard her say she regretted that these were the main focus of her life, and her commitment is the reason her funeral was a celebration of her life in the truest sense.

My grandmother also succeeded where the feminist movement fails because she understood what

Seniors’ care becomes a money maker

By Margaret McGregor and Lisa Ronald, Vancouver

Late last year, the large transnational insurance company Anbang announced its intention to purchase a majority interest in Retirement Concepts, a Canadian for-profit nursing home chain. Retirement Concepts receives funding from a number of provincial governments to provide nursing home care, and is the highest billing provider of assisted-living and residential care services in British Columbia.

The sale, approved by the federal government in mid-February, is concerning for a number of reasons.

The transaction appears to be part of a trend for private investment companies to purchase properties that generate profits by leasing the property back to a second private for-profit operator. In this case, its likely that Anbang will lease the property back to

Retirement Concepts, the previous private for-profit owner, which will continue to provide the services.

Why do this?

Research shows that the typical business model for such arrangements is associated with offering a high return on capital and maximizing cash extraction. The property assets owned by the private equity firm are separated from the daily operations of providing resident

care. The former builds in high shareholder returns through a number of strategies, including requiring the daily operating business to make debt and rent payments.

Some companies have gone bankrupt as a result, leaving residents and families in the lurch.

Obscure relationships among multiple companies can make it very difficult to pin down respon-

— BANKRUPT, page 15



CULTURE COUNCIL WOMEN CONSULTANTS — Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, and women who are consultants to the council, pose for a photo during a media opportunity at the Vatican March 7. In 2015 the Pontifical Council for Culture formed a group of 37 female consultants from around the world to advise it on matters ranging from neuroscience to sports.

McGregor is an expert adviser with EvidenceNetwork.ca and a clinical associate professor and director of Community Geriatrics with the UBC Department of Family Practice. Ronald is a research associate of Community Geriatrics, UBC Family Practice, and a postdoctoral fellow with the UBC Faculty of Medicine. www.troymedia.com

CNS/Paul Haring

— EVIDENCE, page 15

Pastor, 90, values Métis culture

By Dominique Kerbrat, OMI

I'll be celebrating my 65th year as a priest and 70 years as an Oblate this year. I will also celebrate my 90th birthday in August.

Life has been very good to me because of the special people I have met. While teaching in Winnipeg for 15 years I had many occasions to replace priests who worked with Aboriginal people for Sunday services or other celebrations. I was surprised at how I enjoyed the people I met, even if I had never studied native culture and had very little contact with them. For a long time I asked myself: "Where did my reaction come from?"

It took me years before I finally found the answer: it came from my relations with the Métis people during my first 20 years in my hometown.

Coming from a small town, St. Laurent, Man., where 75 per cent of the people were Métis, learning from them about their culture, they made me discover that first- and second-class persons do not exist, that Mother Earth was special, full of marvels, and that we all belonged to the same family. In 1978 a friend of mine asked me to work with him and Aboriginal people. I said yes.

The next 30 years were among the most beautiful years of my life. I received one million tons of respect and honour from them and ten million tons of love. But where did all this come from?

There were so many workshops showing how First Nations had been hurt by their stay in residential schools. How come I felt what I felt?

It was a Buddhist master giving conferences in Europe who gave me the answer. In one of his conferences he said to the people: "Remember you people that when God created you he placed at the very centre of your being a precious pearl that is a masterpiece. She cannot be tarnished, she cannot be soiled and she cannot be broken, not even by you."

One man lifted his arm and said, "You are not going to tell me that Hitler and Stalin had a precious pearl." He answered, "Yes, they did have one but they never found it."

That's when I discovered that in spite of all the crap of residential schools many First Nations women and men DID find their precious pearl, so did

the Métis in my hometown. That is why and what I want to celebrate this year.

I wrote in a poem the following (from my book *The Impertinence and the Compassion of a Pastor*):

Through your friendship
I have felt
Your acceptance
Your respect
Your gentleness
Your warmth
And your patience.

With you I have
Also lived
Your awesome pain
Your feeling of being oppressed
Your feeling of being used

Your feeling of
Not being listened to

Your feeling of
Not belonging

Your feeling of
Nothingness.

Through your own
Visions

Through your own
Dreams

Through your own
Passion

I know the impossible
Will become possible
And also know that
Only through
The recognition of your
Spirituality
Will Canada ever
Discover
Its collective identity.

