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CNS/Jessica Rinaldi, Reuters

Splendour of the Father's light
That makes our daylight lucid, bright;
O Light of light and sun of day,
Now shine on us your brightest ray.

True Sun, break out on earth and shine
In radiance with your light divine;
By dazzling of your Spirit's might,
Oh, give our jaded senses light.

The Father sends his Son, our Lord,
To be his bright and shining Word;
Come, Lord, ride out your gleaming course
And be our dawn, our light's true source.

— Ambrose, Fourth Century

Vatican manipulation of photo becomes the story

By Greg Erlandson

WASHINGTON (CNS) — What was meant to be an intellectual tribute to Pope Francis has instead become the backdrop to the latest tempest over transparency and this pontificate.

On the eve of the fifth anniversary of the election of Pope Francis, the Vatican publishing house, *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, unveiled a series of 11 books focusing on the intellectual roots and thought of Pope Francis.

Numerous theologians contributed to the volumes, and they

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are being published in several languages.

In a news conference attended by Catholic News Service, Msgr. Dario Vigano, prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for Communication who oversees LEV, explained that he had asked retired Pope Benedict XVI to “write a page or a page and a half of dense theology in his clear and punctual style that (we) would have liked to read this evening.”

Pope Benedict responded with “a beautiful, personal letter,” Vigano said. The retired pope explained that he could not write a theological reflection on the 11 volumes because he had not read them and would be physically unable to do so in time for the March 12 presentation. However,

he expressed the hope that the series would contradict “the foolish prejudice of those who see Pope Francis as someone who lacks a particular theological and philosophical formation. . . .”

Pope Benedict said the books “reasonably demonstrate that Pope Francis is a man with profound philosophical and theological formation and are helpful to see the interior continuity between the two pontificates, even with all the differences in style and temperament.”

So far, so good.

However, when the Secretariat for Communication released a photo of the first page of the letter, two lines at the end of the first page were blurred out, making it look as if someone had intention-

ally obscured the fact that Pope Benedict had not read the series, and leaving only the words defending his successor.

Two days later, some Vatican watchers began writing about the blurred photo.

At this point, the blurring, not the book series, became the story. As reported by the Associated Press’ lead Vatican reporter, Nicole Winfield, “The Vatican admitted Wednesday that it altered a photo sent to the media of a letter of retired Pope Benedict XVI about Pope Francis. The manipulation changed the meaning of the image in a way that violated photojournalist industry standards.”

Sources at the Vatican explained that the letter itself was never intended to be made public, which was why the second page was obscured in the carefully staged photo. One source called it a “photo illustration.”

U.S. photojournalists adhere to strict standards regarding any sort of manipulation of a photographed image. AP norms, which are followed by Catholic News Service, state that “no element should be digitally added or subtracted from any photograph.”

Whatever the intention on the

part of the Vatican Secretariat for Communication, the obscuring of a portion of the letter suggested something they did not want everyone to see. Read in this context, Pope Benedict could be seen to be qualifying his generic support for the publication of the series.

For those who attended the news conference, the context of Pope Benedict’s comments was clear, and the fact that Vigano read out loud the lines that were subsequently obscured in the image makes the incident sound more like a matter of poor judgment than deception.

The controversy comes on the heels of the publication of Pope Francis’ World Communications Day message, which criticized the phenomenon of “fake news,” defining the phrase as “false information based on non-existent or distorted data meant to deceive and manipulate the reader.”

The entire incident is a reminder that in a media-sophisticated age, with a media-omnipresent pope, the Vatican communications apparatus must be committed both to transparency and to best journalistic practices. Anything less is a disservice to the church.

Forgiveness needs help from Holy Spirit

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Forgiving those who have caused pain or offence is not easy, Pope Francis said.

“It is a grace that we have to ask for,” because the peace offered by Christ cannot take root in a heart that is incapable of living in fraternity with others and incapable of rebuilding those bonds after being wounded, the pope said at his weekly general audience at the Vatican March 14.

The pope continued his series of talks on the mass, focusing on the communion rite, which begins with the assembly’s recitation of the Lord’s Prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer is not just any Christian prayer, he said, “but is the prayer of God’s children. It is the great prayer that Jesus taught us” because it was the very same prayer he used with God.

“It’s so beautiful to pray like Jesus” prayed, the pope added.

Calling God “our father” like Jesus did underlines how the faithful have been reborn and “regenerated” as God’s children through baptism and the Holy Spirit, the pope said.

But, he asked, how many people go beyond a rote recitation of the prayer and truly believe and feel God is their father and the father of all of humanity when they recite the Lord’s Prayer?

“When we pray the ‘Our Father,’ we connect with the father” through the Holy Spirit, who gives people this connection and feeling of being children of God, he said.

Praying the “Our Father” throughout the day helps people build their filial relationship with God and a sense of fraternity toward others, he said.

The prayer also opens a person’s heart to forgiving others as God has forgiven him or her, the pope said.

“Forgiving people who have offended us is not easy,” he added, so people must pray to the Lord “to teach me to forgive as you have forgiven me.” Human strength or will is not enough to be able to forgive, he said; it requires grace from the Holy Spirit.

The prayer prepares people for the rite of peace in which the celebrant prays that the peace of Christ



CNS/Vatican Media

POPE MEETS MEXICAN FRIENDS — Pope Francis meets Angelica Rivera, wife of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, during his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican March 14. The first lady brought children the pope had met during a visit to the oncology ward of the pediatric hospital in Mexico City in February 2016.

will fill people’s hearts and, as a sign of hope, the assembly exchanges a concrete sign of peace, he said.

This expression of ecclesial communion and being reconciled in mutual, fraternal love is key before receiving the sacrament of communion, the pope said.

“Christ’s peace cannot take root in a heart incapable of living

in fraternity (with others) and of piecing it back together after it has been wounded,” he said.

Pope Francis prayed that by celebrating the rites with greater understanding people would experience the eucharist more fully as the sacrament of their communion with God and with their brothers and sisters, Pope Francis said.



CNS/Marnie McAllister, The Record

CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS PROTEST GUN VIOLENCE — Presentation Academy students stand arm in arm on the sidewalk in downtown Louisville, Ky., after walking out of class at 10 a.m. March 14 to call attention to gun violence. They were among thousands around the nation who participated in a National School Walkout.

Church leaders praise Hawking for role in science

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, who said he did not believe in God, was still an esteemed member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and fostered a fruitful dialogue between science and faith.

The academy, which Pope Pius IX established in 1847, tweeted, “We are deeply saddened about the passing of our remarkable Academician Stephen #Hawking who was so faithful to our academy.”

“He told the four popes he met that he wanted to advance the relationship between faith and scientific reason. We pray the Lord to welcome him in his glory,” @CasinaPioIV, the academy, tweeted March 14.

The Vatican observatory, @SpecolaVaticana, also expressed its condolences to Hawking’s family.

“We value the enormous scientific contribution he has made to quantum cosmology and the courage he had in facing illness,” the observatory tweeted in Italian.

The British-born theoretical physicist, cosmologist and popular author died March 14 at the age of 76.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster tweeted, “We thank Stephen Hawking for his outstanding contribution to science. As a member of the Pontifical Academy of

Science, he will be missed and mourned there, too.”

Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury tweeted, “Professor Stephen Hawking’s contribution to science was as limitless as the universe he devoted his life to understanding. His was a life lived with bravery and passion. As we pray for all those who mourn him, may he rest in peace.”

St. John Paul II named Hawking a member of the papal academy in 1986. The academy’s members are chosen on the basis of their academic credentials and professional expertise — not religious beliefs.

Blessed Paul VI, the first of four popes to meet Hawking, gave the then 33-year-old scientist the prestigious Pius XI gold medal in 1975 after a unanimous vote by the academy in recognition of his great work, exceptional promise and “important contribution of his research to scientific progress.”

In interviews and his writings, Hawking asserted that God had no role in creating the universe.

Yet his avowed atheism did not keep him from engaging in dialogue and debate with the church as his work and contribution to the papal academy showed.

Vatican astronomer, Jesuit Brother Guy Consolmagno, who has studied both physics and philosophy, told Catholic News Service in 2010 that “the ‘god’ that Stephen Hawking doesn’t believe in is one I don’t believe in either.”

“God is not just another force in the universe, alongside gravity or electricity,” he added. “God is the reason why existence itself exists. God is the reason why space and time and the laws of nature can be present for the forces to operate that Stephen Hawking is talking about.”

Holocaust education event held at cathedral

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Over 2,000 students from Greater Saskatoon Catholic and Saskatoon Public Schools heard the powerful testimony of Holocaust survivor Robbie Waisman March 15 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Heather Fenyes of Congregation Agudas Israel welcomed students to the annual Holocaust Education Program. “For more than 10 years we understood that to truly learn and act on the lessons of the Holocaust we need an audience of young people,” she told the students gathered for the event. “Without you in the room we won’t ever see change.”

She described how the program was originally held in the synagogue, with Holocaust survivors telling their stories up to four times in two days to groups of youth. Three years ago, in order to permit the aging survivors to speak to just as many youth on one day, the bishop of Saskatoon (now Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina) and Rev. David Tumback offered the larger venue of the cathedral as a setting for the Jewish community’s annual education event.

“We were worried,” admitted Fenyes. “This piece of history, like all genocides, is a global responsibility, but the story of six million murdered Jews is our story, and we worried that we would lose an essential piece of ourselves and our message if we stopped telling it in our home. And then the first year here happened, and we the teachers became the students. We learned that by sharing our story of the Holocaust, it will always be personal, but in the sharing, the learning is far more powerful, and the change is much greater.”

In Judaism, the charge to repair the world is called *Tikkun olam*, Fenyes explained. “Today, Robbie’s story will become our common prayer, and, as such, far more powerful than the one we could have created alone.”

The Holocaust is one of the darkest periods of human history, in which “pure racism” led to the murder of six million Jewish people, she said.

“The Holocaust didn’t begin with death camps. It began with small, dangerous hate speech and grew into a massive killing machine,” Fenyes noted, adding that the world must continue to fight the hatred and racism that still plagues our culture. The treatment of indigenous peoples in Canada, the shooting of men praying at a Quebec mosque, the bombing of synagogues, and a rise in terrorism around the world demonstrate that the scourge of hatred continues in Canada and beyond.

“Every single one of you can and must be the change to end the hate that has no place in our homes, our community or our world. I beg you, be the change,” Fenyes told the 2,000 students gathered at the cathedral and hundreds more viewing the event via live-streamed video.

Turning the cathedral ambo over to Waisman, Fenyes told the students, “Chances are in your entire lifetime you will never meet somebody who has survived all that he has, and yet you will quick-



Kiply Yaworski

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION — Rev. David Tumback (left) of Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon welcomed special guests at the Holocaust Education Program which was organized by the Jewish community on March 15 for some 2,000 students: Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky, Holocaust survivor Robbie Waisman, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs representative Matthew Godwin, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools chair Diane Boyko, and emcee Heather Fenyes of Congregation Agudas Israel.

ly hear how his spirit, his resilience and his pure goodness are brighter than his darkest memory.”

Born in Skarzysko, Poland in 1931 to a close-knit family, Robbie Waisman was just a boy when Nazi forces invaded Poland. Except for Robbie and his sister Leah, the entire Waisman family was murdered during the Holocaust.

Waisman survived different concentration camps as a slave labourer in munitions factories, and was ultimately liberated from

Buchenwald on April 11, 1945, by American forces. Asked his name by the liberating soldiers that he saw as angels, the traumatized Waisman blurted out his concentration camp number.

“I am a survivor of that infamous place, where death was my constant companion. I celebrate April 11 as my birthday, although I was only 14 years old, for that day I was reborn into freedom,” he said.

He came to Canada as a young man, living in Saskatoon for many

years. He now lives in Vancouver and has spoken to thousands of youth and adults around the world.

“Imagine being a 14-year-old boy, imagine having been in hell and back over four years,” he said. “Being starved, emotionally exhausted, physically weakened, deprived of every human emotion — imagine being so brutalized, so dehumanized that you begin to believe you are no longer human. And in spite of it all never losing hope of being reunited with family.”

Outrage won’t sway Liberals on jobs attestation

By Chris Berthelot
Grandin Media

EDMONTON — Liberal MP Amarjeet Sohi faced hard questions and cries of outrage from frustrated constituents, but he defended his government’s controversial Canada Summer Jobs attestation.

“The attestation is not going to change,” Sohi, the MP for Edmonton Mill Woods, told more than 80 people at a town hall at Mill Woods Assembly church. “If that is the core mandate of your organization, to discriminate, to deny women the right to an abortion, then you will not qualify for funding.”

Leaders from the Catholic, Jewish and Muslim faiths across Canada — including Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops — say the Trudeau government’s new requirement for Canada Summer Jobs funding is an attack on religious freedom.

Organizations are expected to attest that their “core mandate” supports Charter and reproductive rights, including the right to an abortion, as well as the government’s gender ideology.

Political and faith leaders say that amounts to an attack on their religious freedom.

“This attestation is unacceptable. In effect, it simply excludes any Catholic parish, organization or charity from funding for hiring

a summer student,” Smith wrote in a recent letter to Catholic parishes, charities and organizations.

“In checking this box, they’re getting us to affirm that we will silence our right to our conscience, our religious beliefs,” said Allen Verbeek, a vice-president at The King’s University, a Christian institution in Edmonton. “They either don’t get that or choose to ignore that.”

Refusing to sign the attestation will mean that an application for funding will be denied. The Edmonton archdiocese stands to lose between \$10,000 to \$20,000 earmarked for hiring staff at Catholic youth camps.

Others are in a similar position. “We’re blessed to have camps and do camps and be able to continue this summer, but our future is in question,” said Ryan Waine, who is concerned Mill Woods Assembly youth camps are at risk.

Kieran Verghese, who also attends Mill Woods Assembly, says the government’s attestation requirement has had an unintended consequence.

“Now they put this in place, it’s at a point where now we feel as if we’re discriminated against.”

Ironically, even some who support the government’s social agenda say the attestation goes too far.

“You shouldn’t force faiths to sign something they don’t believe in. It’s not good policy,” said Neil

Singh, who is pro-choice and supports the government’s gender ideology. “In that way it becomes discriminatory.”

Sohi defended the attestation, noting faith groups are still eligible for funding — provided their activities don’t directly involve challenging Charter or reproductive rights. And Prime Minister Justin Trudeau himself reiterated his support for faith groups during a visit to Edmonton last month.

Nevertheless, Conservative MP Garnett Genuis, a Catholic, told the town hall that the attestation needs to be reworded or removed entirely.

“This attestation and the rhetoric around it is deeply disparaging to faith communities and the good work that they are doing,” said Genuis, the MP for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan.

Genuis’ fellow Conservative MP, Karen Vecchio, has put a motion forward in the House of Commons to allow “non-activist, non-political” organizations to access Canada Summer Jobs funding without signing the attestation.

Asked how he would vote on March 19, Sohi avoided a direct answer, saying that it’s the government’s responsibility to defend people’s rights. Sohi serves in the Trudeau cabinet as minister of infrastructure and communities.

Aleena Zelman, who attended the town hall, said she hopes Sohi will realize the gravity of

Waisman described the slow realization about the enormity of the Holocaust, which was so difficult to comprehend. “And we had to find a way to deal and cope with the loss of all our loved ones murdered by the Nazis. How were we going to live with all these horrors?”

He shared details of his horrific experience, his separation from his mother, and her murder; the death of his older brothers, of his sister-in-law and his three-year-old nephew; and the despair and suffering of his father.

“I don’t tell you these things to sadden you, but to empower you,” Waisman told the attentive crowd, encouraging his young listeners to battle hate and bullying wherever they find it. “Life to me is so important,” he said, sharing his sadness reading about a young woman who committed suicide because of bullying.

Waisman shared stories of the resilience of the human spirit of those who survived the concentrations camps, and the power of memory.

His own early years as the beloved youngest son of a loving family gave him the strength to go on during the darkest days in the concentration camp, and in the days after the war.

“Glimpses of heaven kept hope alive,” he said.

Coming to terms with the Holocaust and the death of his family was a long, slow process for Waisman and for other survivors. But Waisman noted that in spite of predictions that the children who survived Buchenwald would never live normal lives, the survivors

— PROMISE, page 6

the outrage.

“It raised a lot of important questions for Sohi, because I don’t think he quite understands the perspective we are coming from,” said Zelman, a Christian. “He needs to learn more of why this is



Photo supplied

Amarjeet Sohi, MP

so upsetting to Christians or people who believe in this.”

Genuis said concerned Canadians should contact their local MP about the motion, saying that despite the current Liberal majority, the upcoming vote on the attestation may be a surprise.

“There really has been a groundswell around this issue, so people providing that additional contact will make a difference.”

Easter Bunny decision may affect litigation

By Deborah Gyapong
Canadian Catholic News

OTTAWA (CCN) — The so-called Easter Bunny decision has struck a blow against compelled speech, and may have an impact on upcoming litigation on the Canada Summer Jobs program, says John Carpay.

Carpay is president of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms that represented foster parents Derek and Frances Baars against the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton. On March 6, Ontario Superior Court Justice A.J. Goodman found the society had violated the couple’s Charter rights to religious freedom and other rights, citing Supreme Court of Canada decisions against compelled speech.

Carpay pointed out there’s a clear link between having “a social worker demanding on threat of penalty that you must state that the Easter Bunny is real,” and Prime Minister Trudeau’s “wanting Canadians to state that they support abortion being legal and his false idea that his opinion on abortion is a Charter right.

“The commonality in both cases is that you have the state attaching consequences to not saying what the state wants you to say,” Carpay said.

The Justice Centre has a client affected by the new Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) policy and “will be taking this matter to court in the weeks ahead,” Carpay said. “Our client is not a pro-life group.”

This will be the second court action this year against the federal government for the Canada Summer Jobs policy. The first was filed Jan. 4 by the Toronto and Area Right to Life Association. The group failed to get an injunction against the attestation before the Feb. 1 deadline for CSJ applica-

tions, but has been promised an expedited hearing, although no date has been set.

“It’s better to challenge this program with an applicant that is not a pro-life group,” Carpay said. “If your client is not a pro-life group it makes it easier for the court to see the violation of freedom of expression because the court is not going to be thinking about abortion to the same extent.”

The Easter Bunny decision “had a huge precedent value because it establishes that social workers and childcare workers need to respect the religious freedom of foster parents, and that implies also to respect the religious freedom of adoptive parents and parents generally,” Carpay said.

“The reality is our courts typically are for free speech, free expression and, in circumstances where public benefit is involved, the proposition that one needs to comply or be subjected to some sort of ideological preconditions is dimly viewed by the court,” said Phil Horgan, president of the Catholic Civil Rights League.

He noted the upcoming Supreme Court decision in the case of Trinity Western University (TWU), a private evangelical Christian university, “will be very much on that point.” Two law societies have refused accreditation to students of a proposed TWU law school because of its mandatory community covenant that includes an agreement to abstain from sex outside of traditional marriage.

