



## Living simply

Christopher Hrynkow reflected on Christian ecological ethics and the call to battle our “addiction to stuff” at a recent workshop at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.  
— page 6

## Catholic education

“This is a challenging moment for Catholic education,” said Msgr. James P. Shea in a March 10 public lecture at Campion College in Regina, “but it is also a promising time.”  
— page 6

## Fresh produce

The Regina Food Bank has begun growing fresh produce onsite to augment donated food items. “The interest in the project has been incredible,” says Food Bank CEO Steve Compton.  
— page 7



## A juxtaposition

The church had an unlikely presence at the convergence of interactive, film, and music industries at the recent South By Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas.  
— page 8

## Indigenous voices

Canadians are being challenged to come to terms with historical wrongs arising from the subjugation of Aboriginal peoples, as in the TRC’s report on the “cultural genocide” perpetrated by residential schools, writes Gerald Schmitz. Indigenous peoples are determined to tell their own stories through documentary films.  
— page 9

## Pen pals and prisoners

When Angela Saldanha signed up with Human Writes, an organization based in England that organizes letter-writing to American death-row inmates, she knew she had found a calling. And there are other organizations that give support to the incarcerated.  
— pages 10-11

# Religious and First Nations seek dialogue

By Philippe Vaillancourt

WENDAKE, Que. (CNS) — Inside the traditional Huron longhouse, faint glimmerings cast light on the attendees’ faces. Standing on a stool, Simon Perusse, dressed in his traditional costume, told of

the lifestyle and values of the Huron-Wendat Nation.

The wooden structure once housed several families. On the ground, small grids with plastic fish stood above hearths and recalled the smoking that was practised there. Relationship with

nature, community life, family life: The group composed mainly of nuns and religious listened respectfully to the guide.

After all, they came to meet native peoples.

About 50 of them enlisted for this unprecedented activity organ-

ized by the Canadian Religious Conference March 10. The conference hopes to foster closer ties between Catholic religious communities and First Nations peoples. It was the first time a Canadian Religious Conference activity took place on a reserve, at the traditional Huron ONHOUA CHETEK8E site in Wendake, outside Quebec City.

Nicole O’Bomsawin, an anthropologist and member of the Abenaki tribe, was pleased with the initiative.

“Ten years ago, we were not there. But now this is another step. It pleases me to see this new commitment,” she said.

O’Bomsawin, 60, involved in dialogue initiatives between First Nations and Catholics for many years, is particularly interested in forging links between traditional native spirituality and Catholicism. This is what she did at the beginning of the traditional meal that was offered to the attendees, singing a prayer song as a blessing.

Rev. Richard Bonetto, Presbyterian pastor and founder of the Wampum Centre, spoke of his experience of dialogue in the centre he founded in 1994.

“There’s hope,” he says during the meal. “We are increasingly



CNS/Philippe Vaillancourt, Presence

**FOSTERING CLOSER TIES — Huron-Wendat guide Simon Perusse explains how his nation prepared food during a March 10 meeting with members of the Canadian Religious Conference in Wendake, Que.**

— CRC, page 11

# Highlights of Pope Francis’ four years of service

By Beth Griffin

NEW YORK (CNS) — Evangelization, mercy, encounter and accompaniment are the hallmarks of the first four years of Pope Francis’ papacy, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, said March 15.

“First and foremost, Pope Francis is committed to the work of evangelization. The main role of the church is to evangelize — to receive the gospel and offer it to the world,” he said in a conversation in New York with Jesuit Father Matthew F. Malone, president and editor-in-chief of America Media.

“The *raison d’être* of the church is evangelization. It’s not a business, it’s not an organization or an association for the defence of Jesus, but a group called to announce God’s presence to humanity,” Pierre said.

At a meeting of cardinals before the conclave that elected him pope, then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio reflected on the challenges Pope Benedict’s successor should address. Pierre said Pope Francis’ handwritten notes from his talk were a blueprint for his papacy.

In them, Pope Francis underscored the importance of evangelizing with apostolic zeal and going

to the peripheries of sin, pain, injustice and misery to reach people. He warned that when the church does not come out of herself to evangelize, she becomes self-referential and sick. He wrote, “The evils that, over time, happen in ecclesiastical institutions have their root in self-reference and a kind of theological narcissism.”

Bergoglio said the next pope, “must be a man who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the church go out to the existential peripheries, that helps her be the fruitful mother, who gains life from the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.”

“The church is a continuation of Christ in the world,” Pierre said. And the pope continues to insist it is time not to rest, but to go to the many peripheries to be God’s presence to the people who suffer, he said.

He expanded on the pope’s familiar description of the church as a field hospital. “It’s very simple. It’s a tent where you attend people. Be there. Don’t waste time. That’s where you meet wounded people.”

Malone said Jesus, the source of joy in the Gospels, is the medication in the field hospital. Pope Francis pictures himself as a patient in the hospital, not the doctor, he said.