Kitchi Meegwetch Anishnabeg and Métis



Design Pics

sketches

I collect
the sketches
they make of You
and save them
for a while

for they see
things from a
different view
depict You
with a smile

But one day
I'll decide
to remove them
from my shelf

for bit by bit
I'm learning how
to draw those
smiles myself

By Denise Young

Evidence of Grandma's life showed in fruits of her labour

Continued from page 14

healthy relationships look like. The feminist movement all too often preaches that women need to dominate the people around them, particularly men. Grandma was the matriarch of our family, but she got there by service and commitment, not by an independent focus on herself. Her family loved her because she held nothing back in her love for them. I don't mean to suggest that there were no hurt feelings or misspoken words, but the evidence that Grandma's life was well lived is in the fruits of her labour. Grandma raised six sons who all grew to be respectful of women, and although she had no daughters of her own, she was a mother to her daughters-in-law and granddaughters, all of whom admired her. With family members coming home for her funeral from around the world, you can rest assured that this woman was

deeply loved and respected

This reflection is not to suggest that there is any one formula for being a woman. Whether one has become a mother, has developed a career, or has put her energy into both, I believe the true values of feminism — service, commitment, and relationships — will help all of us to become the women God has created us to be regardless of the path we are called to follow.

I am grateful to be able to share these insights from my grandmother's life in the *Prairie Messenger*. As a member of St. Peter's Colony from birth to death, I don't believe I ever saw her prouder of me than on the days she would show my column to her friends. I just wish I could see her face now that a column has been devoted to her and to all the hardworking women who have given of themselves to build the kingdom of God. Rest in peace, Grandma. You have earned it.

U.K. for-profit homes go bankrupt

Continued from page 14

sibility when things go wrong.

In the U.K., such a lease arrangement became so costly that when the government refused a request from the operator to help pay for increasing costs, the Southern Cross chain of 750 publicly funded for-profit homes declared bankruptcy. This left residents and families with great uncertainty and governments facing public scandal.

Allowing the growth of a private equity service delivery model in Canada will undermine the federal government's stated priority of building a high-quality sustainable system of community-based care for seniors.

Under these large corporate structures, it's often difficult to identify the entity ultimately responsible for the care of this vulnerable population. If patients and families have complaints or governments have quality concerns, the lines of accountability in such large corporate structures are often poorly defined.

The size and complex corporate structure of these large cor-

porations make it extremely difficult to enforce financial accountability and report on how public resources are spent. It's also difficult to create and enforce regulations that require facilities to spend a defined amount of public funds on staffing or to limit spending on administration.

Once large companies own nursing home property, governments become increasingly dependent on these chains for services and are less able to terminate contracts, remove residents from poorly performing facilities, ensure standards are maintained or control the costs of care.

When such ownership is transnational in nature, the introduction of government regulations requiring facilities to spend a defined amount of public funds on staffing or to limit spending on administration may be contested under international trade agreements.

There's a substantial amount of research demonstrating that the quality of care contracted by governments to private for-profit nursing homes is inferior when compared to care delivered in

public and non-profit facilities. This is more often the case with large for-profit chains where there is even greater pressure to deliver a return on investment.

The pressure to make a profit often leads to cost-cutting measures such as reduced staffing that undermine the quality of seniors' care. The 10 largest publicly funded private for-profit nursing home chains in the U.S. have been found to have lower nurse staffing hours, for example, compared to government facilities. Publicly funded private for-profit chain facilities in Ontario have also been found to provide fewer hours of care.

The evidence is clear: large-scale private equity investments in nursing home facilities too often jeopardize the quality of care and put seniors' health at risk.

What can be done now?

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Minister Navdeep Bains and Health Minister Jane Philpott should commission a panel on how governments can address the challenges of privatization and marketization of nursing home chains across the country.

Our seniors deserve no less.

www.prairiemessenger.ca

M

Prairie

Messenger

CATHOLIC JOURNAL

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
Circulation Department
100 College Drive, Box 190, Muenster, Sask., S0K 2Y0
Fax: (306) 682-5285 pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca
Published by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter's Abbey.
Printed by St. Peter's Press, Muenster, Sask.