“I think the Easter Bunny case is quite frankly so far-fetched — a foster parents’ loving environment, with great results for their children, who just refuse to participate in some Walmart marketing exercise related to the Easter Bunny — I don’t think it was that difficult a decision,” Horgan said. “It was

striking that it got to that level in terms of the impact it was having on that couple.

“I think the message from this court to the federal government and other governments that are engaging in these types of limitations is that they should tread very

Cree elder retires from music ministry

By Chris Berthelot
Grandin Media

A beloved voice in the Enoch parish community has been reluctantly silenced.

After 60 years in music ministry, Albert Thomas has been forced to retire after debilitating lung problems and treatment for pneumonia robbed him of his voice.

“It wasn’t too bad when (the lung problems) first started, but I’d be singing for mass and I couldn’t sing a full line without taking a breath. I’d have to sit down, catch my breath again,” said Thomas, an Enoch Cree Nation elder who started his music ministry singing Cree songs during mass at Our Lady of Mercy.

“I’m 76 now, so age is catching up. I’m on oxygen, and I figured it’s time I quit singing in church and stay home. That’s about all I do now.”

To lift his spirits, friends and family organized a celebration honouring his six decades of singing and music at the River Cree Resort and Casino on March 17. For Theresa Thomas, Albert’s wife of 56 years, it’s a fitting tribute.

“All the things that people are doing for him now, I’m so happy for that. They’re not forgetting him in any way,” said Theresa, who has often heard parishioners

lightly into areas of cherished freedom,” he said.

Horgan issued a caveat, however. “We’ve also seen the shelf-life of a Supreme Court decision may be less than 22 years.”

He noted the reversal in the Bedford decision striking down the

prostitution law and in the Carter decision striking down the law against euthanasia and assisted suicide, when both laws had been upheld by decisions two decades previously.

— OVERREACH, page 15



Matthew Bodnarek/Grandin Media

VOCATION — For Cree elder Albert Thomas, music hasn’t just been entertainment; it’s been a vocation. He is reluctantly retiring after 60 years in music ministry after pneumonia and debilitating lung problems robbed him of his voice.

compliment Thomas’ voice and music.

While the music ministry continues at Our Lady of Mercy Parish, it won’t be the same without Thomas.

“Music is his life, and music is his gift and ministry to this parish and this community,” said Father Les Kwiatkowski, the pastor at Our Lady of Mercy, who has known Thomas for six years. “All of us are sad. He developed this very unique way of singing, which will be hard to replace.”

Parishioner Kelly Morin, who

has known the Thomas family for years, doubts anyone can replace Thomas.

“It was a huge loss for us and I don’t think we’ll ever replace him, in the sense of what he’s meant to the church, to the community and to the families.”

Thomas began singing at mass in 1958 when he was too old to continue as an altar server. For him, music isn’t just entertainment — it’s a vocation.

“I’m a Catholic and I pray to God and I sing, so why not sing to God? And I loved doing that,” he said. “They say singing is like praying twice.”

With a steady, warm voice that easily commanded an audience’s attention, Thomas quickly became a regular fixture at community events, weddings and funerals.

“He’s there. We never have to ask him to come out; he’s just there for everybody,” said Clara Sigurdur, adding Thomas provided the music at the funerals of her children. “People just love him, and people have so much respect for him. He’s here for us.”

Thomas even had a year-long stint on an Edmonton radio show in the 1960s. Until recently, he also recorded CDs and gave them to parishioners at Our Lady of Mercy.

He’s a big fan of country music, especially singer Merle Haggard, although it’s difficult for him to choose a favourite song. In addition to singing, Thomas plays bass guitar, banjo and mandolin and recalls teaching himself how to play the organ.

“We used to watch this organist, an elder, an old guy. I’d watch his fingers when I went to church, so that when the church was empty I’d come back and put my fingers on the organ,” Thomas said.

Now that he’s retired from music ministry, Thomas isn’t sure what to do next. He said at his age he really can’t plan for the future.

“It’s hard. I want to do something, but I just can’t.”

March for Life could be even bigger this year

By Deborah Gyapong
Canadian Catholic News

OTTAWA (CCN) — The abortion bubble zone legislation and other assaults on free expression could galvanize this year’s May 10 March for Life and make it even

bigger this year, say organizers.

“With the attack on freedom of speech, expression and conscience from the highest levels of government — Justin Trudeau’s politicization of the Canada Summer Jobs Program and Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne’s abortion bubble

zones, the widespread promotion of deadly chemical abortion in Canada, and the federal government’s global abortion fund, funded by Canadian tax dollars, it is very clear that our political leaders in this country are driven by radical ideologies that place the future of

our nation in jeopardy,” said Jim Hughes, president of Campaign Life Coalition in a release. “If they come after the rights of pro-life Canadians today, whose rights will they remove next?”

“I think a lot of people have woken up,” said Campaign Life project manager

Matthew Wojciechowski in an interview. “The bubble zone and the summer jobs program have been a real factor in waking people up to realize we can’t go by living our life silently. This is a form of totalitarianism and it’s wrong.

“The march has always been about ending abortion,” he said. “That’s always been the primary goal.”

However, the movement also encompasses the fight against euthanasia and assisted suicide, the fight for conscience rights and for religious freedom and freedom of expression.

While Campaign Life is expecting to draw over 20,000 people to the march this year on May 10, the bubble zone legislation has created a lot of uncertainty concerning logistics.

“We don’t know what is going to happen because of the route,” Wojciechowski said. “It’s our biggest concern at the moment. At the same time, the show must go on! We’re going as every year, getting people on buses, organizing school trips and church trips, and we’ll see what happens.”

Paul Lauzon, of Campaign Life’s Ottawa office, said organizers have met with the Ottawa police where they were presented with four possible routes, none of which will pass by the Morgentaler abortion facility on Bank Street. The March has traditionally looped through Ottawa’s downtown, re-

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Deborah Gyapong

MARCH FOR LIFE — Young people carry a banner proclaiming their support for life issues at last year’s March for Life in Ottawa. “The march has always been about ending abortion,” says Campaign Life project manager Matthew Wojciechowski, but the movement also encompasses the fight against euthanasia and assisted suicide, the fight for conscience rights, and for religious freedom and freedom of expression.

Cardinal Sarah challenges students to become saints

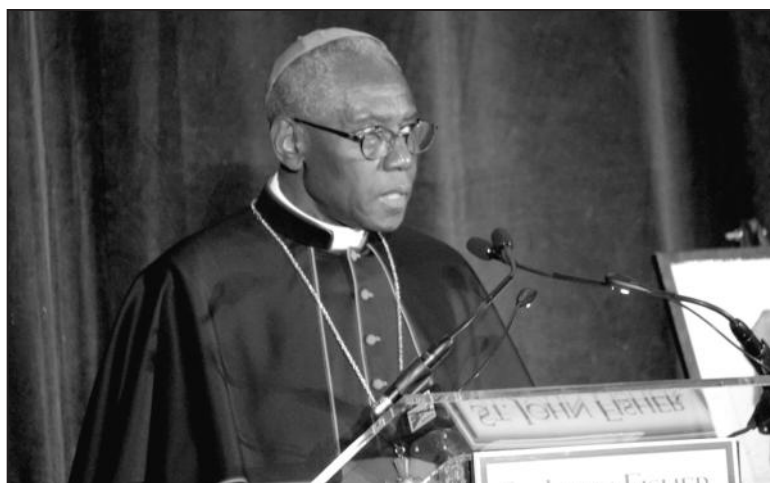
By Deborah Gyapong
Canadian Catholic News

KINGSTON, Ont. — Cardinal Robert Sarah challenged Catholic university students to become saints, so by the beauty of their lives they will attract others to the Gospel.

"This evening, I would like to challenge you to make holiness the foundation of all you are and all you do, to grow in friendship with Jesus Christ, to learn to converse with him and in prayer, even to suffer with him and for him," said the Vatican's Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship March 14 at the annual St. John Fisher dinner in Kingston, Ont., a fundraiser for Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO).

"Virtue crowns law with beauty," said the author of *The Power of Silence Against the Dictatorship of Noise*. "The beauty of virtuous lives becomes all the more important in a time when so much of our culture mitigates against the intelligibility and beauty of God's law."

The consequence of a false freedom on campus and outside of it are all too evident," the cardinal said, citing "addiction to drugs, alcohol and pornography; the so-called right to die with medical assistance; the destruction of the



Deborah Gyapong

Cardinal Robert Sarah

family," and the "confusion of our God-given identity."

"Christ calls us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect," he said. "On university campuses, it's a great temptation to think that perfection is impossible. In our Catholic tradition we find a conception of perfection that is attainable with God's help."

Sarah said Christians are called to "create a friendship with the Lord," and Jesus says, "You are my friends if you do what I command you."

This means abiding by his law, he said, noting the "connection between friendship and law is truth."

"When we abide by God's law, we prepare our hearts to receive the truth about what is good; we prepare our hearts to receive God himself because God is truth," he said.

The cardinal said a key to conforming ourselves to God's law and to receiving his revelation in our hearts is found in the Psalms, citing Psalm 1.

Reading the Scriptures, and "meditating on God's word, we encounter him there, again and again," he said. "We let his Word affect us. We let him shape the boundaries of our imagination and the movement of our hearts."

Becoming "shaped by the law so we obey it," so we "delight in it," is called virtue, he said. "It is the beauty of a virtuous life that we make obedience to God intelligible and attractive to other students."

Sarah recalled the example of the Holy Ghost Fathers who came to his village in Guinea as missionaries. "I can never forget the regularity and rigour of their daily prayer. They kept the hours like monks."

Their prayers punctuating the day was "sustained by their intimacy with the Lord. I wanted what they had. I wanted to go to the Lord with the faith, sincerity and love that they had. Almost 70 years later, I remember their example with awe."

The cardinal urged the students to commit themselves to daily prayer, including spending time before the Blessed Sacrament and going to Confession. "At first this might be difficult. Our interior lives are mysterious and at times tumultuous. We may pray and not discern any response from the Lord. Even when it is difficult, please keep praying!"

Cultivating virtue "brings order to our interior life," he said. One by one, the "virtues will quiet the various movements of our hearts and you will find yourself capable of silence. In silence, God speaks to us; in silence, we recognize his voice. Silence is not just quiet. It is participating in the word of God."

It is in silence we can "discern what is good and reject what is evil," he said. As we "bring every experience to the Lord, we will receive the strength to live our lives and carry our lives back to God."

Sarah told the students: "We are called to suffer. In suffering,

our hearts are purified," he said. "In suffering our attention is turned to Christ's most eloquent revelation of divine love: his death upon the cross."

"As Christian students and missionaries you, too, face challenges that you cannot overcome," he said. "By all worldly measures you fail, because you are called to follow Christ and his kingdom is not of this world."

Suffering "the truth we are objectively incapable of fulfilling the task to which God calls us," helps us come to understand "any success you have . . . is solely a gift from God. By your lives you will glorify God and draw others to him."

"Suffering tires us, it can overwhelm us," he said. "If we grow in virtue and in prayer we are able to carry our suffering to God, to offer it to him in the silence of our hearts, to unite it with the suffering of Christ. There, before Christ crucified and his sorrowful mother, we find the strength to suffer all things and to suffer to the ends of the world."

Sarah had spent a few days in Toronto, visiting with students at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto, and with seminarians and priests of the Archdiocese of Toronto before coming to Kingston on March 14. On March 15, he dedicated a new altar at Sacred Heart of Mary Parish on Wolfe Island, off Kingston where Rev. Raymond de Souza, the chaplain of Queen's University's Newman House, is pastor.

Naming ceremony seen as step to reconciliation

By Agnieszka Krawczynski
The B.C. Catholic

NORTH VANCOUVER — As a child, Rennie Nahanee was given a Stolo First Nations name by his mother. As an adult, he has now accepted it as his own.

"My mother gave me a name when I was young. She called me Skagha," said Deacon Nahanee, a permanent deacon and the Archdiocese of Vancouver's First Nations ministry co-ordinator. Skagha means companion.

"One of the elders in North Vancouver kept telling me I should take that name, but add a Squamish name to it."

Accepting an ancestral name involves a solemn ceremony, where the one receiving the name stands on new, never-used blankets, wears traditional clothing, and calls witnesses who can talk about the historical and cultural significance of the name.

Nahanee, wearing traditional regalia and with blankets wrapped around his shoulders, was given an ancestral name at St. Paul's Indian Catholic Church Feb. 24. He accepted two names to reflect his Stolo and Squamish identities and now signs his name Skagha Kin Rennie Nahanee.

"Your name is depending on what you do in the community," said Nahanee. The second name, Kin, means warrior. The names have special significance for him.

"I am companion to the people who are in the church, and not just the church itself, but companion to the people in the community, and you might even say the whole world, to all the people who are in need," he said.

"The warrior is like in a protective sense, to be strong and be able to defend the people."

About 45 people turned up to witness the historic event, the first time a naming ceremony has ever been held inside St. Paul's.

"I see it as reconciliation," said Nahanee. "There are (First Nations) paintings in there, and there's some carvings, and things like that, but our culture has never been brought into the church in that way."

He's thrilled with the possibility of finding more ways to promote First Nations traditions within the community at St. Paul's. His family, including wife Emma and son Chris, have been very supportive.

"I am willing to be part of the reconciliation process alongside my husband and be of any help to my elders," said Emma, who is from the Philippines. She also received a new name at the ceremony: Kwakwemelwit, which means eagle.

"When my name was announced, I was overjoyed and felt like I got baptized again. I couldn't help my tears rolling down," she said. "I am proud and overwhelmed."

Her husband explained that an eagle seen circling above is considered good luck in his culture. His wife's name also makes him think of an eagle coming down and wrapping a person in its comforting wings.

Nahanee said the ceremony "was like bringing our culture back into the church."

In June he will represent Canada at an annual conference in Rome where he will share a report on local reconciliation efforts.

'Give your stress to God': theologian

By Andrew Ehrkamp
Grandin Media

EDMONTON — After the wedding, and after a couple has settled into the routine of careers, kids, and soccer practice, is there a faith foundation to build on? Or are they living on shaky ground when times are tough?

"Honestly, I do feel that if a marriage isn't lived close to God, close to the Holy Trinity, close to Christ, this is a real challenge," said Dr. Matthew Levering, an internationally recognized Catholic theologian, author and editor. "Reconnecting to the primal realities of our faith — God working through Christ — to me that's a fundamental matter."

Levering delivered this year's Anthony Jordan Lectures, a series dedicated to the memory of the archbishop who founded Newman Theological College. Dr. Levering's topic was "The Catholic Theology of Marriage," and his lecture comes at a time when the whole idea of marriage is in limbo. Traditional married couples still represent the majority in Canada, but common-law marriages represent more than one-fifth of all couples, according to Statistics Canada.

Increased separation and divorce rates also have led to a greater number of single-parent households: at 28.2 per cent, it's the highest proportion since Confederation.

In light of those numbers, Levering said he's concerned

about the trivialization of the sacrament.

"I feel that today we tend to be dealing with the fact that marriage seems to be a personal lifestyle choice," Levering said in an interview. "Marriage is more for just enjoying yourself with a partner. Go to a beach in Cancun. Maybe have a kid for your old age. That kind of thing."

"That adds a lot of stress because it puts a lot of pressure on the couple to entertain each other, and eventually they go looking for entertainment elsewhere."

Levering wants to focus on living in faith as a foundation for marriage.

"We don't want to start with people thinking about rules. First, let that couple seek a living relationship with God," said Levering, who teaches theology at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, the major seminary and school of theology linked to the Archdiocese of Chicago.

"They may be getting a misimpression of the Catholic Church. They may be thinking of this as rules or age-old traditions. Actually, we're just talking about the living God."

The Catholic view of marriage, Levering notes, is that it's a life-long commitment and expression of faith and self-sacrifice with



Matthew Levering

Jesus himself as the model. However, most Catholic couples don't see it that way.

"They don't necessarily see it as connected with the deeper dogmatic realities of our faith. They may see it tied up with controver-

— MARRIAGE, page 19

Catechetical program meets the needs of children

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The spiritual needs of young children were discussed at a recent workshop hosted by three leaders who offer the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to children ages three to six years in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Lisette Fontaine, Cynthia Foster and Jane Korvemaker presented the Saturday afternoon workshop to parents, catechists, parish and ministry leaders Feb. 10 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Saskatoon, the site of one of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) atriums now operating in the diocese.

An atrium is the sacred space set up as part of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to help young children explore and experience Scripture and liturgy as they deepen their relationship with God in a prayerful, hands-on environment.

A teacher in the Catholic school system with experience in a Montessori school, Foster offers CGS at the St. Francis atrium, aided by her two older children.

Korvemaker, who has a BA in



Kiply Yaworski

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD — Lisette Fontaine, Cynthia Foster, and Jane Korvemaker have established Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) atriums to offer the spiritually rich program to children ages three-to-six-years at three different locations in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. A CGS training session is planned for April 22 - 27 in Saskatoon.

theology and is the mother of three young children, started the CGS atrium at St. Patrick Parish in Saskatoon in 2016.

The mother of five children, Fontaine began using the CGS

program in sacramental preparation in 2015 and established the bilingual Trinity atrium in 2016, serving the parish cluster of Prud'homme, St. Denis and Vonda.

During the afternoon work-

shop, the three leaders provided an overview of CGS, which was created some 60 years ago in Rome by Scripture scholar Sofia Cavalletti and educator Gianna Gobbi, with the developmental needs of children in mind. CGS is grounded in the philosophy of early childhood educator Maria Montessori, with gentle, hands-on and age-appropriate catechesis offered in the atrium designed to nurture a child's inherent awe and connection to God, explained the three local catechists.

Korvemaker described how children often respond differently than adults, because of their particular developmental stage. Children ages three to six years have a number of sensitivities, such as an attraction to order, a craving for the security and safety of having a fixed point of reference, or a love of repetition, she said.

Children of that age also often have a profound sense of wonder and awe, and a capacity for "listening to God" in stillness and silence, if that is modelled for them, added the catechist.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd uses a number of time-tested Scripture passages that resonate with young children, including the infancy narratives (about the birth of Jesus), the Kingdom of God parables, the Good Shepherd, the Last Supper and the empty tomb, listed Korvemaker.

Practical ideas for nurturing the spiritual life of young children include setting up a small prayer area ("a place where we come to be with God"); changing colours of cloth to reflect the different liturgical seasons; placing items of beauty and significance in the prayer space; slowing down to a child's pace and focusing on only one thing at a time; and recognizing that prayer can take many forms for children — including silence, working with hands-on material, and drawing.

A simple activity of mixing flour and yeast to create dough and watch it rise was modelled by Korvemaker, who methodically mixed the ingredients and carefully integrated the activity with the Scripture passage about Christ's parable of the leaven.

"Children can take that mystery," Korvemaker said. "You don't have to dumb it down."

The workshop included testi-

monials from the catechists, from a parent, and from a pastor.

"The founders of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd write that in the covenant relationship there is a meeting between God, who is love, and the child, who is rich in love, and they form a relationship," said Foster, describing the joy of being a catechist and helping children to deepen their relationship with God.