People have rediscovered the

sacrament of penance during this papacy because Pope Francis identifies himself as a sinner and is seen going to confession, Pierre said. “Many had abandoned the sacrament of reconciliation, but have rediscovered the necessity of receiving the forgiveness of God and giving it to others,” he said.

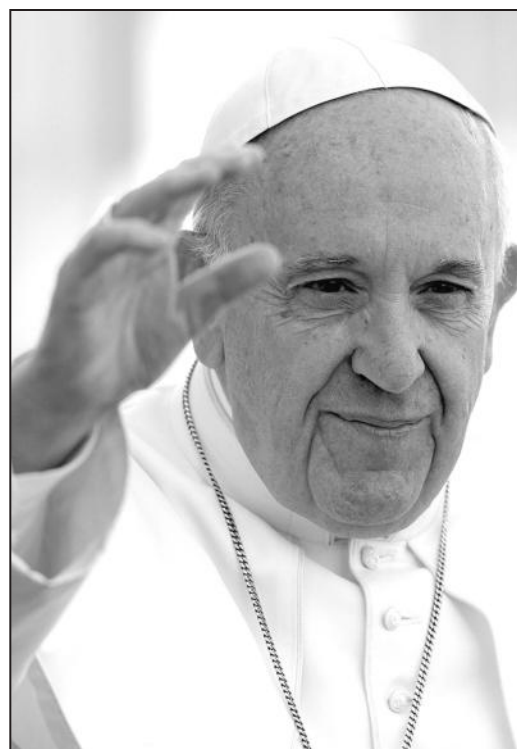
When the pope speaks of mercy, it is not only a human virtue, but a gift from God, and people are the first target of God’s mercy, Pierre said. “Our church is a merciful church. We present truth in a respectful way. Mercy means dialogue and walking along the path of the other,” he said.

“I’m impressed to see the capacity Pope Francis has to meet people,” Pierre said. “Politicians want to see the pope, not just for the photo, but for the encounter. I have seen politicians transformed.”

He recounted the pope’s visit to Sweden to mark the

500th anniversary of Lutheranism. “We’ve had the idea that Luther is the enemy,” the nuncio said. But Pope Francis had an encounter with Lutheran leaders there and

— DIALOGUE, page 4



CNS/Paul Haring

**POPE’S ANNIVERSARY — Pope Francis waves as he arrives to lead his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican March 15. He celebrated the fourth year of his election as pope on March 13.**



# Lent provides opportunity to focus on homeless

By Chaz Muth

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Almsgiving is a lenten tradition and Washington resident Ron Van Bellen says his volunteer work feeding the homeless honours his Catholic faith as he prepares for Easter.



CNS/Chaz Muth

**HOMELESS FED —** Volunteers with Catholic Charities' St. Maria's meals program in Washington serve dinner March 8 to the homeless. They personally greeted each person who went through the food line before they were served.

The real estate agent and parishioner at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Georgetown was one of several volunteers dishing up dinner for homeless men and women lined up March 8 for the weekly St. Maria's meals program

sponsored by Catholic Charities each Wednesday evening.

Van Bellen took time to greet each man and woman who went through the food line before they made their way along the downtown Washington sidewalk to eat their dinner.

"Every time I volunteer I reflect on how my day went and how it related to my relationship with God," he told Catholic News Service. "It does relate to Lent. We have to sacrifice and serve our brothers and sisters."

Van Bellen's example of helping the homeless during Lent is a Catholic value that Washington's Catholic Charities president and CEO, Msgr. John Enzler, would like to see spread across the U.S.

It's clear in the Scriptures that fasting and penance goes beyond not eating meat on Fridays and giving something up during Lent, Enzler told CNS. "It's about making someone else's life better with your service and your commitment."

The homeless are among the world's most vulnerable people and providing service to them during Lent is an ideal way for Catholics to live out their faith in a way that will make a real difference, he said.

Concerted efforts by religious and governmental organizations to address the U.S. homeless situation appear to be making a difference.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

reported a three per cent drop in the national homeless rate from 2015 to 2016 and a 12 per cent drop in the last five years.

HUD reported the 2016 national homeless population to be nearly 550,000.

However, the homeless rate rose from 2015 to 2016 in the District of Columbia and a few states, including Alabama, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Oklahoma and Washington.

With more than a half million people still considered homeless, it's an issue that all U.S. cities confront and there are varying solutions being employed to raise money necessary to address it in a consequential way, Enzler said.

"There doesn't seem to be a secret sauce, if you will, about how to completely eradicate homelessness," Enzler said. "But, it seems to me that we just don't have enough case workers and social workers."

He believes more people need to serve as navigators, mentors or coaches for individual homeless men and women.