Editor: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB 306-682-1772
<pm.editor@stpeterspress.ca>
Associate editors: Maureen Weber <pm.canadian@stpeterspress.ca>, Don Ward <pm.local@stpeterspress.ca>
Layout artist: Lucille Stewart
Advertising: Gail Kleefeld 306-682-1772 <pm.ads@stpeterspress.ca>
Circulation: Gail Kleefeld 306-682-1772 <pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca>
Regina diocesan editor: Frank Flegel 306-586-7316, 306-352-1651
Saskatoon diocesan editor: Kiply Lukan Yaworski 306-242-1500, 306-651-3935
Prince Albert: Chancery Office 306-922-4747
Winnipeg diocesan editor: James Buchok 204-452-2227
Saint-Boniface Chancery Office 204-237-9851

Subscriptions: \$37.00 per year (45 issues); tax included; U.S. \$170.00 per year. Foreign \$269.00 per year.
Single copy: \$1.00 GST#10780 2928 RT0001
Copy and advertising should arrive 12 days before publication date.
Change of address: Please allow 3-4 weeks for processing and send both old and new addresses.
Website: <http://www.prairiemessenger.ca>

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

CN ISSN 0032-664X Publication Mail Agreement No. 40030139

Pope shows openness to ordaining *virī probati*

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While Pope Francis' recent comments on the subject of married priests made headlines around the world, his response falls clearly in line with the thinking of his predecessors.

In an interview with German newspaper *Die Zeit*, published in early March, Pope Francis was asked if allowing candidates for the priesthood to fall in love and marry could be "an incentive" for combatting the shortage of priestly vocations.

He was also asked about the possibility of allowing married *virī probati* — men of proven virtue — to become priests.

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

Expressing a willingness to study the question of allowing married men to become priests was hardly a groundbreaking response

given that the topic was explored in two meetings of the Synod of Bishops and by both Pope Benedict XVI and St. John Paul II.

During the 2005 Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist, the possibility of ordaining men of proven virtue was raised as a way to provide priests for areas of the world where Catholics have very limited access to mass and the sacraments.

"Some participants made reference to *virī probati*, but in the end the small discussion groups evaluated this hypothesis as a road not to follow," a proposition from the synod said.

Eight years before he was elected pope, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said that while married priests in the Catholic Church were not on the horizon in "the foreseeable future," it was not an entirely closed subject.

In *Salt of the Earth*, an interview-book with Peter Seewald published in 1997, the future Pope Benedict said, "One ought not to declare that any custom of the church's life, no matter how

deeply anchored and well-founded, is wholly absolute. To be sure, the church will have to ask herself the question again and again; she

has now done so in two synods."

The question of mandatory celibacy for most priests in the Latin rite of the Catholic Church

has been debated heavily in recent years, with some people seeing it as a way to encourage more men to enter the priesthood since they would be able to serve without giving up marriage and the possibility of having a family.

Pope Benedict said celibacy in the priesthood is difficult to understand today "because the relationship to marriage and children has clearly shifted."

To have children, he

explained, was once viewed as a "sort of immortality through posterity."

"The renunciation of marriage and family is thus to be understood in terms of this vision: I renounce what, humanly speaking, is not only the most normal but also the most important thing," he said.

The celibacy rule is a church discipline, but its roots are found in the Gospel when Jesus speaks to his disciples about the possibility of remaining celibate for the kingdom of God.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I will give you Shepherds), written in response to the 1990 Synod of Bishops, St. John Paul II wrote that Jesus wished to not only affirm the "specific dignity and sacramental holiness" of marriage, but also to show that another path for Christians exists.

This path, he said "is not a flight from marriage but rather a conscious choice of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

Expanding on the subject, Pope Benedict told Seewald that to view priestly celibacy as a way for priests to have more time for ministry without dealing with the duties of being a husband and a father is "too primitive and pragmatic."

"The point is really an existence that stakes everything on God and leaves out precisely the one thing that normally makes a human existence fulfilled with a promising future," he said.



CNS/Jens Schulze, EPA

HEALING OF REFORMATION MEMORIES — Young people lift up a cross during an ecumenical service March 11 at St. Michael's Church in Hildesheim, Germany. The Catholic and the Protestant Church in Germany are holding an ecumenical gathering with the title "Healing of Memories" on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Teens, tweens want news, but get it from new sources

By Mark Pattison

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Children may not read the newspaper or watch news on television like their parents or grandparents, but they still want news. They just get it from different sources, according to a report issued March 8.

In a survey of 853 "tweens," kids ages 10-12, and teenagers ages 13-18, five out of eight said they had gotten news the day before from family, teachers or friends, and close to half said they had gotten news online. What's considered "traditional" media — newspapers, TV and radio — were just a few percentage points behind online sources.

The report, *News and America's Kids*, released by Common Sense Media, also revealed that less than half of those kids surveyed said they could tell the difference between real news and fake news, and 31 per cent of those who had shared a news story in the past six months had later learned the story was inaccurate.