Fontaine shared how her search for sacramental preparation materials led her to CGS after she heard about the program in a mothers' group presentation by Linda Funk, who established the first CGS atrium in Saskatchewan at St. Vincent of Lerins Orthodox Parish in Saskatoon.

In addition to operating an atrium in the Trinity pastoral region, Fontaine continues to use her training and materials in offering sacramental preparation. "The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a gift," she said. "Children are receptive to God and to God's unconditional love."

Fontaine stressed how the program has nurtured her own faith. "I have been able to really ponder what God is trying to tell me in my faith journey. As a catechist, I must also be at the children's pace. So I have to ponder. I have to experience silence. It has been such a gift to me to have that opportunity."

Pastor of the Trinity pastoral region Rev. Steve Morrissey, CSsR, is also enthusiastic about the program and the impact it is having on families. "I think it's fabulous. We have a lot of young children in our parishes," he said, noting that as a homilist he tries to provide a message that resonates with all ages, including the youngest children. "I think it is a beautiful thing for everybody in the parish to be able to grasp what is going on in church."

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd affects the whole family, said one mother, describing the program as "an amazing gift" that helps her child know Jesus, internalize the stories of Scripture and understand what is happening at mass.

The workshop also included a tour of the parish CGS atrium, which was created with help from parishioners. In the atrium, children experience Bible stories and work with hands-on materials that bring alive the Scriptures, prayer and liturgy.

More catechists are needed to help more children experience the gifts of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, participants heard.

A weeklong CGS training session for certification as a Level 1 (ages three to six years) catechist is being offered April 22 - 27 in Saskatoon, led by Dr. Debbie Zeni and Carolyne-Marie Petch from Ontario.

Financial assistance for training is available through the diocesan Education of Laity fund or the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada (CGSAC), the leaders noted, adding that those who take the CGS certification training will be equipped to establish an atrium, or serve at an existing atrium in the diocese.

For more information contact Cynthia Foster at lfoster@sasktel.net or call (306) 955-4854.

'Never again' promise has been broken

Continued from page 3

went on to find places in the world and contribute to society. Many survivors became active witnesses of the Holocaust in a world that was indifferent when it was happening, and too often forgets or even denies the reality of the Holocaust even now.



Kiply Yaworski

SURVIVOR — In a presentation to some 2,000 Saskatoon students March 15, Robbie Waisman described the horrors of the Holocaust which he experienced as a youth in Poland, where most of his family was murdered for the "crime of being Jewish." He was introduced by Heather Fenyes of Congregation Agudas Israel which organizes the Holocaust education event that is now being held at the Catholic cathedral. In his presentation, Waisman urged the students to stand up for what is right, speak out against racism and bullies, and not to take their families for granted.

"We the survivors were certain that the leaders and the citizens of the world would say 'never again' and would commit themselves to turning those words into reality. 'Never again' — noble, thought-provoking words — but only if we act upon them do these words become meaningful."

Some 70 years after his liberation the promise of "never again" has been broken again and again, Waisman said, listing other genocides that have continued in the world. "I am a witness of men's inhumanity to other human beings," he said.

"What happened then, long ago in my time, wasn't supposed to occur ever again, and yet it is happening in many parts of the world. Our own experience of the Holocaust has taught us that evil must be recognized and that we have a responsibility to ensure that it never happens again to anyone. Have we learned nothing from the past? What are we doing about it now?" Waisman challenged.

"We wanted to make sure that no one's future would be like our past," he said, stressing that there is hope in remembering. "By being a witness to history I believe that young people like all of you here this morning, will learn the lesson from us, and all of you will become witnesses and work diligently for a better world. When I look at you, I see hope in your faces."

During a question-and-answer period with the students, Waisman urged the youth not to take their family for granted, and to go home and hug their parents. "Appreciate what you have at home. Never take it for granted."

He asked the students to dedicate themselves to end hatred and racism. "Do good things in life. In doing this, sharing my pain with you, you will have compensated me."

Other speakers at the event included Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky of Congregation Agudas Israel.

"Not forgetting means taking what you just remembered and doing something in your life with

that," said Jodorkovsky. "We have two missions to accomplish: to remember the story that Robbie told you, and to take it to your heart and to try to be a different person now that you know the atrocities that happened, now that you know what racism and hatred can cause. To try to be a kinder person, to step up for others when they are suffering, not only to be a bystander and feel sad for others, but to get involved."

The rabbi also expressed his pride and his thanksgiving in sharing the event with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, adding that it is not only about the space, but it is a tangible sign that "we can do things together."

As cathedral pastor, Rev. David Tumback brought greetings from the bishop and the diocese and expressed his profound appreciation to Waisman. "To hear your story, a painful reminder of the past, is also a painful time for us as Roman Catholics," he said. While many Catholics and Christians stood against the bigotry and hatred of Nazi Germany, "we also know there was complicity on the part of our church," Tumback said.

"Today, motivated not only by you, but by a spirit that is within us and in our souls that is enkindled by your parents and your brothers and by the six million, we stand today in absolute solidarity."

Tumback then asked the students to stand as a show of support for Waisman. "Robbie is giving us a gift, and that gift is that we have his permission to tell his story, to let the world know," he said.

The event concluded with the presentation of a "Think Good, Do Good" award to two teachers by David Arnot of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

The award is presented to educators who demonstrate compassion, understanding and leadership. This year's winners were Lezlie Goudie-Cloutier of Saskatoon Public Schools and Sheena Adams of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Defining 'why' brings renewed meaning to actions

By Derrick Kunz

SASKATOON — There's nothing like the persistent "Why?" of children to make a person question the way things are as they are.

Sometimes the innocence of the "why" is cute and the answer

Kunz is the communications consultant at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

simple, if not totally accurate. I remember one of my children asking why our noses don't point nostrils up. My answer: "So we don't drown when it rains."

At the time, it seemed like a pretty good answer, more credible than, "Because that's how God made us." Or maybe I had used that as my go-to answer one too many times, so felt compelled to come up with something new after a seemingly end-

less string of why? why? why? why? sounding like the seagulls in *Finding Nemo*.

Either way, there seems to be an instinctive drive within us to understand why, to make sense of the world around us so it doesn't appear as utter chaos.

However, there appears to be less of an instinctive drive within us to seek the answer, as illustrated by my less-than-genius response to the nostril question, or by the fact that we have so many sayings, traditions or idioms whose meanings and origins we don't understand.

The Together in Faith and Action (TFAC) committee at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools — a standing committee of the division's Board of Education — is seeking to answer a "why" for themselves.

Since its inception, one of the pillars of the committee's work has been to put our faith into action (it's obvious in the name). Consistent with the board's vision of being rooted in faith, growing in knowledge and reaching out to transform the world, all staff and students are encouraged to put their faith into action.

And people have responded. Not that undertaking social justice initiatives is an entirely new thing for the school division; it has always been an important dimension of Catholic education. But the commitment breathed a renewed vigour into activities and prompted new ones.

Division-wide partnerships with local organizations like the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre or Friendship Inn were strengthened. One example is the Pool Our Love initiative with the food bank, which has schools collect specific food items that are most needed and literally fill a



David Stobbe

DEFINING WHY — Students at Mother Teresa School in Saskatoon help prepare a meal at Friendship Inn.

paddling pool with food during the season of Lent.

Smaller, more personal projects popped up, making it clear to staff and students alike that small actions can make a big difference. Things like knitting scarves and leaving them for anyone who needs some warmth on a cold winter's day, volunteering at Friendship Inn, student-led fundraising for organizations like Hope for Malawi — the list is longer than space permits.

After much discernment, committee members felt there was a need to further strengthen the awareness and appreciation of why we were doing these things.

"After time, things tend to become habit," said trustee Tim Jelinski, chair of the TFAC com-

mittee. "So, we wanted to take some time to refocus, to make sure that we aren't doing things just because they have always been done that way, but to make sure we all understand the reason we believe social justice is so important to the life of the church."

Jelinski pointed out that motivation is key to understanding why. "Saying 'small acts can make a big difference' only gives part of the picture. We need to go further and clarify that it is small acts done out of love that will make the biggest difference."

In Catholic social doctrine, it is impossible to separate motivation and action — or faith and works,

— SOCIAL JUSTICE, page 8



Frank Flegel

FRIARS' BRIAR — The 40th annual Friars' Briar was played March 5 - 9 in Regina, involving clergy from various communities. In attendance this year were Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen; Shirley Schmirler, mother of legendary curling gold medal Olympian Sandra Schmirler; and Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Sid Haugen.

Friars' Briar open to clergy of all traditions

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — The 40th annual Friars' Briar, played March 5 - 9 in Regina, had a couple of special moments: the Gold Medal rink, a combination of members from Saskatchewan and Alberta, skipped by Guy Scholz, scored an eight-ender on the last end of the championship game; and Shirley Schmirler, mother of legendary curling gold medal Olympian Sandra Schmirler, took part in the opening ceremonies.

"It was really special to have Shirley with us," said David Martin, chair of the Friars' Briar Association.

Martin noted there is a special connection between Guy Scholz and the Schmirler family. Scholz wrote *Gold on Ice*, a book that detailed the storied career of Sandra Schmirler that led to her rink winning gold at the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics, the first year women's curling was recognized as an Olympic sport. Martin also noted the eight-ender was a first in the 40-year history of the briar.

There was some concern that this year's event might be delayed

because of the heavy snow storm that blew in March 5, but despite some flight delays across the country, all 24 teams arrived on time for the opening Monday morning.

With Regina Roman Catholic Archbishop Donald Bolen holding the broom, Saskatchewan Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Sid Haugen threw the first rock while Shirley Schmirler swept it into the house to officially get the tournament underway.

The Friars' Briar began in 1978 as a way to bring together clergy, their families and associates, in an ecumenical atmosphere to enjoy time together. It moves across the country in step with the Canadian Briar, which gives participants an opportunity to support the national championship as well as their own tournament.

It is open to clergy of all faiths, Christian and non-Christian alike. This year's teams represented various Christian denominations, but there have been teams from non-Christian faiths in previous Briars, including a team of rabbis who took part when the event was held in Ottawa in 2016.

Art used as symbol of reconciliation

By Derrick Kunz

SASKATOON — Students at Bishop Klein Catholic School in Saskatoon have expressed their learning about treaty education, residential schools in Canada and reconciliation through art.

The entire school community presented their works of art to Saskatoon Police Service's Centre for Children's Justice and Victim Services at an event March 14 at the school.

For several weeks, students in 12 classes painted a star, each of which will become part of a larger mural depicting a star blanket. The star blanket represents the eternal protection, support, comfort and love of the Creator's eye.

"This star blanket mural symbolizes the beginning of a new day where indigenous and non-indigenous people start walking on a path that has mutual respect for one another," said Jamie Arcand, the school's Aboriginal Student Achievement co-ordinator. It was Arcand who spearheaded the project.

"The mural becomes an act of remembrance, an act of continuing our ability to talk and heal from our histories, and learning to do the right thing," said Arcand. "We hope it will comfort children



Derrick Kunz

STAR BLANKET — Saskatoon Police Chief Troy Cooper was recently presented with a star blanket mural created by students from Bishop Klein Catholic School in Saskatoon. The art work will be installed at the Saskatoon Police Service's Centre for Children's Justice and Victim Services.

when they are at the centre with its vibrant colours and its feeling of a cozy quilt."

"We are honoured to have the students at Bishop Klein School recognize the work that is done at the Centre for Children's Justice," said Police Chief Troy Cooper. "They are now our partners in healing, and their contribution will help us build a safe, healthy and respectful community."

The mural will be installed at the entrance of the Centre for Children's Justice.

The Centre for Children's Justice and Victim Services (previously called the Saskatoon Child Centre) offers a child-friendly facility where members of helping professions can interact with abused children or child victims as a part of the investigative and criminal justice process.

Gaffney’s uplifting message is to give life a chance

By Heather Adams

LOS ANGELES (RNS) — Karen Gaffney has swum the English Channel, given a TEDx talk and received an honorary doctorate. As a public speaker, she disarms audiences with her warmth and humour.

For all these reasons, and because she has Down syndrome and opposes abortion, Gaffney, 40, also serves as a prized speaker for the anti-abortion movement.

“I want my voice to be heard,” Gaffney, of Portland, Ore., said during a speech that received a standing ovation in January at OneLife LA, a gathering to protest abortion. “And I want my message to come through loud and clear.”

Her message is that people like her deserve a chance at life.

Kathleen Domingo, the OneLife LA organizer, heard Gaffney speak while watching her TEDxPortland talk online last year, and soon realized that she would be just the person to address OneLife LA.

“After reaching out we realized, ‘Oh my goodness, she’s actually a Catholic woman,’” Domingo said.

Anti-abortion groups are particularly worried about the high proportion of women choosing to terminate fetuses with Down syndrome after prenatal testing, which has become increasingly safe and sophisticated in the past decade.

This year wasn’t the first time OneLife LA has featured a speaker on abortions chosen because of fetal abnormalities. In 2015, its first year, Rick Smith, known to many as “Noah’s Dad,” spoke about being a parent of a child with Down syndrome.

March for Life, one of the nation’s best-known anti-abortion groups, also stepped up its work on the issue after the release of a 2017 report from Iceland that showed a nearly 100 per cent abortion rate for women who learn they are carrying a fetus with Down syndrome.

“I think the Iceland story was so shocking to so many people,” said Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life. “They just didn’t know that this is a situation.”

The movement got a boost last month when baby food maker Gerber announced that its 2018 “spokesbaby” is Lucas Warren, an 18-month-old with Down syndrome.

Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, told CBN News that Gerber’s choice could make people think twice about abortion. “Images have the power to revolutionize and transform hearts and minds,” he said.

There are about 206,000 people in the United States living with Down syndrome, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some anti-abortion activists are concerned that elective abortions may one day mean there will be virtually none.

A 2012 study in the journal *Prenatal Diagnosis* showed that between 1998 and 2011, at least half and as many as 85 per cent of American women who learned that they would give birth to a child with the syndrome opted for abortion. In the United Kingdom, the rate is 90 per cent.

Down syndrome is marked by a delay in physical development, low muscle tone, reduced intellectual capabilities and shorter life expectancy — but there can be wide differences in how it affects people. As Gaffney attests, many children and adults with Down syndrome are integrated into mainstream classrooms and the workplace and lead full, happy lives.

“I want to inspire so many people with Down syndrome and really tell them that people like me can live,” said Gaffney, a graduate of a Catholic high school and community college who works as a research assistant at Portland’s Oregon Health and Science University.

Many who favour abortion rights say it’s unfair to use Gaffney and other adults and children with Down syndrome in the campaign against abortion. They say it wrongfully pits disability rights against a woman’s right to an abortion.

“In the U.S., anti-abortion leaders are hijacking this rhetoric of the disability rights movement to argue against women’s rights to choose their own future for their families and bodies,” wrote *Slate* staff writer Christina Cauterucci.

“Women’s rights and disability rights are not mutually exclusive movements; they intersect and inform one another in important ways. Anti-abortion activists are stoking fear in advocates of the latter in hopes that they’ll join an assault on the former.”

Abortion rights advocates further argue that abortion foes only showcase families who thrive with children who have Down syndrome, and not the women who feel forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term.

But for those who don’t believe abortion should be a right — and perhaps even for some who do — Gaffney presents a strong argument against aborting a fetus with Down syndrome. In the past few years in the U.S., several states have introduced or passed bills banning the abortion of fetuses with Down syndrome.

The debate on the bills often features proponents with Down syndrome, who, like Gaffney, show that their genetic abnormality has not precluded a rewarding life.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, an abortion right research group, six states have passed laws that would require counselling or restrict abortion on the basis of fetal abnormalities. But only one of those laws prohibiting abortions in these cases, Indiana’s, remains legally enforceable. In practice, however, it is difficult to enforce.

Whether these laws proliferate or not, the continued push for them means Gaffney’s voice — and those of others with Down syndrome willing to speak out against abortion — are likely to remain in demand.

Gaffney, who began her public speaking in high school, where she swam competitively, stands out in particular for her ease in front of a microphone and her stamina in the water.

In any given year, she can fulfil more than a dozen requests to speak before disability rights groups, college classes and parents of children with special needs. She also serves as president of the 20-year-old Karen Gaffney Foundation — a non-

profit founded to promote inclusion of people with disabilities.

She often furthers its mission with her athletic feats. Gaffney

daughter, entering card tournaments with her father and doing puzzles. Her favourite author is Jane Austen, although she’s currently reading



RNS/Heather Adams

INCLUSION — Karen Gaffney, an advocate for the inclusion of people with physical disadvantages in families, the workplace and schools, speaks Jan. 20 during the OneLife LA rally in Los Angeles. Gaffney has Down syndrome, and her message is that people like her deserve a chance at life.

has swum from Alcatraz Island across the San Francisco Bay on 16 occasions and was part of a relay in the English Channel in 2001.

At her day job, she splits her time between the university’s hemophilia clinic, where she helps with clerical work, and the Down syndrome clinic, where she helps with scheduling. Gaffney also works in the physical therapy room at the Down syndrome clinic and meets with families to answer questions about what living with Down syndrome is like.

“I especially like meeting the families who come in with their children,” Gaffney said.

Gaffney earned an associate of science degree and teaching certificate from Portland Community College, where she graduated in 2001 with a cumulative grade point average of 3.41. She also holds an honorary doctorate of humane letters from the University of Portland.

She swims almost every day. In her free time, she enjoys going to musicals, playing with her god-

Tough Girl, a book written by another Portland swimmer, former Olympian Carolyn Wood.

Gaffney expresses hope for her future and for others with Down syndrome.

“It was a wave of humanity that lifted us out of institutions, brought us home, got us into schools and included us in the community of life,” Gaffney said during her OneLife LA speech. “It will require another wave of humanity to stop the targeting of Down syndrome around the world.”

“I believe that God is watching over me,” Gaffney said, “and a lot of other people like me.”

Social justice work of God

Continued from page 7

as St. James said (cf. James 2:14-26). Catholic social teaching has been refined and articulated by Pope Leo XIII, Pope St. John Paul II and most recently Pope Francis.

As Catholics, if we don’t see the inherent dignity of the person — that each and every individual we seek to serve is made in the image and likeness of God and is an adopted son or daughter through Christ, our brother — we risk missing the mark with our service.

Aspects of social justice like solidarity and subsidiarity become increasingly empty the more we separate them from loving God and others. We need to recognize that our service to others is a work of evangelization that seeks eternal salvation of the other as the ultimate good.

It can be easy to get caught up in the action of washing feet. It is essential that we pause and remember why Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. Why are we called to follow his example? So that we may one day share in his glory — together.



Photo supplied

STUDY DAYS — Priests from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon recently gathered with Bishop Mark Hagemoen for Study Days, featuring guest speaker Rev. Robert Christian, OP, exploring the theme, “The Priest and the Laity.” The annual event was held March 12 - 15 at Elk Ridge, just outside Prince Albert National Park.