"We don't have enough people who can really step in and say,

'I'm going to help this one individual,' " Enzler said, "and say 'it's my job to help just that one person get a job and get a place to stay and stay with them. Mentor them through that process.' "

He has been encouraging volunteers in his Catholic Charities' programs to make the homeless their focal point during Lent.

Pope Francis has long urged governments and Christians to recognize the dignity of the homeless and help ease their suffering.

Homelessness became more complicated in the nation's capital this lenten season, since the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library shut down March 4 for a three-year, multimillion-dollar renovation.

Many D.C. homeless men and women used that library branch as a day resource centre, a place to get out of the elements during the daytime hours, to use the computer lab to look for work and to use the public restrooms, Enzler said.

That closure inspired him to explore a partnership between the District of Columbia and other charitable groups to fund an official day resource centre for the

homeless, complete with a meal program, laundry and shower facilities, as well as job counsellors, case managers and social workers.

It's an idea that is still percolating with no commitments yet realized, Enzler said.

It's also an idea that Able Putu, a 37-year-old homeless Washingtonian who uses a wheelchair, would like to see come to fruition.

Putu said the library closure left him without a place to rest, use the lavatory and made him more vulnerable to being robbed during the daytime hours.

"I know a lot of people think the homeless are scum and aren't worthy of anyone's help, and maybe that's true about some of them," Putu said, "but it's not true about most of us."

Van Bellen said he had been one of those people with a negative opinion of the homeless before he started his volunteer work.

"I found out that those were misperceptions," he said. "What I've discovered is the homeless people I've encountered here are sweet and definitely misunderstood. I wouldn't have figured that out if I hadn't exposed myself to them."

## Shady business deals a sin, pope says

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Employers who make business deals that threaten people's livelihood commit a sin that robs men, women and their families of their dignity, Pope Francis said.

"Whoever — because of economic manoeuvring and business dealings that are not all clear — closes factories and businesses and takes work away from men and women commits a grave sin," the pope said March 15 before concluding his weekly general audience.

The pope was speaking to a group of employees from Italy's Sky television; several hundred employees risk losing their jobs after the company announced plans to move their Rome head-

quarters to Milan.

According to Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, Sky Italia claimed the move was due to rising costs and an outdated digital infrastructure in Rome. Local workers' unions have criticized the company's decision that will force 300 workers to transfer from the capital while an estimated 200 employees will be left without a job.

Before the audience began, the pope circled St. Peter's Square in the popemobile, stopping along the way to kiss babies and wave to the thousands of pilgrims present.

Stepping out of his popemobile, the pope also greeted several Chinese pilgrims from the *Tanjin Meng Fu Lu Chang* group.

One pilgrim holding a child couldn't contain his emotions, kneeling and prostrating while the

pope stooped down to help him up. The child he carried also bowed respectfully.

Another Chinese pilgrim approached the pope on her knees while the pope, visibly moved, tried to raise her up. He also greeted the other pilgrims, who were waving Chinese flags and holding a statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which he blessed.

In his main audience talk, part of a series on Christian hope, Pope Francis reflected on St. Paul's call in his Letter to the Romans for Christians to be "joyful in hope" and sincere in their love.

A Christian's "highest vocation" is the call to love and charity. However, the pope said, St. Paul also warns of "the risk that our charity can become hypocritical."

"Hypocrisy can infiltrate anywhere, even in our way of loving," he said, especially when acts of love or charity are done "to put ourselves on display or so that we feel fulfilled."

Christians, he added, must ask themselves if their love is sincere and "not that of a soap opera."

"There is a false, misleading idea behind all this: namely that if we love, it is because we are good, as if charity was a creation of man, a product of our heart," the pope said.

Charity and love, he continued, are a grace that is meant to shine forth what "the Lord gives us and what we freely receive."

St. Paul's warning, the pope explained, is "not so much a reproach but rather an encouragement to revive hope in us."

"We need the Lord to continually renew this gift in our hearts through the experience of his mercy," Pope Francis said. "In this way, we will be able to appreciate the little, simple and ordinary things again, and we will be able to love others as God loves them."

## Catholic bishops ask Trump to support humanitarian aid

By Dennis Sadowski

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Five Catholic prelates were among 106 faith leaders who shared their support for U.S. spending on international humanitarian aid in a letter to congressional leaders.

Dated March 16, the letter cited the importance of maintaining support for the humanitarian and development programs through the Department of State "that enable countless people to pull themselves out of poverty and live life with dignity."

The letter was sent hours after the White House released a simplified version of its fiscal year 2018 budget that proposed deep cuts in federal spending on discretionary programs in the departments of State, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development as well as in the Environmental Protection Agency.

Called the "skinny budget," the

president's proposal includes a \$54-billion increase in discretionary spending for the military with corresponding cuts in discretionary spending on non-military programs.

The budget proposes a 28 per cent cut in the programs addressed in the religious leaders' letter.