The genesis for the report was that "the media landscape has changed considerably in the last two decades," said Michael Robb, the report's author, in a March 7 telephone interview with Catholic News Service from New York City. The notion of "a family gathering around a single TV to watch the news is antiquated." He added it was the first study of its kind in about 20 years.

Seventy per cent of the children surveyed said consuming the news made them feel "smart and knowledgeable," while half following the news said it helped prepare them to make a difference in their communities.

Healthy majorities of kids also feel the news media underrepresents and misrepresents them, as 74 per cent said media should show more kids rather than show grown-ups talking about kids, and

69 per cent, according to the report, said the news media "has no idea" about the experiences of people their age — tweens feeling even more so than teens.

Kids' most trusted news sources are family (66 per cent) and teachers (48 per cent), although online news sources edge family for their preferred news source 39 per cent - 36 per cent. More than three-fourths of all kids says they scan the news headlines of the social media sites they frequent.

Teens prefer Facebook over YouTube by a 3-to-1 margin for their preferred online news source, although tweens favoured YouTube slightly; Facebook users are supposed to be at least 13 years of age.

"Kids see racial and gender bias in the news," the report said. "Of particular note is the fact that half of U.S. kids say when they see non-white kids in the news, it's negative and/or related to crime and violence."

Kids can be like grown-ups in one troubling respect: They can be scared by what they see in the news. "Content can be disturbing, causing children to feel afraid, angry and/or depressed," the report said, adding that 63 per cent of those surveyed feel that way. Girls are twice as likely as boys to feel this way, and tweens are 50 per cent more likely than teens to feel like this.

Robb attributed this to kids "basically not having as robust an understanding of what can actually affect them. . . . Younger children tend to be more scared by natural disasters and big scary events. I think part of their fear is age-based."

"For a lot of people, we talk about the news around kids, and we don't engage kids about the news, so we don't interpret what it means for their lives — anything from the election to a natural disaster, car crashes in the neighbourhood. It can be very visceral, very scary for a kid."

Gossip, evil hurt people every day: pope

By Cindy Wooden

ROME (CNS) — Witches don't really exist, so they can do no harm, Pope Francis told a young girl, but gossip, sin and evil exist and they hurt people every day.

"What frightens me?" the pope asked, repeating the question posed by Sara, one of the children at the Rome parish of St. Magdalene of Canossa. "I'm frightened when a person is bad; the wickedness of people" is scary.

Spending close to four hours at the parish March 12, Pope Francis answered questions from the children, met with the older and sick members of the parish, spent time with parents whose babies have been baptized in the past year and with the Canossian Sisters, whose founder is honoured as the parish's patron saint.

Before celebrating an evening mass, the pope also heard confessions.

He had told the children that the "seeds of wickedness" lie within each human being, but that God is always willing to forgive those who are sincerely sorry for their sins.

Sara had told him she's afraid of witches, but Pope Francis told her that witches don't really exist and those who claim to be able to cast spells are lying.

What is really frightening, the pope said, is the harm caused when people choose to sin, a choice that often begins small. "And it frightens me when in a family, neighbourhood, workplace, parish — or even the Vatican — there is gossip. That's scary."

"You have heard or seen on TV what terrorists do? They throw a bomb and run," he said. "Gossip is like that. It's throwing a bomb and running away. Gossip destroys" people and reputations.

In his homily at the mass, Pope Francis described sin as being ugly, an offence against God and "a slap" to God's face.

"We are used to talking about other people's sins. It's an ugly thing to do," the pope said. Instead, people need to look at their own sins and at Jesus, who took upon himself the sins of all humanity.

"This is the path toward Easter, toward the resurrection" where

Jesus' face will shine like it did at the transfiguration.

But Christians also need to gaze at the crucifix and at the face of Jesus "disfigured, tortured, despised, bloodied by the crown of thorns" because he loved humanity so much that he took on the sins of the world and "paid so much for all of us."

The face of Jesus, he said, "encourages us to ask forgiveness for our sins and not to sin so much. It encourages us most of all to trust because if he has made himself sin and has taken on our sins, he is always ready to forgive us. We just need to ask him."



CNS/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters

POPE FRANCIS VISITS ROME PARISH — Pope Francis celebrates mass March 12 at the Rome parish of St. Magdalene of Canossa. Before mass, he heard confessions.

There is no surprise more magical than the surprise of being loved.

— Charles Langbridge Morgan