A time to dream: the PM takes on a prophetic role

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

By Paul Paproski, OSB

When Rev. Andrew Britz, OSB, was chair of the *Prairie Messenger* Advisory Board, he wrote an article in 1982 entitled, "A time to dream new dreams." The article commemorated the *Prairie Messenger* on its 60th anniversary and explained the mandate of the Catholic weekly. In 1983, Britz became editor of the *Prairie Messenger*, serving in that position for 21 years. He was succeeded, in 2004, by Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB.

"The *Prairie Messenger* seeks to mirror for the church on the Prairies the whole reality of our lives as God's pilgrim people," Britz explained in his anniversary article. "There is so much that is beautiful and is a pure joy to mirror: the vigour of the faith of our forefathers, the intuitive sense of justice that has marked Prairie life throughout most of its history, the abiding love for the eucharist on the Lord's Day, the willingness of people to work together on local concerns — to name just a few."

The Catholic weekly, he added, has faced many challenges because of its role as a mirror which reflects everything, whether celebrations and triumphs or conflicts and failures. This policy has stirred controversy and upheaval. Readers have expressed disapproval with editorials, articles and photos. The *Prairie Messenger*, he said, was familiar with controversy. In the 1940s the newspaper was accused of being too partisan in politics. In the 1950s it was chastised for being incorrect about co-ops and social justice. In the 1960s it was held in suspect for being unfaithful to theology. The weekly was castigated, in the 1970s, for being too critical of church structures.

"The *Prairie Messenger* sees the role of a Catholic newspaper in prophetic terms," Britz noted. "It is to deepen the love of our readers for our Catholic traditions, and thereby give them the courage

to look to the future and work for a new church in a new age. To work for newness entails, whether we like it or not, a criticism of the present state of affairs."

The *Prairie Messenger* entered the 1980s with the charism of being prophetic, a mirror that reflected the stories of people from all walks of life, within and outside of the church. The Catholic weekly strived to be of service to everyone while not being subservient to anyone. It faced the challenge of never having enough correspondents to cover local events while having limited space for all the stories that came through news services. National and international stories were carefully chosen by Britz, who was aware that spin doctors were always at work to protect their own interests. Editorials were written with the goal of being truthful and fair, yet with the realization that pure objectivity does not exist.

The *Prairie Messenger* was continuing the legacy of *The Bote*, founded in 1904, to support a German-Catholic colony and German-Catholic traditions, and *St. Peter's Messenger*, a traditional Catholic paper first published in 1923, to appeal to a readership that adopted the English language. The *Prairie Messenger*, in the 1980s, responded to the optimism of the Second Vatican Council (1962 - 1965), which opened the church to renewal. The Catholic weekly was aware that a new generation was bringing new experiences and expectations into church life. The weekly invited them to share their stories of faith life.

The Second Vatican Council was a momentous event for the Catholic Church. It not only brought renewal to the church, but encouraged Catholics to re-evaluate their place in church and society. The council reminded the People of God of the church's concern for: social justice, the dignity of all people, the role of the laity in the church, the call to conversion, the importance of understanding Scripture and liturgy. The church began to dialogue with other Christians and non-Christians.



Paul Paproski, OSB

A TIME TO DREAM NEW DREAMS — Rev. Andrew Britz, OSB, was chair of the *Prairie Messenger* Advisory Board when he wrote an article "A time to dream new dreams" commemorating the 60th anniversary of the *Prairie Messenger*. He believed anniversaries are good occasions to evaluate the past and dream new visions for the future. The *Prairie Messenger* has a prophetic role, he believed. It serves as a mirror for the People of God, reflecting their experiences and commenting on them. A prophetic newspaper deepens the love for Catholic traditions while giving people courage to look to the future and work for a new church in a new age.

In 1985 Britz expressed his disappointment in the direction of the Catholic Church some 20 years following the council. Changes in liturgy had been resolved, he noted, but there were deeper questions about the nature of priesthood, the domain of the clergy, and the role of women in the church. Dialogue, which had begun in the 1960s, had been closed by an authoritarian hierarchy. The editorial pages sometimes referred to the term *sensus fidelium* (sense of the faithful) that had been expressed by the Second Vatican Council. The *sensus fidelium* was a tradition in the early church, Britz noted, in the choosing of bishops. There was a sense of collegiality amongst the first bishops and the pope who shared in governance.

Prophets were people who could dream, Britz noted, and he expressed his hopes and dreams in editorials for the day when there was collegiality of bishops, especially in the choosing of bishops who identified with their people. He dreamt of the day when laity had a greater role in decision-making and there was more equality for women. He believed the time had come for celibacy to become an option in the priesthood and for women to be ordained. The Catholic Church, in its mandate to be ecumenical, needed to accept the eucharistic traditions of other denominations. The dignity of everyone, whether Christian or non-Christian, heterosexual or homosexual, needed to be respected. Discrimination against any person or group was contrary to Christianity.

Britz was not alone in his understanding about the optimism of the Second Vatican Council. There were many who believed the council was going to bring more profound changes to the church.

Britz praised everyone, inside and outside of the church, who supported the hopefulness of the Second Vatican Council. The Archbishop of Canterbury was

among the first church leaders lauded by Britz for support of church unity and ecumenism. Conversely, Pope John Paul II was criticized for his authoritarianism.

Admiration was expressed for everyone who worked for peace, particularly the pope, when public opinion in some nations was in favour of war. He and other leaders were commended for bringing greater awareness to the plight of the poor, marginalized and oppressed. The editorial page reminded readers that change was possible in the church and the church could be criticized because it was made up of sinners who not only sinned, but sometimes made bad decisions. An example of poor decision-making in a sinful church was the hierarchy's mishandling of the clergy sex-abuse crisis.

The *Prairie Messenger* continued its tradition, under editors Britz and Novecosky, of maintaining a keen interest in societal issues. The editors, sharing a social-Gospel outlook, challenged attitudes that viewed success as more of everything, whether more: development, jobs, material goods, money or power. Stories and editorials reminded readers that society is successful when people have access to basic rights such as: education, health care, fair wages, a safe working environment, equality, dignity and justice.

Front page and feature stories have highlighted the plight of people and groups who have been ignored and marginalized. They have expressed the dreams of those who want a more just society. Stories on church life have made known a church united by common traditions, immersed in many cultures, which have diverse understandings of church life. Coverage of events highlighted celebrations of faith life and the visions of those who would like the church to be open to the renewal and optimism of the Second Vatican Council.

The *Prairie Messenger*, in its role as a mirror, has welcomed people of many faith backgrounds

to submit articles on Scripture and faith issues. Columnists have included: a rabbi, Protestant pastors, Catholic priests and nuns and lay people. They have provided material on liturgy, spirituality, canon law, and Scripture. Mothers and fathers have written about family life and issues important to them. Columnists have been free to express opinions that challenge teachings of the church.

Readers are aware of the prophetic role of the Catholic weekly. Letters to the editor have expressed dismay over criticism of the church. Some have accused the newspaper of heresy and balked at the notion of the newspaper being prophetic. Most letters, however, have given support to the Catholic weekly.

The Second Vatican Council was held in a decade when society was in flux and people were questioning and/or rejecting Christian beliefs. The church began to lose its place in society as attendance declined and vocations to the priesthood and religious life dropped. St. Peter's Abbey, in 1998, facing an aging priesthood and lack of vocations, was absorbed into the Saskatoon diocese. The religious jurisdiction of the former St. Peter's Colony was gone.

The *Prairie Messenger*, similar to *The Bote* and *St. Peter's Messenger*, has struggled to keep up to financial demands. The Benedictine community, not able to support the deficits of the *Prairie Messenger*, and aware that subscriptions had been declining, decided to close the apostolate in May of 2018.

The loss of the Catholic weekly will end more than 100 years of prophetic journalism by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter's Abbey. The church is always in need of prophets, Britz once wrote. Prophets encourage us to dream and look to the future with hope and courage. There have always been prophets in the church. More prophets will come who will remind us that there is "a time to dream new dreams."

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St. John brings doubting to heart of Easter mystery

The following editorial by Andrew Britz, OSB, is titled “Concluding the council,” and was originally published in the May 22, 1995, issue of the PM. It is also the epilogue from his book *Rule of Faith: as we worship, so we believe, so we live*.

Archbishop James Hayes of Halifax, a longtime member of the administrative board of the Canadian bishops and for a time their chairperson and also a regular member of the Synod of Bishops in Rome, said that the Second Vatican Council “ain’t over till it’s over.” The final great act of each church council, he noted, is its acceptance by the people.

Some of the great councils in the early church did not achieve

ecumenical status precisely because the People of God did not accept that council’s teaching. Reception is an integral part of each council.

Of course, that muddies the waters. We would have much more certitude in our church if only the bishops or, better still, if only the pope were the magisterium. Leaving a place, as did all the great bishops of the patristic age, for the *sensus fidelium* (the sense of the faith-

ful) often leaves issues unresolved.

The bishops at the Second Vatican Council, however, were comfortable with this. They noted, in one of the council’s key concepts, that the church is always on pilgrimage, that it can do no better than move toward the fullness of truth. A perfect expression of our faith, a completed dogma, is one gift the Lord did not give to his church.

We live in an age of social disintegration and thus, more than in most ages of the church, we long for certitude. In the church at least, we are tempted to cry out, we should be able to have some black-and-white answers.

We don’t want muddled waters. And so we proclaim that the best faith is the faith that never questions — and surely never doubts. So for many of us it is not good news to hear the archbishop say that such acts of faith are far from being the best, that rather they are signs of immaturity in our faith life.

True faith, Hayes teaches us, involves questioning. It involves giving and sharing with people who, like ourselves, do not have their lives

fully together.

It is interesting to look at the church at the time John’s Gospel was written. The church then knew more uncertainty than we experience today. The little community was caught in the crossfire between the Romans and the Jews and, to anyone with even a smidgen of pessimism, it looked like total disaster. Persecution and death was not what the first Christians expected when they declared their faith in the resurrection of Christ.

No wonder they spoke of the persecutions as giant waves threatening any moment to swamp the boat carrying the disciples across the Sea of Galilee. The disciples were certain that the Lord was asleep, that he would not save them. In other words, the first evangelists acknowledged that the church was rocked with doubts.

In the final Gospel to be written for the church, St. John brings this doubting into the very heart of the Easter mystery — and into the very centre of the church’s life, into the apostolic college itself.

John has his reasons for bringing doubt right into the story of the Lord’s passover from death to life. Just as death is no longer an evil but a necessary step to true life, so too is doubt.

Doubt and questioning make us part with empty certitude, with childish or shallow belief, to accept a faith that cuts much more deeply into our lives.

Making an evil out of questioning and doubting is usually a self-defence against a call to a faith

which would summon us to a new level of existence.

But rather than move on to a new maturity of expression in our faith, our age is tempted to espouse fundamentalism.

We saw in the bombing of a federal government building in Oklahoma City that fundamentalism is a problem not only for the Muslims; it is finding radical expression within Christianity too. Nor should we forget that Catholics are well-represented in the militia movement in the United States, and that the first suspect to be apprehended for the bombing was a Catholic.

St. John would have nothing to do with the certitude of fundamentalism. His Easter story of the Doubting Thomas reminds us that what we have not doubted is usually not worth believing.

We should not overlook the process whereby Thomas came to faith in the lordship and divinity of Christ.

The apostle had to touch the Lord’s flesh. To affirm his divinity Thomas touched human flesh. To affirm his lordship he had to put a finger into the very cause of the death that so puzzled him.

We too will never come to authentic faith, to faith that takes us to the core of our being (and knowledge, no matter how certain, can never do that), until we touch the death about us, till we acknowledge the flesh, the weaknesses that threaten to overwhelm us.

It is this faith that can be of help to the world. Our dogmas, no matter how much truth they contain, will never dazzle the world.

Hayes reminds us that it is only with a maturity in our faith that we can take up the self-effacing task the council gave the church: “to answer the needs of the world, to be the servant of the human family.”



Paul Paproski, OSB

NEW LIFE — “The aim of the resurrection of Jesus is fulfilled when the experience of Jesus’ disciples becomes our own: the experience of Jesus’ continuing, empowering presence moving us toward new hope, new beginnings, new life.” (Tom Ryan, CSP)

Easter: opening to new life in unanticipated ways

By Tom Ryan, CSP

Happy Easter! We extend this wish to each other on Easter Sunday, and yet Easter is much more than a single celebration. Easter is so important that we cannot celebrate it in just one day.

To fully celebrate the Easter season it takes *fifty* days, or a Pentecost (the Greek word for 50). And each one of these 50 days, in fact is Easter. That is why the church speaks of the Sundays of Easter, rather than the Sundays *after* Easter.

The Gospel reading on Easter Sunday just gets us started in describing Mary Magdalene’s going to the tomb with the words: “Early in the morning on that first day of the week, while it was still dark . . .”

The Gospel writers want to make the point that something new is happening. There’s a fresh start. It’s “the first day of the week” and the sun (read Son) is rising. It’s another way of saying, “Today is the first day of the rest of your life.”

For death and resurrection are not separate from life. They are not just future. They are present. To look upon the resurrection as a narrow escape from death is to miss the full meaning of human life, to miss the death and resurrection that are present in every

moment. It is reflected in the coming and going of the seasons, in the rhythm of our relationships, in the loss of things that we have relied upon and become attached to.

Whenever we are faced in any way with a form of “dying” or letting go, the Paschal Mystery of Christ is there to shape our perception of what is happening and give an affirming stamp to our hope that out of this “death” will come new life and growth.

Being a disciple of Christ involves living out of this paradox and allowing it to serve as a special pair of lenses that enable us to see the nature of all reality. To see this mystery at play in the seasons of the year and the stages of our lives. No dying, no new life. No emptying or letting go, no being filled.

The upcoming cessation of the *Prairie Messenger’s* publication, a newspaper we have all relied upon, will be an occasion for our spiritual practice in letting go with trust that what is needed will be given, albeit in a new form.

Having written articles for it over the past 35 years, I have to admit that I’ve become attached to its overall superb coverage of regional, national, and international church-related events. Even when I moved from Canada to the U.S. at my religious community’s call, I’ve continued to rely on the *PM* to keep me up-to-date, and it’s the only church newspaper I read on a weekly basis. No longer receiving it will truly be a “letting go,” a “dying.”

And what does the Easter mys-

tery say to us about that? It reminds us that we are engaged in daily rehearsals for our grand

finale. It reminds us that death and

— NEW LIFE, page 11

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Ryan directs the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in Boston.

Walking with victims of violence in Easter light

Editor's note: Nothing is more destructive of Easter faith than to ignore the problems of the poor in our midst, the scourge of violence in all parts of the world. The following story is a powerful example of the power of the resurrection. Father Melo's commitment to the church and the poor reveals the Easter light of Christ.

By Phil Little

Two months ago the readers of the *Prairie Messenger* (01/17/18) were introduced in an article by Michael Swan to the situation of a Honduran Jesuit priest, Ismael Moreno, known nationally and internationally as "Padre Melo." He is one of many Jesuit priests around the world who live on the edge because of their discipline, their high intellectual standards, and their commitment to the church and the poor.

I met Father Melo in 1988 when he came to study in Toronto and since then a bond of friendship and love has connected my family to him. In 2013 Father Melo invited me "to accompany" him in Honduras, which means to walk with him or to shadow him in his travels. The theory behind accompaniment is that the presence of a foreigner is a hindrance to would-be assassins employed

Little is a retired teacher living on Vancouver Island. Born in Alberta, he went to university in Ottawa. As a member of the Oblate congregation he went to Peru as a missionary from 1972 to 1980. Returning to Canada he married and taught in the Toronto Catholic school system for 26 years until retirement.

by the state or by someone from the oligarchy.

Father Melo, like many Hondurans, knows the pain of violent death among friends and family. His parents, Pedro and Angela were poor *campesino* farmers. Father Melo's father, Pedro Moreno, was the president of a farmer's co-operative that was under siege by foreign investors who wanted to buy land to grow sugar cane. Pedro urged the poor farmers to stick together and not to sell. It was Melo who, at the age of 13, discovered his father's mutilated body in the office of the co-operative. Shortly afterward the farmers started to sell off their parcels and become part-time workers on the sugar hacienda.

Angela, known as Doña Lita, carried her first pair of shoes for many kilometres to her wedding so as not to get them dirty. Her husband farmed until his murder and Lita worked hard producing tortillas and other items to support the family. Melo would have had financial difficulty to continue in high school and he had thought about getting a job to help support the family. However, he got the highest grades in Grade 8, which won him a scholarship to the private Jesuit school that mostly catered to the rich of El Progreso.

His keen intellect kept him at the top of his class throughout

high school. Melo's ambition was to go into law or the Jesuits to work for the poor. He remembers a day when Jesuit Father Padre Guadalupe was visiting the family and Pedro said to his young son, "If you want to be a priest, be like Father Guadalupe or don't bother."

Padre Guadalupe was an American missionary who became radically aligned to the struggle of the poor farmers, particularly the banana workers in the northern plantations of the Standard and United Fruit companies. In 1983 Padre Guadalupe was captured by Honduran and U.S. troops and after being tortured he was thrown alive over the jungle along with other political prisoners.

On Nov. 16, 1989, an elite American trained murder squad of the Salvadoran army entered the campus of the Catholic University and killed six Jesuit professors and the two women housekeepers. Those Jesuits were professors of Father Melo when he was in training as a seminarian. When Melo's mother, Doña Lita, heard of the assassination of the Jesuits, whom she knew personally, she summoned Melo to her side and, having him kneel beside her, she told him to have his affairs in order because if he was to be faithful to his calling they would come someday for him.

So why do they want to kill Padre Melo today? Honduras is a failed and corrupt narco-state. It is ruled by a military dictatorship, many of whom were trained at the infamous School of the Americas. The American embassy calls the shots in Honduras as it has up to six military bases in the country, including the largest airport in the country. The country just went through a fraudulent electoral process, which has confirmed the most corrupt in society as the government: an alliance of military, embassy, oligarchy and drug cartels. Padre Melo is director of an independent radio station, Radio Progreso, and a human rights centre, ERIC. Of the most dangerous careers in Honduras are law, journalism, and environmental defence.

Father Melo is perhaps the leading figure in the Catholic Church in the area of human rights and interpreting the "signs of the times" (Vatican II). Politically he is non-aligned, but his political astuteness is widely sought by many sectors of society.

I have accompanied Melo to meet with sociology professors, with teachers groups, with women indigenous *campesina* groups, with youth groups, with leaders of co-operatives and labour unions, with political groups and even with groups of clergy. They all look for the same thing. "How can we understand what is happening in Honduras?" they ask. Melo has that rare ability to speak to any



Lucy Edwards

DEFENDERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS — Jesuit Father Ismael Moreno, known nationally and internationally as Padre Melo, is seen with longtime friend Berta Caceres, a Lenca environmental and human rights defender. Berta was assassinated on March 2, 2016.

group at their level, to engage them in meaningful dialogue and shared wisdom.