Smaller increases were included for homeland security — particularly \$2.6 billion for building the border wall between the U.S. and Mexico and implementing border security technology — and \$1.4 billion for school choice alternatives.

Signers of the letter included Maronite Bishop Gregory J. Mansour of Brooklyn, New York, who is chair of the board of Catholic Relief Services, and Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, who offered a prayer during Trump's inaugural ceremony.

The letter cites the 25th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, which instructs the faithful to serve poor and marginalized people as if they

were serving God.

"As people of faith, we cannot turn our back on those in desperate need," the letter said. "We are grateful for America's global development and diplomacy programs that have been instrumental in saving lives, safeguarding religious liberties and keeping America safe and secure."

The message reminded Trump that humanitarian and development assistance comprises one per cent of the federal budget and that it has helped reduce extreme poverty worldwide by half, stopped the spread of infectious disease, including AIDS and Ebola, and has protected the religious freedom of millions of people around the world.

CRS officials also opposed the proposed cuts in humanitarian and development assistance.

Bill O'Keefe, vice-president for government relations and advocacy for the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, said such deep cuts in aid



# National survey on vocations first of its kind

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors (NAVFD) is launching a national survey that has never been done before in Canada.

Starting March 17, NAVFD is sending out questionnaires to all major superiors and provincial superiors of religious congregations operating in Canada. Information gathered from this survey will lay the foundations of a research study on the state of religious vocations in the Canadian Church.

“We hope to have a comprehensive look at where are people coming to religious life today from across Canada,” said NAVFD executive director Sister Nancy Sullivan.

“Not just where they’re coming from, but who they are, what attracted them, how did they find out about their congregation. You know, just all kinds because there has never been anything like this that’s been Canada-wide with this level of research.”

Sullivan and NAVFD president Sister Mary Rowell, both from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Toronto, have been talking about a research study like this for almost three years.

Vocations in religious life have



Photo courtesy of NAVFD

**VOCATIONS SURVEY — CCCB President Bishop Douglas Crosby, NAVFD president Sister Mary Rowell and executive director Sister Nancy Sullivan discuss how the survey’s results will enhance NAVFD’s 2018 conference in Hamilton, Ont.**

been a lightning rod for discussion within the church worldwide. In an interview published March 8, Pope Francis said the lack of priests is a “serious problem” that the church must solve.

In Canada, the number of vocations to religious life (priests, brothers and sisters) has been on a steady decline. The total has dropped from 22,471 in 2004 to 13,890 in 2015, according to the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), which monitors about 200

congregations.

The idea for a Canadian study came from a similar study conducted in the United States by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) in August 2009.

“We work very closely with (NRVC),” said Rowell. “(The study) really has enhanced their abilities to reach right across the United States and to assist their members in vocation ministry. In a

multitude of ways, it’s enabled them to develop materials, training programs, education (and) conferences to address these very things.”

The 2009 study, titled “Recent Vocations to Religious Life,” found that although religious are an aging population (75 per cent of men and 91 per cent of women are 60 and over), there are a few congregations experiencing significant growth.

The study surveyed new religious members and found that nine in 10 were raised Catholic and 73 per cent attended a Catholic school for part of their education.

Men were more likely than women to report they first encountered their religious institute in a school or another institution where the members served, while women were more likely than men to learn about their institution through a friend or adviser.

With the recommendation of

its American counterpart, NAVFD is working in partnership with CARA to run a similar survey on Canadian religious congregations.

Rowell anticipates that many of the results will likely reflect the results that their American counterparts have been seeing over the years. Still, it is important to create a database that also speaks to the unique diversity found in Canadian religious institutions.

“From what I hear informally of new members here in Canada, I would say that we will have a lot of similarities with the United States,” said Rowell. “But it’s important that we’re able to base it on our own research so that our strategic plan is very much geared to Canada.”

NAVFD’s national conference, which happens every two years, is a unique opportunity for directors to share knowledge and best practices with each other.

Rowell said that NAVFD and CRC have collected demographics and other numerical information from its members for many years.

However, not all religious congregations are members of NAVFD and CRC. Rowell said the information is limited and it doesn’t give vocation directors and formation directors “a full picture.”

“I think (the study) is going to be very helpful, not only for the vocation directors, but for religious communities generally,” said Hamilton Bishop Douglas Crosby, general secretary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “I hope it will be a beneficial study for the church in Canada.”

The research study is made possible through a \$90,000 research grant from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, a family foundation committed to supporting projects for Catholic sisters, Catholic education, homelessness and many other initiatives.

## Euthanasia reveals ‘massive shift’ in society

By Josh Tng  
The B.C. Catholic

NORTH VANCOUVER (CCN) — Legalized euthanasia is just one of many changes ahead as society contends with increased liberalism

have to look at, answer, deal with, and in some cases, delay these changes. In all cases, we have to try to understand not to deal out more harm than good in response to these things.”

Legalized assisted suicide offers a quick but permanent solution to individuals who are suicidal or heavily depressed, he said. “What the Canadian law has done is make it legal for a doctor or nurse practitioner to be kind of a walking, talking, high-risk area for depressed people to come near. When depressed people come into contact with

icalized suicides and homicides with the now-familiar euphemisms about ‘medical aid in dying,’ the uninvolved public will be reassured that nothing has gone wrong.”

Johnston stressed the euthanasia debate “didn’t drop out of the sky,” but rather had “been cooking for a century” due to modern liberalism and radical autonomy.

Society has followed a specific pattern, said Johnston. “A victim group will be defined. Anyone who raises a question about how the victim group is being helped will be defined as an oppressor, as someone who is backwards and needs to be shut down, whose rights of free speech can easily be suppressed because, after all, they’re evil!”

He cited examples of businesses wiped out for not co-operating with a same-sex wedding, to the popularity of transgenderism, despite “the number of people who are truly transgendered being rather tiny.”

“Unless there is some kind of pushback caused by some kind of general unhappiness in society, this model will continue to march through society,” Johnston said. “This isn’t just about doctors killing people. There’s a lot more going on.”

North Shore Pro-Life president Ross Labrie commended Johnston’s vigilance in illustrating assisted suicide abuses in Europe and other parts of the world. “He has been especially alert in showing how assisted suicide has historically been permitted even when patients are not terminally ill, and indeed when they are afflicted with depression and other forms of mental illness, which the providers of assisted suicide have often not properly treated.”



B.C. Catholic/Josh Tng

Willard Johnston

and an emphasis on radical autonomy, says Dr. Willard Johnston.

“We are dealing with a massive shift in our civilization and the euthanasia issue is simply a symptom of the shift,” said Johnston, speaking to the North Shore Pro-Life Society meeting at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary.

Johnston, a general practitioner in Vancouver who is known for his pro-life work, gave a talk, “Why Assisted Suicide is not a good idea,” March 8.

Euthanasia is “just one out of scores of changes coming to our society within the next generation,” he said. “We’re going to

one of these euthanasia providers, who think of themselves as angels of mercy, they are suddenly at high risk of being killed.”

Another issue Johnston is concerned about is “medically facilitated elder abuse by greedy relatives” who can potentially give consent for the ailing senior.

He warns that it will be five years before the new law will be assessed, ample time for neglect from the medical profession to take hold. “The mandatory report is going to be full of bland and self-justifying statistics presented by the very doctors who have done the killing. By sanitizing these med-

## Order to mark 400 years

By Josh Tng  
The B.C. Catholic

VANCOUVER (CCN) — Ukrainian Catholics in Vancouver are about to celebrate a historic occasion — the 400th anniversary of one of the oldest Ukrainian Catholic monastic orders.

“This anniversary is a special time for all members of the Order of St. Basil the Great of St. Josaphat. (It’s) the 400th anniversary of the founding of our order in Ukraine,” said Rev. Joseph Pidskalny, OSBM, pastor at St. Mary’s Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Vancouver.

It was in 1617 when the future saint, Bishop Josaphat Kuncevic, together with Metropolitan Joseph Veliamin Rutsky, made substantial reforms to the monastic life of that time, said Pidskalny.

Together, the two clerics organized five independent monasteries, combining them into a single monastic order under one general superior. The Order of St. Basil the Great of St. Josaphat was formed, though the name is commonly shortened to read the Basilian Fathers.

“We are always reminded to be ever thankful for the spiritual treasures that have been bestowed upon each of us as members of the Order

of St. Basil the Great,” wrote Rev. Genesio Viomar, OSBM, the order’s present general superior, via email to The B.C. Catholic.

“This celebration is to be a spiritual renewal for each member, to go forward in faith and trust in the Lord as did the members of those first monasteries that joined to form one order.”

The Basilians’ 400th celebration coincides with two other anniversaries in the Ukrainian Catholic Church: the 380th anniversary of the passing of Metropolitan Rutsky, and the 150th anniversary of the canonization of St. Josaphat.

“This anniversary is for us a time of reflection on what St. Josaphat and Metropolitan Rutsky were able to accomplish, bringing unity to our order,” said Pidskalny. “It is to be a time of personal introspection . . . each of us being once again grateful for our monastic vocation.”

Pidskalny also took the moment to thank God for calling him to Vancouver “to serve him first and foremost as a member of the order.

“Our order has had a long and beautiful history of working together with the parishioners of St. Mary’s,” he said. “We look forward to many more years of working together.”



# Motherhood, not womanhood, barrier to employment

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Motherhood, not simply being a woman, is the greatest barrier to advance-



CCN/D. Gyapong

**OBSTACLES — Veronique Bergeron, who has two law degrees and is a mother of nine, said the biggest obstacle in the workplace was not being female, it was motherhood.**

ment in the workplace, a mother of nine with two law degrees told a panel sponsored by Cardus here March 8.