During my most recent five-week trip this year, Melo was called to the capital city of Tegucigalpa to meet with three United Nations representatives who had come to Honduras on a fact-finding mission. They spent the entire day in conversation, just with Padre Melo. He is often called upon to meet foreign delegations and commissions such as the O.A.S.-sponsored MACCIH — Support Mission to Combat Corruption and Impunity in Honduras. In 2015 Padre Melo was awarded in Norway the RAFTO award, sometimes called the Alternative Nobel. There have been numerous other awards given to Father Melo and the twin apostolates he directs: Radio Progreso and ERIC.

Since the military coup of 2009, documented in the video *La Voz del Pueblo* (<https://ignatian-solidarity.net/la-voz-del-pueblo/>), the Jesuit mission has been under attack by the military dictatorship. One radio manager, Carlos Mejia, was murdered in 2014. More than 16 of the Jesuit's staff have received credible death threats, the most recent in late February 2018.

In 2013 Father Melo was at a road blockade supporting an indigenous Lenca community in their resistance to an illegal hydroelectric project that would deprive the farmers of their source of water. Along with him was Berta Caceres, a Lenca environmental and human rights defender and a longtime friend of Father Melo. Berta in 2015 received the prestigious Goldman environmen-

— MELO, page 14

Only by dying to what was can we embrace new life

Continued from page 10

resurrection are not separate from life, are not to be seen as ultimate events but as immediate experiences. They are every step of the journey from this life to the next.

Whether its turning 21, 40, 65, or 80. Whether it's losing our health or our hair, our money or our memory, a person we love or a publication that we prize. We must not cling to what once was but is no more.

Wherever or whatever or with whomever we've been, we have to move on. And all moving on is a dying, a letting go. It's the imprint of the Paschal Mystery on our lives. Only by dying will we rise to fresh life. Only by letting go of yesterday will we open ourselves to tomorrow, where the seeds of fresh life await us.

"Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark . . ."

It's important to grasp the context in which this statement is made. The disciples in this Easter story faced enormous loss, the slaughter of an intimate friend and

leader, the crushing of a dream they shared with him. They had hoped that he would be the one to free Israel.

What is it in our own experience that enables us to relate to that, albeit in less profound and dramatic ways? The journey of Jesus' disciples from perplexity and fear to amazement, new hope, liberation and joy, is the journey God intends for us.

The aim of the resurrection of Jesus is fulfilled when the experience of Jesus' disciples becomes our own: *the experience of Jesus' continuing, empowering presence moving us toward new hope, new beginnings, new life.*

The Risen One deeply desires that this truly be for us a new day, a whole new season, with new realizations and possibilities. The "first day of the week" is an analogy for the first day of the rest of our lives.

Let us go forward with confidence and trust that every "letting go," every dying — whether little or big — if embraced with faith, will lead us to new and fuller life in unanticipated ways.



Gerald Schmitz

Easter

Christ is always raised on the tree
and we are always
falling asleep
only to awaken
nailed on both sides.
But still breathing into
more than this.

Yes, slowly breathing
into that space
where longing rises
to emptiness and opens wide to
the warm wind from the east
and songs of grace coming
softly from the trees,
flowing over the ground.

Ah! Much more
still to come;
much.

By Michael Dallaire

Self-expression is a traditional human right

Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



It was a fine October afternoon following two weeks of rain. A misty sun hovered like a flame behind a blue screen, hour by hour recreating every plane and prospect of England’s ancient capital. I had been to high mass at the Brompton Oratory and returned to my Jewish friend’s flat in Maida Vale around 2 p.m. He suggested that we tour Hampstead.

It was unusual at the time to see young mothers sporting bare mid-ribs, pierced navels, brazen tattoos, and hair the colours of the rainbow. But there were three of them on the summit of Primrose Hill, where my friend had thought to present to me a breath-taking view of the city.

Laurence was a London cabby with a degree in economics. London was his city, he knew its every nook and alley, and through the years he had seen virtually everything. But he could not avert his eyes from the parti-coloured mothers, toddlers in tow, who had climbed the hill, apparently, with the express purpose of ignoring the view.

For here, laid out before us, from Battersea Power Station on the twisting Thames to the spire of St. Mark’s in Regent’s Park, was the crucible of English language and literature, theatre, royalty, empire, and democracy — not to mention the best beer brewed anywhere in the world. And here were three young women standing in a

tight circle, their backs to the view, cigarettes dangling from flaccid lips, speaking in the broad accents of North London as if the history of their race were not written at every point of the compass.

The children might have been the offspring of accountants and solicitors, so ordinary did they appear: a pram-sized infant, a brace of garden-variety toddlers. But the women appeared as if they had been caught in a gale. My own mother’s bright lipstick used to embarrass me as a child, but I got over it. What did these children have to look forward to, going through the family albums 20 years hence?

“That’s my mother, the one with the swastika on her belly and the safety pin through her nose. And that’s Auntie Jen with the steel spikes in her hair and the death’s head tattooed on her back. Yes, she often wore a studded leather bikini top with vinyl trousers.”

There is another side to this, of course. People have been adorning themselves with tattoos, ingenious hair styles, paint, dye, clay, kohl, and quicklime for millennia. These three women were the contemporary result of thousands of years of tradition. However bizarre their self-expression, they had every right to express it.

It hadn’t always been so. For a dark and hateful period in the 20th century, individuality among the young was systematically sup-



Photo by David Iliff. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

PRIMROSE HILL — The view from the top of Primrose Hill looking down toward central London.

pressed, and often punished. Those young mothers would have been suspended from school, even expelled, for refusing to conform to the norms of society.

Twenty years before I was, four times in two days, barred from registering at school because of the manner in which I chose to wear my hair. After three haircuts my mother, with the implicit authority of my father, contacted the principal to protest, not only on my behalf but in defence of three friends who had been similarly singled out.

The story made the news — there was even a paragraph about us in the *Globe and Mail* — but we weren’t identified by name and no one made any attempt to solicit our point of view.

The four of us went to the school board offices and demanded to speak with the superintendent, who granted us 15 minutes, 10 of which he devoted to a very odd parable about freemasonry.

If we wanted to join the masons, he opined, we would have to conform to certain rules and expectations: it was the same with school.

It wasn’t, we opined, in turn: we didn’t want to join the masons, we just wanted an education. But our 15 minutes were up.

On the third day my father intervened, invoking his position in the community and his formidable powers of persuasion. He offered to take the school board to court. In the end, I think, it was the awful spectre of the law that conquered their trivial autocracy.

I was awarded a 9-A pin in the first semester. The vice-principal stared daggers as I stepped down from the stage in the auditorium, but there was nothing he could do to lower my grades.

We knew there would be consequences, of course. For my part, I was routinely insulted, yelled at, challenged to fight, and subjected to crude suggestions that would today be rightly condemned as sexual harassment (#MeToo? I’m afraid so) — this from social conservatives who judged a man by the cut of his hair and the shine of his shoes. Never mind that they drank themselves stupid every weekend.

As I was leaving a shop in down-

town Victoria one day in 1968, a pair of young men called out that I looked like a dog. I was embarrassed for my companion’s sake, but she was used to being harassed because of her gender and her beauty, and she just ignored them. In a way, I was grateful to be able to share the experience with her.

My neighbour’s daughter, an elegant young woman, recently dyed her long, smooth locks a brilliant green. The woman next door has sported a shining orange-red mane since we moved in 12 years ago. I see her at mass most Sundays, and she often reads. A young man I know is blonde on top and brunette beneath. One of the many efficient and highly professional pharmacists I have come to know over the years is tattooed from neck to wrist, and he assures me he has one on his back as well.

I take pleasure in the fact that young people feel free to express themselves creatively as they greet the daily world. Few of them know that this is a right that others suffered and fought for.

And we won.

Vulnerability has inherent risks, but it is necessary for honesty

By Caitlin Ward

This past weekend, I participated in an extended act of irony. Or perhaps it was hypocrisy. I’m not quite sure which.

I was working at the time, co-facilitating the final seminar in a series of four that is attached to a study abroad program I co-ordinate. I’m always in charge of the morning of the fourth seminar. It’s always about the same thing. And it’s always an act of irony. Or hypocrisy. I’m still not quite sure which. Irony tends to be more situational and hypocrisy tends to be more intentional, so it could go either way. How I name it is likely less relevant than what exactly I was doing at the time, mind you — at least for the purposes of you having any idea what I’m talking about.

I was talking about vulnerability that morning: its inherent risks, but its absolute necessity in order to be genuine and honest

Ward is a freelance writer and aspiring documentary filmmaker based in Saskatoon. You can find her short bursts of insight and frustration at <http://www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings>

with ourselves and others, to build relationships. Essentially, to borrow a phrase: to live wholeheartedly.

I’m not so good at that. To be honest, I can be quite terrible at it. I can barely handle the fact that I wrote “to live wholeheartedly.” It makes me cringe a little bit, and I tried to make it clear

that those weren’t my words. In fact, they’re the words of Brene

and empathy. Basically, she studies and talks about how to be a

Gethsemane (I Only Want to Say)

Andrew Lloyd Weber ft. Tim Rice

Brown, a now rather popular public intellectual who speaks to the ideas of shame, vulnerability,

fully functioning human being in the world who lives with integrity and honesty. It starts to feel

pretty warm and fuzzy sometimes, and that is not my forte. Talking openly about feelings can make me feel pretty queasy. When people thank me profusely for anything, for example, my immediate instinct is to call them a dork.

— TRIDIUM, page 13

I only want to say
If there is a way
Take this cup away from me
For I don't want to taste its poison
Feel it burn me
I have changed

I'm not as sure, as when we started
Then, I was inspired
Now, I'm sad and tired
Listen, surely I've exceeded expectations
Tried for three years, seems like thirty
Could you ask as much from any other man?

But if I die
See the saga through and do the things you ask of me,
Let them hate me, hit me, hurt me, nail me to their tree
I'd want to know, I'd want to know, my God
I'd want to know, I'd want to know, my God

Want to see, I'd want to see, my God
Want to see, I'd want to see, my God

Why I should die
Would I be more noticed than I ever was before?
Would the things I've said and done matter any more?
I'd have to know, I'd have to know, my Lord
Have to know, I'd have to know, my Lord
Have to see, I'd have to see, my Lord
Have to see, I'd have to see, my Lord
If I die what will be my reward?
If I die what will be my reward?
Have to know, I'd have to know, my Lord
I'd have to know, I'd have to know, my Lord

Why should I die? Oh why should I die?
Can you show me now that I would not be killed in vain?
Show me just a little of your omnipresent brain

Show me there's a reason for your wanting me to die
You're far to keen and where and how, but not so hot on why

Alright, I'll die!
Just watch me die!
See how I die!
Then I was inspired
Now, I'm sad and tired
After all, I've tried for three years, seems like ninety
Why then am I scared to finish what I started
What you started, I didn't start it

God, thy will is hard
But you hold every card
I will drink your cup of poison
Nail me to your cross and break me
Bleed me, beat me
Kill me
Take me, now!
Before I change my mind

Some soul-stirring cinema for Easter springtime

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



The advent of Easter has become a time for releasing biblical and Christian faith-based movies. This Good Friday brings a third in the *God's Not Dead* series — “A Light in the Darkness.” A Pure Flix Entertainment production, one can only hope it's better than their rather dreadful *Samson* from February. A better bet is Andrew Hyatt's *Paul, Apostle of Christ*, which opens today with James Faulkner as Paul and in the role of Luke, Jim Caviezel, who was Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ*. Worth noting as well is the mid-March release *I Can Only Imagine*, the story of Bart Millard, lead singer of the contemporary Christian music band MercyMe.

Blaze
Come Sunday
Quiet Heroes

Music can stir the soul, which brings me to *Blaze*, the latest effort from writer-director-actor-producer-author Ethan Hawke, whose prolific and protean career is the subject of a cover feature in the 2018 25th anniversary issue of *MovieMaker* magazine. *Blaze* is Blaze Foley, an itinerant musician from Arkansas who, with his partner Sybil Rosen, moved to Austin in the 1970s and became a legend in the outlaw Texas country music scene until addictions and bad luck got the better of him. Hawke himself has played a troubled musician in the role of jazz trumpeter Chet Baker in *Born to be Blue* (2015).

Hawke cast Arkansas musician Benjamin Dickey in the role of the mercurial Blaze, and it's a brilliant choice. Dickey not only does justice to the songs, he embodies the character, fully deserving the Sundance special jury award he received for achievement in acting. Alia Shawkat is also terrific as the Jewish girl, Sybil, smitten by Blaze, who accompanies his rambling ways, for a time living in a tree house in Georgia. Much of the scenario is drawn from her memoir *Living in the Woods in a Tree: Remembering Blaze Foley*.

Blaze had great talent but never

achieved major success and struggled with his self-destructive side. There were ill-fated moves and a split from Sybil. There's a poignant moment when he visits his elderly father, played by Kris Kristofferson. When *Blaze* had big career opportunities, he blew them. There's a great scene where he turns off a trio of record company executives (cameos by Richard Linklater, Sam Rockwell, and Steve Zahn). The highs and lows are also reflected in posthumous reminiscences by fellow musicians Zee and Townes Van Zandt (Charles Adams and Charlie Sexton) in radio interviews (with Hawke, back turned, playing the radio host). Foley was only 39 when shot to death in 1989.

The movie takes an evocative non-linear approach to this story that weaves together the strands of a singular life. *Blaze* may have been a lost soul but there is something in his musical legacy that touches the soul. In Sybil's words: “It's the homeless troubadour refusing to bend to the demands of success. It's the champion of the downtrodden, the bellicose drunk, the gentle giant children adored. But mostly it's the music — so direct and authentic it feels as if he is singing about you personally, wrapping your life in melodies that can heal.”

The gospels have a lot to say about healing, love and forgiveness, but divisions within Christian churches sometimes put these to the test. That is the case with the true story dramatized in director Joshua Marston's *Come Sunday*, scheduled to be released on Netflix April 13. At the centre is the African-American Pentecostal bishop Carlton Pearson (Chiwetel Ejiofor), a successful evangelical pastor of the Higher Dimensions Family Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His charismatic preaching attracted whites and blacks in great numbers and reached a nationwide TV audience. Pearson was also a protégé of leading Tulsa-based televangelist Oral Roberts (played by Catholic activist Martin Sheen), the stern patriarch of a network of Christian ministries and a university.

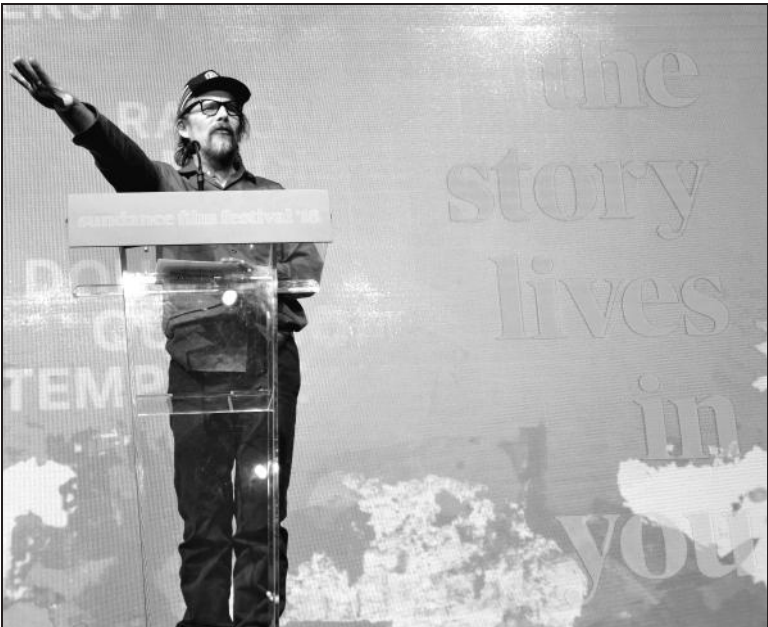
Pearson adhered to a strict fundamentalist doctrine of hellfire and salvation — unless you explicitly accept Jesus as your lord and saviour you are doomed to eternal damnation. An early scene has him visiting an aging

uncle named Quincy (Danny Glover) in prison and declining to help him with a parole request. The despondent Quincy will take his own life. There's a parallel to Roberts' rejection of his eldest son who committed suicide after coming out as gay.

Pearson started questioning his beliefs after watching a program on the Rwandan genocide and having an encounter in which he was convinced God spoke to him. How could this God of unconditional love, who sent his son for the salvation of the world, condemn most of humanity to hell because they had not known and accepted Jesus? When Pearson started preaching this truly Easter message of redemption, of all people being saved by the sacrifice of the cross, it provoked major troubles. Many in his congregation left, including his top adviser and business manager, Henry (Jason Segal), forcing him to find another smaller venue. Pearson was upbraided by other Pentecostal bishops and called on the carpet by Roberts, who had treated him like a son. (Another son of Roberts, Richard, would take on the mantle of heir but later have to resign over improper use of funds.)

Through a difficult period of soul-searching Pearson persevered, with strong support from his wife, Gina (Condola Rashad), and remaining congregants. These included his choir leader, Reggie (Lakeith Stanfield), who was wrestling with his homosexuality. Reggie was HIV-positive and as the illness progressed returned to Texas to live with his mother. Pearson would make a visit to his side to reassure him that “Jesus loves you.”

The narrative has had a protracted development, originating as an episode of the documentary series “This American Life” over a decade ago. At one point the film project had Jonathan Demme as director with Jeffrey Wright as Pearson and Robert Redford as Roberts. Fortunately, this Netflix production earns full marks for quality, sincerity



Gerald Schmitz

BLAZE DIRECTOR — Ethan Hawke speaks at the Sundance awards ceremony Jan. 27, 2018. He directed and co-wrote the film *Blaze*. The film will get a special screening at the South By Southwest Festival in Hawke's hometown of Austin on March 16, followed by a special live concert of tribute to Blaze Foley. Watch for highlights from SXSW in the April 11 issue.

ty and sensitivity. Ejiofor is especially compelling as Pearson, who was present at the Sundance premiere and credited the filmmakers with doing “a fantastic job of interpreting my hurts, hopes, and heart.” Indeed it's the humanity of all the characters that comes through. In this story faith is deeply felt on all sides. There are no caricatures. Still, the spiritual takeaway clearly embraces a gospel of inclusion over exclusion in which God's saving love is for everyone.

Fundamentalist doctrines have a hard time accepting redemption for souls they believe are lost. That was true of socially conservative Utah's Mormon church, which ostracized gay people or pressured them into traditional marriages to “cure” their afflictions. When the AIDS crisis hit in the early 1980s, gay men who contracted the deadly disease had nowhere to turn. They became lepers in the community. *Quiet Heroes*, co-directed by Jenny Mackenzie and Jared Ruga, relates how Dr. Kristen Ries arrived

in Salt Lake City as an outsider and became the only doctor willing to treat HIV/AIDS patients, who had often been abandoned by everyone else, including their families. Dr. Ries, who had been raised in an anti-Catholic household, found a welcome in the hospital run by the Sisters of the Holy Cross where she developed an extraordinary compassionate practice assisted by a nurse practitioner, Maggie Snyder, who would become her life partner as well.