"I have not faced barriers because I am a woman, but because I am a mother, yes," Veronique Bergeron told a gathering of about 100 on International Women's Day that coincided with the release of a Cardus study on women called "Celebrating Women."

Bergeron, who got pregnant during her first year of law school, said she faced interviewers from law firms who asked her, "Are you going to get pregnant?"

Because she has children, it

was assumed she could not make it to the "7 a.m. issues meeting."

While she said it probably would have been difficult to make that meeting, "Can I be the judge of that?" she asked.

Bergeron was one of four women on the panel moderated by Tasha Kheiriddin, a writer, broadcaster and political analyst based in Toronto.

"Having children is the biggest divide," Kheiriddin said.

"Being a woman has always helped me," said Helen Reimer, who started out in sales for Proctor and Gamble, then worked for Christians Against Poverty (CAP) in the U.K., and helped launch CAP in Canada in 2013. Recently married at age 35, Reimer is hoping to have children.

The panel addressed some of the questions raised in Celebrating Women, based on a survey by the Angus Reid Forum for Cardus.

To the question: "Are women held back today because they are women?" 57 per cent of women said "Yes," while only 31 per cent of men say "Yes." For Canadians overall, 44 per cent said "Yes," the survey showed.

Panelist Deani Neven Van Pelt, a former high school math teacher, mother of three, home-schooler who has a doctorate and now works for a think-tank, said perhaps the barriers women experience are more invisible and that's why there is a disconnect between the perception of men and women.

As a math teacher, she often found herself the only female in a faculty of men. Now, at an economic think-tank, she said, "Here I am again, just Deani and the boys. I find it pretty shocking I'm still finding that."

"Am I being patronized? Are there barriers?" she asked. "My

experience is it hasn't been a barrier at all."

The survey also asked, "Is motherhood/are mothers valued highly enough in Canada today?"

Only 34 per cent of women said "Yes." Again there was a disconnect with the answer from men. Forty-seven per cent of men said, "Yes." For Canadians overall, 40 per cent said "Yes."

"We value the idea of motherhood but when the rubber hits the road, we don't," said Bergeron, who holds a degree in civil law from the University of Ottawa and a master's degree in law from McGill University. She had four children by the time she finished law school.

"Oh, you have nine children! That's amazing," she said. "But we won't give you a job."

Children can be "nice pictures



CCN/D. Gyapong

**OPTIONS — Helen Reimer said that while she wants children, she does not want to go to the opposite extreme and say the only fulfilment for a woman is in marriage and family.**

ductive health rights by protecting and promoting the sexual and reproductive health of women and adolescent girls," he said.

Bibeau told journalists March 8 she was unable to tell how much money would be spent on abortion of the \$650 million. Abortion is illegal in most countries in Africa.

Walley said his organization has not received government funding even through the Harper Maternal natal and child health initiative. "We survived," he said. "We intend to make it a centre of excellence. What we are offering is what women want and what African mothers want."

Obianuju Ekeocha founder and director of Culture of Life Africa has decried "the cultural imperialism" and "dictatorship of the wealthy donor" in videos shared on social media. "What we are looking for and asking for is your support for the safe delivery of African babies," she has said.

Walley, who appeared last year with Ekeocha at an event at the United Nations co-sponsored by the Holy See, said she testified that in her mother tongue there is no word for abortion and it is hard for most African women to even conceive of killing an unborn child.

on your desk, but not as something we have to accommodate," Bergeron said.

Van Pelt said she "stopped the juggling and decided to stay home" and immerse herself in motherhood while her three children were small. She said she was grateful for the flexibility that allowed them to live on her husband's limited income. When they lost their youngest son at the age of 15 in an accident, she was all the more grateful she was able to spend that time with him while he was growing up. She reminded panelists motherhood is "only a short phase."

Reimer, however warned against going from the extreme of finding fulfilment in one's career and outward success to the "opposite extreme that only family and marriage are the way to be fulfilled."

Shannon Joseph, a civil engineer, municipal sustainability expert, and recreational opera singer, said she felt she "experienced an educational system trying to right the wrongs of the past."

"There might be a disconnect on how we define success," she said. "You are not the only definer of success."

Oriented toward high achievement since childhood, Joseph said a health scare convinced her to start exploring "Who is Shannon" and what she is really interested in and incorporating those ideas into her model of success so it is more about what fulfils her than about breaking the glass ceiling.

For Bergeron, who works as a technical writer, success for her family has involved making sure they have choices. For her family, that has meant moving to take advantage of new opportunities; and flexibility. "We are not wealthy, but consider ourselves successful because we have a lot of choices," Bergeron said.

"I see people married to suc-

cess markers they have set for themselves have miserable lives," she said.

The Cardus survey asked



CCN/D. Gyapong

**FULFILMENT — Shannon Joseph said a health scare prompted her to stop trying to equate success with breaking the glass ceiling, and learn more about herself, and where she finds fulfilment.**

whether any one organization speaks on behalf of Canadian women. Sixty per cent of Canadians said "No." That figure rose to 75 per cent among university-educated women.

The survey asked if equal representation in Parliament and in the federal cabinet is important to you. Only 45 per cent of women said it didn't matter; while 69 per cent of men and 57 per cent of Canadians in general said it didn't matter. None of the March 8 panelists said it mattered to her.

The survey also asked, "Can you be a feminist and pro-life?" Fifty-seven per cent of women say "Yes," while 52 per cent of Canadians overall do. Forty-seven per cent of men say "Yes," while 30 per cent answer they are "unsure."

## Investment means less for other projects

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Liberal government's \$650-million investment to provide sexual health initiatives including abortion and other services in the developing world has been met not only with outrage but also with a lament on how the money could be better spent.

Canada needs to commit to providing women overseas with the same standard of pre-natal, birth and post-natal care women get here, said Dr. Robert Walley, founder and executive director of MaterCare International, a worldwide organization of Catholic obstetricians and gynecologists that helps women safely deliver children in the developing world.

Walley said world leaders like Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and wealthy philanthropists like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation "don't realize that mothers are women, too."

"So, they are discriminating against an enormous number of women who are dying in pregnancy," he said. Instead of addressing needs for clean water, and basic obstetrical care, they say, "If you don't want to die in pregnancy, the best thing to do is kill your baby."

MaterCare International is working in northern Kenya, which has the highest maternal mortality rate in all of Kenya and possibly in all of East Africa, he said. On top of that, Kenya and neighbouring countries like Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan are experiencing a massive drought.

According to a spokesperson for International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau, the \$650-million commitment over three years is not new money, but "unallocated funds in Global Affairs Canada's existing aid budget."

"Addressing the gaps in sexual and reproductive health and rights is a clearly articulated priority for the Government of Canada," the spokesperson said.

The commitment is in addition to the \$3.5 billion over five years committed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2014 when he renewed his 2010 Maternal and Child Health Initiative.

"Canada committed to investing \$3.5 billion between 2015 and 2020, to improve maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH), and this commitment will be respected," Bibeau's spokesperson said. "The recently announced funds will address gaps in repro-

## Dialogue is an important ingredient of public life: pope

Continued from page 1

said Luther is part of the history of the Catholic Church. The pope speaks with his actions, Pierre said.

The nuncio said Pope Francis approaches dialogue as an important ingredient of public life. People who dialogue successfully must be rooted in their own convictions and faith. In this way, dialogue is "two rooted persons looking for the truth," he said.

The pope is hard on bishops and priests because he wants them to be masters of discernment and help people develop the capacity to choose between good and bad, Pierre said. It is not enough to identify right from wrong, he said. If the understanding is not applied to personal actions, life will be a dichotomy.

Pierre said Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) is based on the closing document of the 2007 meeting of the Latin American bishops' council in Aparecida, Brazil. Bergoglio led

the editing committee for the document. A document intended for the Latin American bishops "became the patrimony of the whole church," Pierre said.

He said Pope Francis' experience living in a "peripheral" country helped him elaborate a different kind of option for the poor than the one envisioned three decades earlier at the Medellin, Colombia, meeting of the Latin American bishops. "The reality is the people had been evangelized so deeply that the culture was filled with the Gospel," he said.

Because the church does not play the same role in people's lives it once did, the church today is challenged to help people encounter Christ and rediscover the presence of God in their own lives. It must be missionary and not self-referential, the nuncio said.

In his introductory remarks, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, apostolic nuncio to the United Nations, said Pierre is an "intrepid adventurer who 'enfleshes Pope Francis' desire to go to the peripheries."



# Lawyers debate conscience rights in Ottawa

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Legal experts squared off on physicians' conscience rights March 16 in a debate hosted by the University of Ottawa's law school.

Albertos Polizogopoulos, who is representing five Ontario doctors challenging the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's policies requiring effective referral on procedures such as abortion and euthanasia, argued for conscience rights, saying they are protected under Section 2(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Referrals should not be required and the law supports his stance, he said.

The Charter protects the conscience rights of the physicians but there is no Charter right to receive a particular drug or procedure from a particular doctor, Polizogopoulos said.

The Carter decision did not "create a right" to euthanasia or assisted suicide, it "merely struck down" the law against assisted suicide in the Criminal Code, he said.

"The Charter is binding on the College and it protects physicians," he said.

Refusal to do certain procedures or prescribe certain drugs on

conscientious grounds is not a form of discrimination in the same way a female Muslim doctor's refusing to treat male patients or a physician's refusing to treat gay patients would be, he said.

Queen's University Senior Contracts Negotiator Ricardo Smalling argued physicians' conscience rights must be balanced with the rights of patients who are "seeking care" in their "weakest" moments.