While the righteous wrote off AIDS sufferers, in the face of fear and death these brave women brought palliative concern, mercy and hope to a stigmatized population. You might say they were an Easter presence in a dark time.

*Note: My best movie of 2017, Paul Shrader's *First Reformed*, starring Ethan Hawke as an ordained minister, had a special screening last week at Austin's South By Southwest Festival in advance of its theatrical release. Watch for festival highlights in the April 11 issue.

Triduum a story of deep vulnerability

Continued from page 12

When I started this job nearly eight years ago, I looked at this particular study abroad program with wonder and suspicion, but mostly utter incomprehension. Over the course of these last years, I have learned to understand this idea, to work within it, to teach it. In many ways, I've gotten much better at it. Often, though, it's been a street fight between vulnerability and a pathologically self-protective nature. I'm fighting my baser instincts every time I reach out to someone with vulnerability, and every time it goes poorly I have to fight my way back through the walls that so easily go up again.

This particular seminar happened to fall toward the end of Lent this year. As we approach Easter, I've been thinking about this concept of vulnerability in a religious context. The narrative of the Triduum is one of profound vulnerability: Christ institutes the eucharist, asking his disciples to

remember him, but when he asks these same people to stay awake with him while he prays, they fall asleep or they run off to the high priests to betray him. In Gethsemane, Christ sweats blood, begging the Father to take away the burden placed on him, but the answer is his own capture. Too little and too late, one of his sleepy friends decides to wage war on the arresting party by randomly cutting off the ear of a slave who probably had very little say in what was going on. And then he pretends he doesn't know Christ as soon as it gets a little hairy. In those moments, when Christ was beaten, bruised, and exhausted, I can imagine his human side thinking, “Why on earth would he be the rock on which to build my church?”

I'm guessing Christ was a heck of a lot less sarcastic and cynical than I am, but you never know. The Triduum story tells us that Christ was wounded and betrayed. Many of the people who had sworn to stand by his side abandoned him, and he walked to his

death humiliated and largely alone. In those moments, in purely human terms, he was more vulnerable than many of us will ever have to be. In spiritual terms, it is beyond our comprehension to understand the constant openness that Christ has to each of us, and how he feels every one of our corporal acts of mercy or cruelty. He has laid himself bare for us: not just in the Triduum, but always.

And it is because of Christ's willingness to enter into that that we have the Harrowing of Hell and the Resurrection. It is because God broke down the walls between this world and the next through Christ's birth and death that we are saved.

So it is because of this that every year, on the morning of the final seminar for this study abroad program, I still teach the value of vulnerability in a prolonged act of irony or hypocrisy, depending upon your politics. It is because I have learned that to open oneself up is not only an act of vulnerability, or trust; it is an act of faith.



CNS/Reuters

RESURRECTION — Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of God's new project, not to snatch people away from earth to heaven, but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. — N.T. Wright

Gift of the Last Supper: do this in memory of me

Both Lungs

Brent Kostyniuk



As we all know, at the Last Supper Jesus gave humanity the most precious gift it would ever receive, when he changed bread and wine into his body and blood. Since that time, those who follow him have continuously heeded his exhortation to “. . . do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19).

Jesus’ institution of the holy eucharist most likely came in the context of a traditional Passover meal. It recalls the night of the 10th and final plague when lamb’s blood was spread on door frames to protect the Israelite’s first-born children. According to custom, early in the Passover meal the person presiding would take a *matza*, a loaf of unleavened bread, and break it in two. Symbolically, unleavened bread was used because there had not been time to prepare leavened bread on that first Passover.

The larger portion of the bread, the *afikomen*, was set aside, out of view. At the end of the meal, the *afikomen* was taken out of hiding, broken into smaller portions and distributed to each person present. The meal was eaten standing up, as if done in a hurry, and all of the food had to be consumed. When the *afikomen* had been eaten, a final prayer of thanksgiving was recited and a third cup of wine, the “cup of blessing,” was passed around to all participants.

Kostyniuk, who lives in Edmonton, has a bachelor of theology from Newman and is a freelance writer. He and his wife, Bev, have been married for 39 years and have eight grandchildren.

When the first Christians celebrated the eucharist, they did so in imitation of the Last Supper. At about AD 55, when St. Paul gave the first recorded description of a eucharistic celebration in his first letter to the Corinthians, he tells us that Jesus asked his followers to break bread in remembrance of him. Unfortunately, “remembrance” lacks the theological significance of the original Greek word *anamnesis*, meaning reminiscence or memorial sacrifice. By making the action a memorial, we are not passive onlookers, but become participants in the Paschal Mystery.

Our use of the word eucharist — *eucharistia* — meaning thanksgiving, also stems from Corinthians and was used to describe Jesus’ giving thanks at the Last Supper. By the late first or early second century, the word had been adopted to describe the ritual itself.

While Jesus used unleavened bread at the Last Supper, both leavened or unleavened bread have been used through the ages. For the Jews, unleavened bread was known as “bread of affliction.” However, since early Christians wanted to joyfully commemorate Jesus’ resurrection, they chose leavened bread as more meaningful.

Today, in some Eastern Catholic traditions, including the Byzantine, leavened bread continues to be used, as a symbol of the risen Christ. A round loaf called *prosphora* — Greek for offering — is baked from flour and water, along with a small amount of salt and yeast.

Whether leavened or not, eucharistic bread must be made from wheat flour only and natural water. Traditionally, the *prosphora* is baked weekly by the priest, although in large modern parishes the task often falls to sisters or the laity. After the loaf has been shaped, it is stamped with an image generally marked with the Greek letters IC — abbreviation for Jesus — XC — Christ, and NIKA — Conquers. In some traditions, five small loaves are used, symbolic of the five loaves used to feed the 5,000.

The *prosphora* is brought to church and in preparation for the divine liturgy, the priest, and deacon if present, perform the *Proskomedia* rite at the altar of prothesis, a small table of preparation to the left of the main altar. This highly symbolic action recalls the Passion. After blessing the loaf, the priest takes a small knife known as the Holy Lance and makes an incision into the right side of the seal saying, “As a sheep, he was led to the slaughter.” Along the left side of the seal he cuts and says, “As a spotless lamb before its shearer, he opens not his mouth.” The action is repeated at the top with the words, “In his humiliation, his judgments were taken away,” and the bottom with, “And who shall declare his generation?”

Lifting out the holy bread he says, “For his life is taken from the earth.” He cuts it in the form of a cross saying, “The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is sacrificed for the life and salvation of the world.” Finally, piercing the right side with the lance, he says, “One of the soldiers with a lance pierced his side and immediately there came out blood and water. And he who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true.”

The resulting portion of bread known as the *amnon* — lamb — is placed on the *diskos* — paten — to be consecrated during the divine liturgy. Additional smaller

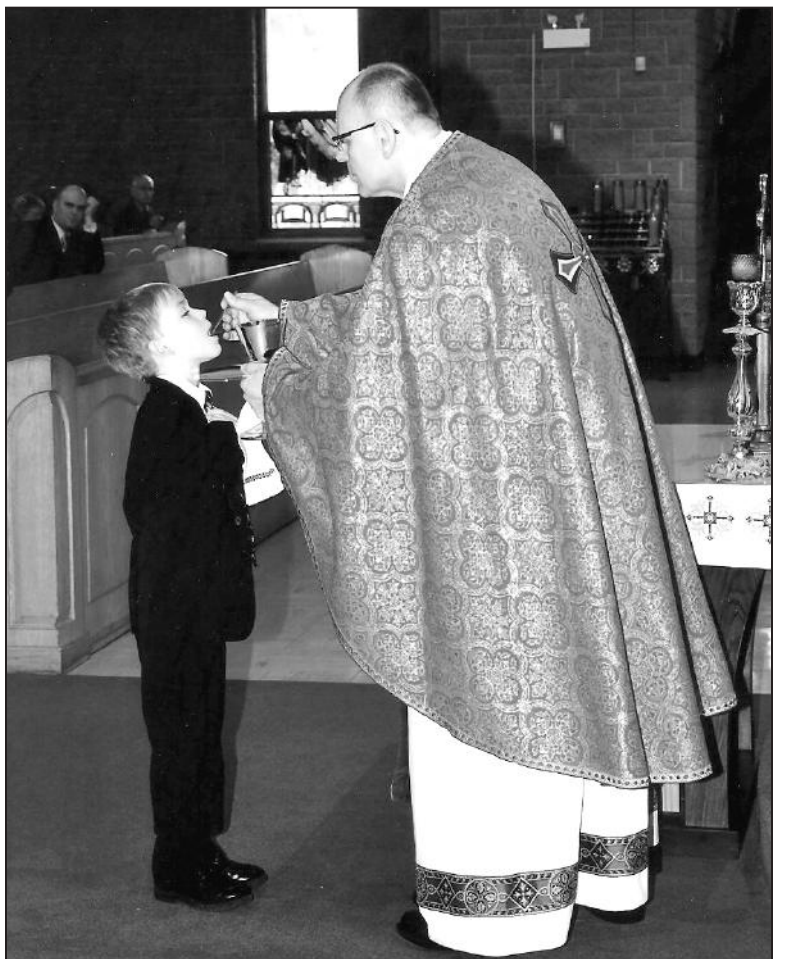
particles are arranged on the *diskos* to represent the Theotokos, saints, and both living and dead who the priest intends to commemorate. He concludes with a particle for himself. The remainder of the loaf not used in the consecration, the *antidoron*, is set aside and distributed at the end of the liturgy.

In the West, round wafers known as hosts — Latin, *hostia* — meaning victim or one to be sacrificed, are used. Hosts are made by pouring a flour and water batter onto a hot griddle with upper and lower plates, similar to a waffle iron. It is cooked for a short time, then allowed to cool.

Engraved plates are used to make embossed hosts. The large sheets of bread are then cut into individual hosts with a device similar to a paper hole puncher. While unleavened bread does store well, hosts are required to be recently made. Indeed, in Rome bakers of altar breads must swear the hosts they sell are not more than 15 days old.

East or West, leavened or unleavened, bread, through the consecration, becomes essential for our spiritual well-being.

In the form of bread so lowly, by example you do teach, to help others in misfortune, thus all burdens to relieve. — Here Among Us, My Dear Saviour



Kostyniuk

BREAD OF LIFE — Reception of holy eucharist in the Ukrainian Byzantine tradition of leavened bread and wine combined, is distributed from the chalice with a gold spoon.

Gift of Easter can be taken literally



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”
— John 12:23

As a child I tended to take many things quite literally. I am surely not the only child who thought it grotesque to tell an actor to break a leg before they went on stage, or to be deeply confused when someone informed me their relative had kicked the bucket or bought the farm. So when Easter Seals first caught my attention in 1967, I can tell you I was mightily disappointed that no

semi-aquatic mammals were part of that funding campaign for disabled kids. They were, however, one of the charities that always reminded me of Easter.

I think it’s equally true to say that as a child Easter similarly challenged me. Firstly, the church was transformed for this day, not just by the unveiling of statues that had stood beneath rich purple coverings, but also because tons of people I never saw at mass suddenly showed up. This told me that something monumental was taking place, and that I should look at this event as particularly important. But I didn’t quite get it.

As I grew older, however, I began to understand humility in a

way that is profoundly connected to the life and death of Jesus, and which transforms this story of salvation into a language that made a great deal of sense to me as a human being encountering the world. It is now a comic cliché to point out how the word “literally” is misused. I could literally eat a horse! But here is a moment in history where an act of leadership and sacrifice literally transforms our understanding of love.

The gift of Jesus is not only his teaching, but also his ultimate sacrifice. In his day, the thought of a messiah humbling himself to the point of persecution and humiliation was incomprehensible to many. But it is precisely this reversal of the paradigm of power that makes God’s gift so overwhelming. And it becomes an example to all of us to put charity ahead of personal interests for the sake of true salvation. Easter is the moment when the world remembers this ultimate rebirth. That, surely, is something we can take literally.

For Padre Melo, death threatens a constant reality

Continued from page 11

tal award, which her supporters celebrated thinking this international recognition might give her some protection. At the Rio Blanco blockade, an American woman who at that time was accompanying Padre Melo took a photo of Melo and Berta together. Berta smiled at Father Melo and said, “Who of us will they kill first?” Berta was assassinated on March 2, 2016.

In my trips to accompany Melo I know he has quietly saved lives. I have gone with him to a federal prison to visit political prisoners. His legal team advocates not only for persons dealing with political and human rights issues, but poor people wrongly imprisoned.

In Honduras there is no other prominent Catholic Church official who speaks out against the corruption, the violence, the fraudulent electoral process, and the high “femicide” rate. The combined teams of Radio Progreso and ERIC did a full-year campaign about violence against

women. It was followed by an intensive national program promoting Pope Francis’ environmental encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. Father Melo openly supported the Movement of the Indignant — a national protest against the bankruptcy of the Social Security Health Program — because the dictator drained the funds for use by his own political party.

Father Melo has lived with death threats for most of his priesthood. He has been kidnapped more than once. People around him have been killed. He cannot be bought, although there have been efforts internationally and nationally to compromise him with financial support. As Father Melo once explained, “First they try to be nice and ingratiate themselves with praise and admiration. Then they try to buy your support. If that doesn’t work they try to ridicule you or criticize your work. When that doesn’t work they move to criminalize you or paint you as a traitor to the country. Then they kill you.”

Turcotte is president of St. Mary’s University in Calgary.

End our fears: ‘live threatened by Resurrection’

Liturgy and Life

Joe Gunn



“Accompany us then, on this vigil and you will know what it is to dream! You will then know how marvellous it is to live threatened with Resurrection. To dream awake, to keep watch asleep, to live while dying and to already know oneself resurrected!”

— Julia Esquivel, *Nos Han Amenazado de Resurrección: Prayers and Poems from an Exiled Guatemalan*, Brethern Press, 1982

On Easter morning every Christian should ask, “What does it mean to believe in the resurrection?”

Let’s try to avoid too simple recitations of the Creed or racking our memory banks for verses of the catechism as we consider this defining question of our faith. Rather, let’s sit with this question and try to answer from deep within our own hearts. The church, in her wisdom, offers the readings of Easter morning as guides to our reflection.

Understanding the significance of the resurrection is to accept that it has meaning today, in 2018. Jesus, once dead and buried, has not gone away. His presence is forever in this world, and can be present in our lives, too.

In John’s Gospel account, the disciples did not under-

stand the significance of that first Easter morning, “for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.” The first step in the journey of comprehending the resurrection starts in the emptiness of the tomb.

There were John and Peter, in the dark, fearful and unsure of what had happened, searching for the meaning of it all. They were probably ashamed that they had not even gone to bury their friend and teacher, Jesus, leaving that task to Joseph of Arimathea. All the hopes they harboured of Jesus being the true Messiah seemed to have been dashed — dead and buried with his own corpse.

If we are honest with ourselves, our own lives and perhaps even our own spiritual journeys have also undergone similar stages. Most of us can admit to having lived some aspect of emptiness in our own lives. Perhaps we’ve experienced the ending of a marriage or special relationship, or a failure in a hoped-for career advancement or business venture. Of course, this emptiness can hit home harder in moments of finality: when we’ve lived through the loss of a loved one (such as the disciples had just done).

In such times of suffering and loss, times when gloom seems to have surrounded us, we long for resurrection, for a return to life, for release from the hollowness of defeat and darkness.

Easter Sunday	Acts 10:34a, 37-43
April 1, 2018	Psalms 118
	Colossians 3:1-4
	John 20:1-18

Yes, we humans are sinners! Yes, there are times when I have not lived up to all I can be. Even this Lent there have been moments when I’ve not kept my promise to reform my usual practices, increase time spent in prayer and almsgiving — but that can’t be the end of the story.

I can remember losing friends to the violence of civil war when I lived in Nicaragua, and worse, losing other loved ones from El Salvador, Colombia and Guatemala, who were taken by paramilitary forces and “disappeared.”

Only later did we learn that such wonderful human beings had been made to suffer abusive humiliations and torture. In those dark days, writers like Nobel Prize-winning poet Julia Esquivel tried to help us live through such moments with grace. Her words challenged us to end our fears, and “live threatened by Resurrection,” that is, recognize that all remains in God’s hands, and that we can go on, doing what must be done. She encouraged us to believe that those who had fallen “have threatened us with Resurrection because they are more alive than ever before, because they transform our agonies and fertilize our struggle . . .”

Jesus’ torture and public humiliation and execution did not end the Good News. In Luke’s telling of the resurrection of Jesus, two men in dazzling clothes spoke to the women who first entered the empty tomb, saying, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” (Lk 24:5). This is an excellent question we must continue to ask ourselves today.

If we have faith in the One we refer to as the God of Life, we should be searching for this God in places that offer transformational life and new energy to the world. In Jewish society of that time, women had low status and could not serve as legal witnesses — yet Mary was first to have come to the tomb, and in Mark’s account, the first to have seen the risen Jesus (Mark 16:11). Preferential love for those whom society disdains remains a crowning expression of our resurrected Lord. Offering life to those who need our merciful presence and action become signs of our belief in the teacher who rose from the dead.

It took time for the disciples to understand the resurrection, to have their eyes opened to what had happened. Let’s prayerfully ask that our own eyes may be opened to this miracle’s life-giving power in our own lives this Easter.



Faith: sometimes you walk on water, sometimes you sink like a stone

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



The poet Rumi suggests that we live with a deep secret that sometimes we know, then not, and then know again. That’s a good description of faith. Faith isn’t something you nail down and possess once and for all. It goes this way: sometimes you walk on water and sometimes you sink like a stone.

The gospels testify to this, most graphically, in the story of Peter walking on the water. Jesus asks Peter to step out of a boat and walk across the water to him. At first it works. Peter, unthinking, walks on the water, then becoming more conscious of what he is doing he sinks like a stone. We see this too in the massive fluctuations in belief that Jesus’ disciples experience during the “forty days” after the resurrection. Jesus would appear to them, they would trust he was alive, then he would disappear again, and they would lose their trust and go back to the lives they’d led before they met him — fishing and the sea. The post-resurrection narratives illustrate the dynamics of faith pretty clearly: You believe it. Then you distrust. Then you believe it again. At least, so it seems on the surface.

We see another example of this in the story of Peter betraying Jesus. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus tells us that there is a secret that separates those who have faith from

those who don’t: To you is given the secret of the kingdom, but to those outside everything exists in parables. That sounds like Gnosticism, that is, the idea that there’s a secret code somewhere (e.g., *The Da Vinci Code*) that some know and some don’t and you are in or out depending upon whether you know it or not. But that’s not what Jesus is saying here. His secret is an open one, accessible to all: the meaning of the cross. Anyone who understands this will understand the rest of what Jesus means, and vice versa. We are in or out, depending upon whether or not we can grasp and accept the meaning of Jesus’ death.

But, being in or out isn’t a once and for all thing. Rather, we move in and out! After Peter denied Jesus, we’re told: “*he went outside.*” This is intended both literally and metaphorically. After his denial, Peter stepped outside a gate into the night to be away from the crowd, but he also stepped outside the meaning of his faith.

Our faith also bounces up and down for another reason — we misunderstand how it works. Take, for example, the rich young man who approaches Jesus with this question: “Good master, what must I do to *possess* eternal life?” That’s an interesting choice of a

verb: to *possess*. Eternal life as a possession? Jesus’ gentle correction of the young man’s verb teaches us something vital about faith. Jesus says to him: “Now if you wish to *receive* eternal life,” meaning that faith and eternal life are not something you possess so that they can be stored and guarded like grain in a barn, money in a bank, or jewelry in a box. They can only be received, like the air we breathe. Air is free, is everywhere, and our health doesn’t depend upon its presence, because it’s always there. Rather, it depends upon the state of our lungs (and mood) at any given moment. Sometimes we breathe deeply and appreciatively; but, sometimes, for various reasons, we breathe badly, gasp for breath, are out of breath, or are choking for air. Like breathing, faith too has its modalities.

And so we need to understand our faith not as a possession or as something we achieve once and for all, which can be lost only by some huge, dramatic, life-changing shift inside of us, where we move from belief to atheism. “Faith isn’t some constant state of belief,” suggests Abraham Heschel, “but rather a sort of faithfulness, a loyalty to the moments when we’ve had faith.”

And that teases out something else: To be real, faith need not be explicitly religious, but can express itself simply in faithfulness, loyalty, and trust. Fox example, in a powerful memoir written as she was dying of cancer, *The Bright Light*, Annie Riggs shares her strong but implicit faith as she calmly faces her death. Not given to explicit religious faith, she is challenged at one point by a nurse who says to her: “Faith, you gotta

have it, and you’re gonna need it!” The comment triggers a reflection on her part about what she does or doesn’t believe in. She comes to peace with the question and her own stake in it with these words: “For me, faith involves staring into the abyss, seeing that

it is dark and full of the unknown — and being OK with that.”

We need to trust the unknown, knowing that we will be OK, no matter that on a given day we might feel like we are walking on water or sinking like a stone. Faith is deeper than our feelings.

‘There is an overreach on the part of government’

Continued from page 4

Ray Pennings, co-founder and executive vice-president of Cardus, also sees implications in the Easter Bunny decision for governments and government agencies, such as the Law Society of Ontario that is requiring lawyers to include in their annual report “a statement of principles acknowledging their obligation to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.”

Whether it’s the foster parents, business people, or professionals, “there’s an overreach on the part of government and administrative agencies that has some role to play in compelling speech,” Pennings said.

“What the court has done here has quite clearly drawn some lines showing a) this is dangerous and b) the worker at the agency seemed blind to what she was doing.”

Pennings said often bureaucrats are carrying out their functions “sincerely ignorant of the impact of compelling speech on the part of others.”

He puts the Canada Summer Jobs attestation, however, “in a slightly different category.”

“It seems to me on the Canada

Summer Jobs attestation the government has been very intentional and it has not backed down,” he said. “It’s part of a broader strategy and that is something I worry about.”

“There are lots of ways the government could achieve its objective of not funding pro-life organizations without having an attestation box,” he said, noting that all the government had to do was identify the organizations that have the abortion issue as part of their mandate. In fairness, though the policy should apply to both sides of the issue, he added.

“These different ways of expressing compelled speech have become a form of virtue-signalling regarding certain issues and what it means to be on the right side of contentious questions,” Pennings said. “It’s a very illiberal way of advancing arguments in the public square.”

“This is where government is using its powers in a coercive way. It has turned the Charter from a shield into a sword and is seeking to transform society according to its beliefs at the expense of the conscience, religion and expression rights of individual Canadians.”

A prodigal daughter returns to her roots

By Shannon Hengen

The grounds of St. Peter's Abbey and St. Peter's Press, home of the *Prairie Messenger*, invite me on this sunny February day. Surrounded by snow covered parkland, stands of spruce, pine, tamarack trees, and tall elms, the grounds themselves are gathered near a handsome bell tower and abbey church.

From those bells, the Benedictine monks' days here continue to follow a regular pattern of prayer. *Ora et labora*, says one of the many paintings along the quiet abbey hallways: pray and work. That is why I am here.

More than 40 years ago, freshly graduated from university, I visited the abbey and press for the first and only other time when I was hired by the Archdiocese of Regina to write weekly columns for the *PM*. The extraordinary helpfulness, energy, and level of commitment of the monks inspired me then, as do those qualities in the paper's staff now.

The purpose of my return is to consider the question: What does it mean that the *Prairie Messenger*, housed in this idyllic setting all these years, will discontinue publication in less than two months?

Hengen wrote articles for the Prairie Messenger from the Archdiocese of Regina in the 1970s.

Thanks to the prescience of one of my sisters, I have in an old steamer trunk a musty scrapbook kept by her containing original copies of many of my articles from the year 1974 and late 1973. At my desk in a guest room at the abbey now, attempting to see into the future, I look back by reading the first article in the scrapbook: the passing of the bishop's crozier from then Archbishop of Regina M.C. O'Neill to C.A Halpin (Dec. 23, 1973, issue).

Having lived away from Saskatchewan for most of my adult life and having only recently resettled here, as I reorient myself to those earlier times I find not only important historical information but also bemusing hints of my younger self in these articles. For example, the title of a piece on aging from June 9, 1974: "Life can be worthwhile even after age 65." Indeed.

In other pieces, I come to acknowledge that references to Prime Minister Trudeau are not to Justin, but rather to Pierre Elliott. And I begin to wonder: why would mentions of the prime minister or of lectures on aging appear at all in a religious newspaper? Although at the time I sensed no oddity in my choice of material on which to report — encouraged no doubt by my bosses at the Catholic Centre in Regina and the newspaper itself — I see now that the stories I chose to write and those the paper chose to

print were largely concerned with social issues: for example, organizations focused on international development; a program allowing Regina law-breakers to work off fines through community service; encouraging indigenous ministry; supporting Big Brothers of Regina, the Regina Church Basketball Association (interdenominational) and an interdenominational summer program for children ages four through 11 in Regina's north central neighbourhood; co-operating to undo the damage of the spring 1974 Moose Jaw flood.

To my young mind, such social consciousness became so normal that I equated it with Catholicism. If I failed to attend in some way to those in need, I was not — very simply — practising my faith.

In that year, I also wrote articles about, for example, a religious pilgrimage to Kronau; about Père Murray and Notre Dame College in Wilcox, Sask.; the 75th anniversary of profession of a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions (Caroline Crosse); a Cana Colony



Shannon Hengen

END OF AN ERA — Shannon Hengen, a former writer for the *Prairie Messenger*, wonders what it means that the *Prairie Messenger*, "housed in this idyllic setting all these years, will soon discontinue publication."

retreat for families at Moose Mountain Provincial Park as part of "an international marriage and family movement" (Aug. 18, 1974); and such pieces on the arts that reflected my undergraduate experience as interviews with Anne Murray and the stars of the *Godspell* musical. Clearly, Catholic liturgy and education and the upholding of spiritual values in our cultural milieu have remained as central as social activism to the work of the *Prairie Messenger* since those years.

This newspaper has thus held a unique place in the hearts and

minds of its readers, linking our worship with our lives. By reminding us always of our primary commitment to the poor and the forgotten as well as to public witnesses of faith, it has raised us above our dogmatic differences.

As I look from my guest room window to the fields that will produce new growth several months hence, I feel such gratitude for this paper and its home that have so thoughtfully tended us through these many changing years. I do not know what will be born of that careful tending, but I must believe it will be good.

Painful emotions: seeing in the dark

Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



"The word shaman means 'to see in the dark.' There is a shamanism of the dark emotions — a way of maintaining awareness in the midst of the chaos and turbulence of the darker regions of the psyche. . . . Painful emotions challenge us to know the sacred in the broken; to develop an enlarged sense of Self beyond the suffering ego . . . a wider and deeper perspective not limited by our pain but expanded by it."

— Miriam Greenspan

There's a scene in the movie *The Pink Panther 2* in which Chief Inspector Dreyfus (played by John Cleese) is ordered to reinstate Inspector Clouseau (played by Steve Martin) on a criminal investigative team. Dreyfus had previously kept Clouseau on parking ticket duty to minimize the chaos Clouseau causes everywhere he goes. Upon being given no choice, Dreyfus excuses himself to the washroom where we see him literally banging his head against the wall; then he returns to the meeting in tight control of his frustrated rage.

Painful or "dark" emotions are often subject to such two-choice dilemmas. We can hide them,

Speyer is a Benedictine Oblate as well as an author, subject matter expert for e-therapy, clinical consultant and director of InnerView Guidance International (IGI). <https://www.innerviewguidance.com>

numb, dissociate, and maintain a veneer of politeness or even piety while in a state of emotional constriction. Or we can "act out" in ways that hurt ourselves or throw loved ones and not-so-loved ones under the bus, in favour of how they "make" us feel.

There is a third alternative, however, which allows both needs of the heart. One bleeds. The other forbears. It's the psychospiritual practice of relating to the passions in the following ways.

Attending: The adversity of the dark emotions invites us to practise emotional mindfulness with whatever state we're in. Just stay with the images or sensations which arise. Allow yourself to feel what you're feeling without having to do anything about it. Watch the thoughts and feelings like you would when watching a movie. View yourself with the same compassion you would extend toward someone you love in the same situation.

Befriending: Welcome whatever you're feeling like an honoured, or at least interesting guest, without judgment. Maintain witness consciousness for the stream of sensations and thoughts as they pass through your body/mind/spirit. Let any emotional toxicity circulate like you would with overactive, demanding children running around until they tire themselves out, while you "hold the space" and make sure they don't get into trouble.

Surrendering: While staying connected with the emotional energy, allow it to flow where it wants to go in the spirit of "let's get into it" rather than "get me out of here." Open your heart wider in the face of emotional pain, rather than closing and contracting around it. Set the intention to trust it. Move into what hurts, with awareness as your safeguard. Trace back grief, fear, or despair to the essence of what matters to our shared humanity.

Intending: Set the intention to practise emotional alchemy for personal and collective transformation. The dark emotions contain subtle calls to action since the world lives in us as much as we live in the world. We are called by fear to protect and preserve what is life-giving. We are called by grief to join in an uprising against systemic sin, like the Parkland high school students in Florida are doing. Despair calls for deep contemplation of eternal values in this, our collective dark night of the soul. We then tap into the human condition at its most crucified, where we can discern how conscious suffering leads to service.

Police will not engage counter-protesters in march

Continued from page 4

turning to Parliament Hill via Bank Street.

The Ottawa police told them they would not engage counter-protesters if they stand in the way, but will reroute the march on the spot, Lauzon said. March organizers will respect the bubble zone to protect marchers, the decorum of the march, and to preserve a good relationship with the police.

The March for Life faces another hurdle. It has yet to hear whether the committee that grants access to Parliament Hill grounds has approved this year's march.

"I don't know if they can ban it," Lauzon said. "They can deny access to Parliament Hill. If it's not available, we will have to get our own stage and electrical equipment."

Another difference this year is that the east lawn of Parliament Hill may be barricaded because the ice rink set up for Canada 150 celebrations damaged the water and sprinkling system, Lauzon said. Right now, the march will likely only have the west lawn and the centre walkway and steps to Centre Block. If that is not approved, Lauzon mused about using Wellington Street in front of the Hill.

The keynote speaker for the annual Rose Dinner following the march is Catherine Glenn Foster, president and CEO of Americans

United for Life. Foster served as president of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition USA and as a litigator with the Alliance for Defending Freedom.

Sought-after speaker Paul J. Kim, who shares his message of chastity via beatboxing, is speaking at the youth banquet that annually draws more than 800 people 30 and under.

The annual youth conference May 11, following the march, features Christina Lamb, a registered nurse and assistant professor with the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta. Her area of expertise is on conscience in health care practice and bioethics education.

Also speaking is international speaker Stephanie Gray, author of *Love Unleashes Life: Abortion & the Art of Communicating Truth and A Physician's Guide to Discussing Abortion*.

Rounding out the agenda is Campaign Life Youth co-ordinator Marie-Claire Bissonnette, who "challenges young people to move being social media 'slactivism' into 'human interactions' to advance real change in culture," according to the march website. Bissonnette has voiced a number of videos in a series #RU-CRAZY on the dangers of the abortion pill that have gone viral.

For more information on the march, see <http://www.marchfor-life.ca>

Pope Francis invites change, but we are the change

This first appeared March 10, 2018, in the web column "From Where I Stand" at ncronline.org (National Catholic Reporter). It is reprinted with permission of the author (www.joanchittister.org).

By Joan Chittister

There was a time in life when I wanted things done and wanted them done now. I still want things done now but over the course of the years, I discovered that, at least where the church is concerned, I was looking for action in the wrong places. As Sean Freyne, the Irish theologian and Scripture scholar, put it, "It's a mistake to think that a pope has the power to do anything." Translation: The right to reign as an autocrat, to take unilateral action about almost anything, does not come with the mitre and crossed keys. Nor, for that matter, does it come with the capes and crosses of bishops.

Popes and bishops, I have come to realize, are the maintainers of the tradition of the church. When they move, it is commonly with one eye on the past — the point at which lies safe canonical territory. Only we are the real changers of the church.

It's the average layperson living out the faith in the temper of the times who shapes the future. It is the visionary teacher, the loving critic, the truth-telling prophet that moves the church from one age to another. It was those who had to negotiate the new economy who came to see fair interest on investments as the virtue of prudence rather than the sin of usury,

Chittister is a Benedictine sister of Erie, Pennsylvania.

for instance. It was those caught in abusive relationships who came to realize that divorce could be a more loving decision than a destructive family situation.

And yet, the manner in which popes and bishops move, the open ear they bring to the world, the heart they show, and the love and leadership they model can make all the difference in the tone and effectiveness of the church.

Five years ago, for instance, we moved from one style of church to another. It happened quietly but it landed in the middle of the faithful like the Book of Revelation. Gone were the images of finger-waving popes, stories of theological investigations, and the public scoldings and excommunications of people who dared to question the ongoing value of old ways.

When Jorge Bergoglio, the newly elected Pope Francis, appeared on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, he bowed to the people and asked for a blessing; the faithful roared their approval of a man who knew his own need for our help and direction.

When he told aristocratic bishops to "be shepherds with the smell of sheep" — to move among the people, to touch them, to serve them, to share their lives — episcopal palaces and high picket fences lost ecclesial favour. What the people wanted were bishops who would come out of their chanceries, walk with them and come to understand the difficulty of the path.

When Francis told priests to deal with abortion in confession, where all the struggles of humanity find solace and forgiveness, rather than treat it as the unforgivable sin, the church grew in understanding. When he said, "Who am I to judge" the spiritual quality of the gay community, the church became a church again. The fluidity of human nature and the great need for mercy and strength that come with life's most painful decisions became plain.

Francis, building on foundations laid by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, opened hearts and doors to Cuba, regardless of the politics of it, and with the Obama administration eased Cuba's isolation from the modern world. Francis has brought to the world's attention migrants fleeing war and oppressive economic situations; he has spoken up against slaughter in Southeast Asia and central Africa. He has said a definitive no to nuclear weapons and encouraged rethinking so-called just war.

Clearly, Francis is an invitation to change our stance in the world. We have a new model of what the church should look like to others as well as what we ourselves can hope for from it in our own lives.

Clearly, Francis is an invitation to change our stance in the world. We have a new model of what the church should look like to others as well as what we ourselves can hope for from it in our own lives. We begin to see the church as a sign of the love of God rather than the spectre of the wrath of God.

And yet, at the same time, some things that must change clearly have not changed in these last five years. Instead, there is smoke without fire, commissions promised but not created, questions acceptable to ask, yes, but answers still scarce.

The very recognition of a problem, the modern world assumes, is the beginning of its solution. There is promise and possibility galore. But, in too many instances, if nothing happens, more and more people, disappointed, drift away from a drifting ship.

And so the married couples who lived through abuse, through marriages more toxic than life-giving, wait for the understanding that even though married again, they deserve the right to have the spiritual support the church offers as they attempt to make more loving marriages. They wait, but the



CNS/Vatican Media

POPE AT FIVE YEARS — Pope Francis leads an audience with Italian nurses in Paul VI hall at the Vatican March 3. "... this papacy has made thinking possible again. It has embraced the idea that change is part of the process of living. But it has not given some major issues significant direction," writes Joan Chittister, OSB.

declaration of inclusion in the church does not come.

A commission on the restoration of the female diaconate is formed, but the church itself is not included in the conversation, no public reports are ever given, and a very important and long-lived part of Roman Catholic history goes silent again.

The leviathan of child abuse, the most glaring problem facing the church, continues to raise its hoary head. It reaches across the world and even up to the pope's own household. Unless or until even bishops and cardinals are suspended until charges are resolved, the taint on the integrity of the Vatican itself will continue to undermine the sincerity of the church's effort to dispel the venom. Meanwhile, an abuse commission itself was formed, allowed to lapse, is now formed again, we're told, but all of that with little or no evidence of palpable response to the problem itself.

The call for women in official positions at higher echelons in the church is promised — but ignored. This means, of course, that the role of women has not shifted at all yet — despite their educational readiness, their lifetime records of service, let alone the discipleship offered by their baptism. The effect is clear: Women have nothing to do with the theological commissions where deci-

sions are made that affect the spiritual lives of their half of the church. But Francis says there is nothing more that can be said about women because his predecessors have spoken.

The question is why this papacy appears to have stalled. Whether situations like this stem from Francis' own lack of commitment to them, or as a result of the interminable resistance of the Curia to papal leadership, is anybody's guess. But they do mark this papacy. They make for long-term distrust.

From where I stand, this papacy has made thinking possible again. It has embraced the idea that change is part of the process of living. But it has not given some major issues significant direction. In cases like this, the promise of action and the absence of results, as the French say, "flatter only to deceive." They give false hope. As a result, in the end, the absence of action is even more disappointing than it would have been if hollow promises had never been made.

St. Paul warned the church about this kind of unclear leadership centuries ago. He writes in 1 Corinthians 14:8, "If the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?"

It is a warning to a papacy that came full of hope and is deeply respected for it. As the Talmud says, "Those who risk nothing, risk much more."



PM file

PRESENT AT THE TABLE — "The initiative in encounter belongs to the Lord. But if we open the door of our being to him, we shall share his life, his supper." — Gustavo Gutiérrez

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The Easter passage

The culture of the West associates new life with New Years Day. This is a time to make resolutions and plans to change for the better.

Unfortunately, our good intentions seldom last.

The Christian tradition associates new life with Easter. Easter eggs, the Easter bunny and the butterfly are symbols of the meaning of the mystery we celebrate this week. But, it is the cross, the silence and the empty tomb that point to the deeper meaning of this feast. Easter celebrates the death and resurrection of Jesus as the Saviour of the world. Jesus is victorious over sin and death — that ancient enemy — St. Paul preaches.

This week's *Prairie Messenger* carries a number of wonderful articles to explore the meaning of Easter today.

The following story strikes me as giving a good illustration of how we make the energy of Easter more personal. It comes from the Buddhist tradition.

Buddha was asked: "What have you gained from meditation?" He replied, "Nothing." However, Buddha said, "Let me tell you what I lost: Anger, anxiety, depression, insecurity, fear of old age and death."

The New Testament stories of early Christians

remind us that baptism didn't change that much for them. It was no magic pill. They continued to struggle with anger, infidelity, lying, cheating and difficult relationships. Early attempts at communal living soon fell apart. St. Paul spent a lot of space in his letters trying to encourage his converts and followers to clean up their act, always noting that Christ's victory gave them new energy.

While baptism was a pledge to change direction or take a new path, old habits clung closely and were hard to shake off. It's not unlike our own experience.

Reflecting on the question to Buddha, we ask, "What does Easter bring us?" It's not only gaining the glory and transformation of Easter morning. It also includes the pain and suffering of the cross. As the Buddha says, it's what we lose: Anger, anxiety, depression, insecurity, fear of old age and death. The more we lose, the more we can receive and gain. — PWN

Students protest gun culture

South of the border, students are marching. They want to change a gun culture that is hard for Canadians to understand but which is engrained in the psyche of many Americans.

The students are protesting the Feb. 14 massacre of students in the Parkland, Florida, high school.

In a feature series on gun violence in the *National Catholic Reporter*, teacher Colman McCarthy wrote: "I was immensely pleased when a fair number of my students defied threats of being 'punished' for skipping school to join 1,300 others at an anti-gun rally at the U.S. Capitol. One of my seniors, Olivia Juliano, carried a large and colourful sign saying 'Peace Is Cheaper,' a visual published and valorized in both The Washington Post and New York Times."

Student Emma Stewart wrote, "I can't wait to spend some time outside the United States to gain some perspective and inspiration on how to change the minds of our fearful, untrusting community. We need to better know our history to understand and recognize this isn't the way to go."

Days before the Parkland tragedy, the *American Journal of Medicine* published a World Health Organization study on American gun violence. Ninety-one per cent of boys and girls under 14 killed by guns lived in the United States. It's gun-related murder rate is 25 times higher compared to 22 other high-income nations. Every day an average of 24 children are shot.

Indeed, we pray Americans get a new perspective. — PWN

Human trafficking called 'one of darkest, most revolting realities'

By Beth Griffin

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — Mely Lenario quietly described her harrowing journey from ambitious, naive rural girl trafficked to hopeless, drug-fuelled urban prostitute, through slow rehabilitation to a new life as an outreach worker.

After she finished her story, hundreds of people in a UN conference room jumped to their feet in a sustained ovation.

Lenario spoke March 13 on "Preventing Human Trafficking Among Rural Women and Girls," a panel co-sponsored by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations.

As an eight-year-old, Lenario was abused by her stepfather in the Philippines. He threatened her at knife point after she watched him rape her sister. When she confronted her mother and neighbours about it, she was placed into a Jesuit-run orphanage for seven years.

As a teen, she accepted an offer of work and a free education from an elegant woman visitor who arranged transportation to Cebu, a city distant from her hometown. In Cebu, she was prostituted and

forced to use drugs to stay awake all night and improve the glum demeanor that discouraged customers.

Lenario begged for release but was told she had to pay for the transportation and other expenses incurred by her traffickers.

She resigned herself to a life of prostitution. "I felt hopeless and worthless. I felt already ruined," Lenario said.

Ultimately, she met compassionate women and men religious who introduced her to the Good Shepherd Welcome House in Cebu. With their help and five years of effort, she overcame her drug habit, finished high school and trained to be a nurse's aide.

"I had to learn how to forgive myself and the people who caused me pain," she said.

Lenario now studies social work and serves as an outreach counsellor to trafficked women and girls at the Good Shepherd Welcome House.

"I want to give them hope. I want to be an inspiration and give voice to all the abused women out there. I want to show them that if I

— WOMEN, page 19



CNS/Daniel Dal Zennaro, EPA

UN PEACEKEEPERS ACCUSED — UN peacekeeping soldiers patrol alongside women and children in 2015 in Bangui, Central African Republic. A Catholic bishop in the Central African Republic accused UN peacekeeping troops of sexual abuse in his diocese and warned they could be guilty of crimes against humanity.

Canadian man wants assisted life not assisted death

By Alex Schadenberg
Executive director,
Euthanasia Prevention
Coalition

CTV News reported that Roger Foley, who lives with a cerebellar ataxia, a degenerative neurological condition, has launched a lawsuit naming the London Health Sciences Centre and the South-west Regional LHIN, stating that they are offering him assisted death (MAiD) but they are not willing to provide him with an assisted life.

CTV News reported Foley as stating: "A government-selected home care provider had previously left him in ill health with injuries and food poisoning. Unwilling to continue living at

home with the help of that home care provider and eager to leave the London hospital where he's been cloistered for two years, Foley is suing the hospital, several health agencies and the attorneys general of Ontario and Canada in the hopes of being given the opportunity to set up a health care team to help him live at home again — a request he claims he has previously been denied."

"I have no desire to take up a valuable hospital bed," Foley explained. "But at this point, it's my only option."

Foley has been offered euthanasia (MAiD), but Foley does not want to die; he simply wants to live at home.

CTV News reported: "I have

been given the wrong medications, I have been provided food where I got food poisoning, I've had workers fall asleep in my living room, burners and appliances constantly left on, a fire, and I have been injured during exercises and transfers, When I report(ed) these things to the agency, I would not get a response."

"Unfortunately, the Ontario health care system and the Ontario home care system have broken my spirit and sent my life into a void of bureaucracy accompanied by a lack of accountability and oversight."

Foley has asked to manage his own home care team. Doing that is called "self-directed care," and Ontario recently created an agency

called Self-Directed Personal Support Services Ontario (SDPSSO) to help co-ordinate such activities.

"I need self-directed funding in order to return to my home. I need to be able to hire my own workers to build my (home) care to work with me."

Foley's lawyer, Ken Berger, doesn't understand why they have not offered a solution for Foley. Berger stated the only two options offered to him have been a "forced discharge" from the hospital "to work with contracted agencies that have failed him" or medically assisted death.

Refusing to leave the hospital and unwilling to die by a doctor's hand, Foley claims he has been threatened with a \$1,800 per day

hospital bill, which is roughly the non-OHIP daily rate for a hospital stay.

Foley's statement of claim also alleges that his Charter rights "to life, liberty and security of the person" were violated when he was offered the above options without being given the chance to create a "safe and available self-directed assisted care option that would substantially alleviate his irremediable and intolerable suffering."

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition supports Foley's case and all others who require assisted living not "assisted death." We believe in caring for people, not killing.

Link: alexschadenberg.blogspot.ca

PM has been very informative in ecumenical matters

The Editor: May I give a heartfelt thank you to all who have been involved in the printing of your excellent Catholic paper, to which our parish subscribes, and I have read cover to cover each week. It has been most informative, especially in all matters ecumenical.

As our parish ecumenical representative for more than 20 years, I have benefitted greatly from the articles and the book, *In*

God's Reconciling Grace which Rev. Bernard de Margerie kindly sent to me quite a few years ago. It was put to good use in our very active, eight denomination, ecumenical group.

The picture of the Sisters Of Sion, as well as the article describing the recent reunion of former pupils, brought back many fond memories. As a child, I enjoyed attending Grade 2 at Sion Academy, on Avenue A those many years ago.

I truly loved my teacher, Mother Eulalia, a very special woman.

I do recall several classmates, especially a good friend, Dorothy Cuthbert, a non-Catholic who lived on Avenue C.

The *Prairie Messenger* shall be greatly missed.

May God's choicest blessings be upon each and every one who contributed in any way toward bringing this great paper to us. — **Maureen Condon Horon, Lethbridge**

Women religious fight trafficking

Continued from page 18

could change my life, they can, too," she said.

The UN panel was a side event to the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

It focused on the contributions of women religious to prevent trafficking by providing educational and employment opportunities for rural girls, women and their families, disrupt the "supply chain" of the trafficking business, and help survivors tell their stories.

Trafficked women are "marginalized by an environment that can't meet their needs," Mercy Sister Angela Reed said. Therefore, anti-trafficking strategies must address the root causes of the problem, which include poverty, unemployment, discrimination, violence, rural isolation and lack of access to education, she said. Reed is the co-ordinator of Mercy Global Action at the United Nations.

"Human trafficking is one of the darkest and most revolting realities in the world today," said Msgr. Tomasz Grysa, Vatican deputy ambassador. Vulnerable rural women and girls suffer

"compounded marginalization" and are at a "cumulative disadvantage prior to being trafficked," he said. "Their dignity and rights are not adequately respected before they're trafficked, something that makes them more susceptible to much worse violations of their dignity and rights later."

Religious sisters are "going to the existential peripheries" to do heroic work, but they cannot do it alone, Grysa continued. Trafficking is "a global phenomenon that exceeds the competence of any one community or country. To eliminate it, we need a mobilization comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself."

Sister Annie Jesus Mary Louis, a Franciscan Missionary of Mary, is executive director of Jeevan Jharna Vikas Sanstha in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh. She said, "Sexual exploitation is big business, governed by the same principles of supply and demand as any commercial activity."

The sex industry treats people like products and the sex trade has a supply chain of exploitation driven by demand and fuelled by greed, vulnerability and deception. It is an illusion that women

and girls freely choose prostitution, she said.

The supply chain can be disrupted and trafficking prevented when families have opportunities and feel like society cares about them, Louis said. Families need loving accompaniment and rural women and girls should be protected with at least the same level of investment that is put into labour exploitation, she said.

The rural population is disproportionately affected by trafficking, said Mercy Sister Lynda Dearlove, founder of Women at the Well in London. Religious groups with long-term enduring local relationships have an advantage over large organizations in preventing trafficking, she said.

"Individuals hold the key to empowering women and girls," she said. Large international funding groups sometimes create an unnecessary layer between donors and those in need, she said.

Reed said women must be seen as anti-trafficking advocates. The Religious Sisters of Mercy help women share first-hand accounts to bring women's voices into public policy discussions and prevention efforts. "We need to change the dominant narrative that trafficking is a random act" to an understanding that it is a sign of systemic marginalization and oppression, she said.

Successful preventive approaches counter the vulnerability of potential trafficking victims, Reed said. They include providing an adequate standard of living and quality education, fostering human attachment and a sense of belonging in adolescents, and supporting decent work and full participation in society for adults.

Sister Sheila Smith, a Sister of the Sacred Heart, who is co-founder of Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking in Humans in Ottawa, described the mutual relationship between human rights and human dignity in the context of rural trafficking.

"We work tirelessly for prevention because we value each other," she said.



Gamache

Sign of Spring

For some,
the first sign of spring
is robins
bobbing on the lawn.
For me, a sure sign
is flash of blue
as I check out
my nest-box line.

By Donna Gamache

www.prairiemessenger.ca

Marriage is a service to another person: speaker

Continued from page 5

sial moral issues, but they don't often see marriage as closely tied with Jesus Christ, the church and the Holy Trinity," said Levering.

"Marriage is a service to another person. A good marriage is built on that. It's not built on what so-and-so has done for me lately. It's built on how can I serve, how can I strengthen the other person. I think the more you're opening yourself up to sacrifice for the other person, the more you're eager to lay down your life . . . simply in service."

Levering's advice to couples is to keep their faith as the centre of their marriage by attending mass, participating in the sacraments, and even saying the Our Father or a decade of the rosary together.

In tough times Levering said the couple that prays together stays together.

"It sounds trite, but these are realities. Before you go to sleep, as you're turning off the light, say some prayers together. It's essentially offering gratitude to God, asking God to bless you and to come into your marriage. It's not complicated."

Levering knows that from personal experience. He and his wife Joy have relied on faith and prayer

throughout their 25-year marriage, raising six children aged 21 to nine, and moving from Dayton, Ohio, where he taught theology and the family lived a comfortable life.

"I felt like I needed a change, but my wife was happy where we were — to me that was the toughest time. But my wife says the toughest time was the first year of marriage, where you're actually getting used to living with a different person," Levering said.

"I honestly don't think there's any easy way to get through the stressful times in a marriage. You have to depend on the fact that marriage is a life commitment. People who don't have that sense of marriage . . . oftentimes it feels like the very foundation of their marriage is shaken by almost anything, but certainly by a really stressful situation."

In those situations, Levering said, Catholic couples need to fall back on God and their faith.

"It's not necessarily clear how it's helping at the time, because stressful things are just stressful," he said. "I encourage people just to hang on. Give your stress to God. Pray for grace and simply hang on. You'll make it through and when you do make it through, you'll make it through stronger."

A message to our subscribers . . .

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

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

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

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



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Pope tells Sant'Egidio to treasure the excluded

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Community of Sant'Egidio's founding, Pope Francis



CNS/Paul Haring

GUAM ARCHBISHOP — A Vatican tribunal found Archbishop Anthony S. Apuron of Agana, Guam, guilty of sexual abuse of minors. Vatican judges imposed sanctions on the 72-year-old archbishop: the removal from office and a prohibition from residing in Guam.

Vatican official urges aid for Holy Land collection

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians in the Middle East, particularly those who have been forced from their homes by violence and persecution, need the support of the Catholic Church, a Vatican official said.

"Let us show them concretely our closeness, through our constant prayer and through our monetary aid," said Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches.

Such support is especially key now that the Ninevah Plain in Iraq has been liberated from Islamic State and "most Iraqi Christians and Syrians want to return to their

urged its members to continue to safeguard the poor, the elderly, the young and the excluded.

"Today, more than ever, continue audaciously along this path. Continue to be close to the children of the peripheries through your Schools of Peace which I have visited, continue to be close to the elderly who are often discarded but who, for you, are friends. Continue to open humanitarian corridors for refugees of war and hunger. The poor are your treasure!" he said March 11 during an evening prayer service with members of the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio.

The community, founded in Rome's Trastevere neighbour-

hood in 1968 and now active in 73 countries, combines prayer, Bible-reading and service to the poor, including through inter-religious dialogue and peacemaking.

Despite a steady downpour raining down on Rome in the afternoon, hundreds of people, holding umbrellas or wearing ponchos, packed the square of the Roman basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere and awaited the pope's arrival in the afternoon.

Pope Francis thanked them for welcoming him even though "heaven opened its doors and threw down water." He also praised the community's generosity in opening its doors to those in need.

"Here inside, there is generosi-

ty and an open heart. A heart open for everyone without distinguishing, 'I like this one, I don't like this one; this one is a friend, this one is an enemy.' No, everyone! A heart open for everyone."

Entering the basilica, the pope was welcomed by members of Sant'Egidio with thunderous applause and singing.

During the prayer service, the pope listened to the experiences of four people representing the elderly, migrants, young people and international peacekeepers before addressing those present.

Recalling the community's founding 50 years ago, the pope said their mission is a necessary talent in the church that can be

summarized in three words: prayer, poor and peace.

However, like the parable of the servant who hid his talent out of fear instead of investing it in the future, the pope said the world is consumed by fear and needs the community's gifts.

Fear, he said, "is an ancient disease" that is prevalent today "in front of the vast dimension of globalization."

"And these fears often concentrate on those who are foreigners, different from us, poor, as if he were an enemy," the pope said. "Thus, we defend ourselves from these people, believing we are preserving what we have or what we are."

Congolese church leaders welcome new mining taxes

KINSHASA, Congo (CNS) — Catholic leaders welcomed tax hikes on mining multinationals as part of Congo's new mining code in a show of agreement with the government of embattled President Joseph Kabila.

Henri Muhiya, executive secretary of the church's Ad Hoc Episcopal Commission for Natural Resources, said the new code will "ensure respect for the environment and fiscal transparency."

The new code, five years in development, was unveiled March 9 by Kabila. It raises taxes on

strategic minerals — including cobalt, a vital agreement to the burgeoning electric vehicle market — from two per cent to 10 per cent. Taxes on "classic minerals," including copper and gold, will rise to 3.5 per cent.

The measure, which also levies a 50 per cent tax on "windfall profits," or gains from sudden price rises, replaces a 2002 mining code, which was widely considered too favourable to foreign investors.

A government statement said it reflected a "compromise" between the country and mining companies and would generate "substantial receipts for economic and social development."

In a March 15 interview with France's Catholic *La Croix* daily, Muhiya said church representatives had proposed distinguishing "classic" and "strategic" minerals during negotiations and were glad the distinction had been adopted.

However, he cautioned the tax hikes had been opposed by the seven largest foreign companies operating in Congo, including the Anglo-French Randgold Resources; China Molybdenum; Glencore, an Anglo-Swiss conglomerate; and Ivanhoe, a Canadian firm. All announced March 15 they were quitting the Federation of Businesses of the Congo in protest.

"Randgold was the most aggressive and closed to any change," Muhiya told *La Croix*.

"In principle, however, these



CNS/Jonny Hogg, Reuters

CONGO MINING HIT WITH TAX INCREASE — Excavators and drillers work in an open pit in 2013 at a copper and cobalt mine in Likasi, Congo. Congolese church leaders welcomed tax hikes on mining multinationals, in a show of accord with the government of embattled President Joseph Kabila.

negotiations have been more transparent than before. It's a question of our country's interests, and the prospect of a coming presidential election should assist a positive evolution," he said.

Catholic organizations frequently deplored the exploitation

of resources in the central Africa nation, where multinational corporations have been accused of working with armed groups to obtain minerals used in mobile phones, laptops and other consumer products, and for allowing trade that violated human rights.

Resignation over gun control

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The top financial administrator of a Catholic university in Miami has resigned rather than step down from the board of the parent company of a manufacturer of weapons, including semi-automatic rifles such as the AR-15, which was recently used in the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

As chief financial officer at Miami's St. Thomas University, Anita Britt had been facing backlash for being on the board of American Outdoor Brands Corp., parent company of weapons maker Smith & Wesson, which in late 2016, changed its corporate name from Smith & Wesson Holding Corp., to American Outdoor Brands.

She was hired as CFO of the university in December but resigned March 13 after officials from the school told her to resign from the company's board if she

wanted to keep her position at the Catholic institution, according to various news reports. She had accepted the board position after being hired at St. Thomas.

The Miami Herald reported March 13 that Msgr. Franklyn M. Casale, president of the university, said he "came to the conclusion that St. Thomas was being associated with gun violence and that was not an image I thought was good for the university."

Community members circulated a petition asking her to resign the board position after the Feb. 14 mass shooting that left 17 dead.

Initially, university leaders said they saw no conflict, but the Miami Herald said public reaction, as well as faculty reaction, led Casale to ask Britt to resign her board position if she wanted to stay at St. Thomas.

For years, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has pushed for stricter gun control and urged lawmakers to discuss solutions to gun violence.

So shall God's will on earth be done,
New lamps be lit, new tasks begun,
And the whole church at last be one.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

George K.A. Bell, "Christ Is the King", CBW III

Easter blessings from the editors and staff
at the Prairie Messenger and St. Peter's Press