Highlighting the "subjective nature of conscience," Smalling said eliminating conscientious objection "is the only way to ensure there is a predictable framework that guarantees a patient's health care."

Physicians have a right to their religious beliefs but they should know that if abortion or "medical aid in dying" is legal, they "may be required by the state to do these services," he said.

"If you join and then decide, 'I will not do it,' that is unreasonable and should not be accommodated," Smalling said. He acknowledged there might be an argument to grandfather in those who were licensed before euthanasia and assisted suicide were made legal.

Physicians "willingly join the profession" and "know the physicians' college can change its code,"



CCN/D. Gyapong

**DEBATE — Constitutional lawyer Albertos Polizogopoulos (left) defended physicians' conscience rights in a debate at University of Ottawa's law school March 16. Queen's University senior contract negotiator Ricardo Smalling thinks physicians should not be allowed to exercise conscience rights while providing health care services.**

but those changes "do not affect the ability to hold beliefs," he said.

Physicians refusing to provide care on conscience grounds means "patients are not getting the care they are also entitled to under (the Charter's) Section 2(a) rights" and "now have the views of the physician imposed on them."

In any job environment, an employee doesn't "tell the boss, 'Sorry, I'm not doing this today,'" Smalling said.

Both legal experts referred to the Oakes Test as a way of examining whether a limit to a Charter right is "reasonably and demonstrably justified."

The Oakes Test, from a 1986 Supreme Court Case R vs. Oakes, says the limit must be "fair and not arbitrary" and "rationally connected to that objective"; limit the impairment as much as possible; and be proportional to the objective.

Polizogopoulos said the meas-

ures by the College to limit physicians' conscience rights fail the Oakes Test because there is "no pressing and substantial reason" for the policy.

"(Smalling) cannot point you to one case prior to this policy where somebody's access to a particular procedure was impeded," he said.

Smalling, however, argued the College must consider the rights of all the parties that will be affected.

The rights of the physicians are minimally impaired, because he or she "has the right to all their beliefs; they can go to church and manifest their beliefs," he said. All that's being asked is "for those hours when you are at work, you don't manifest them. To me, that's minimum impairment."

It's "not saying to the physician, 'you don't have the right to hold those views — I'm not forcing you — I'm going to give you a choice do it, or change your specialty or leave the profession.'"

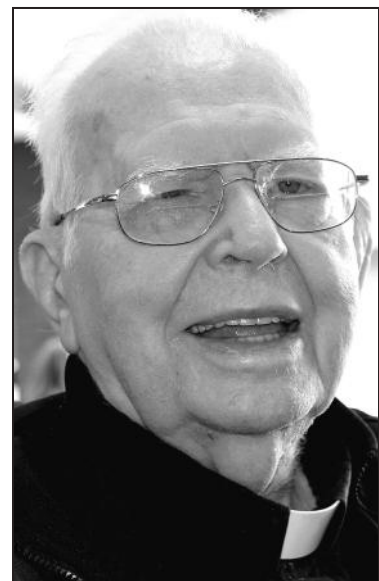
The Charter exists to protect people from coercion, from being compelled to take a course of action, Polizogopoulos said, noting he does not do family law, criminal law or real estate. He said he has no moral objections to them, but should he be forced to practise real estate law?

## Foy, longest-serving priest in Toronto, dies at 101

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The oldest and longest-serving priest in the history of the Archdiocese of Toronto has died. In his 78th year of priesthood, 101-year-old Msgr. Vincent Foy was proud of his longevity, his loyalty and his defence of Catholic teaching.

In a Catholic Register article last December, Foy, who died March 13, wrote about being "perched on the precipice of eternity" as he recounted his long career.



Catholic Register

**Msgr. Vincent Foy**

In addition to being the longest ordained and the oldest diocesan priest in the history of the Archdiocese of Toronto, he found that only one other diocesan priest in Canadian history had served longer, a Rev. Roger Duval of Quebec City who served 78.5 years.

Worldwide, his research found only four priests, two of whom were still living, who spent more than 78

years in diocesan priestly ministry.

"Msgr. Foy inspired us by his fidelity and personal witness, serving the Lord and all those he encountered most generously," said Toronto Cardinal Thomas Collins. "As a prayerful shepherd, champion of life issues and witness of loving service to others, may his legacy live on for years to come."

Foy served as a eucharistic minister at two papal funerals, those of Pope Paul VI in 1978 and Pope John Paul I later that same year. He also served at the first mass of Pope John Paul II.

When Foy was ordained by Cardinal James McGuigan June 3, 1939, he fulfilled a promise he had made as a seven-year-old boy. In 1922 his mother was close to death and young Foy promised God that if she survived he would do all he could to become a priest. She lived.

Doing all he could became Foy's lifelong touchstone.

After graduating from St. Augustine's Seminary in 1939, he was sent to study canon law at Laval University. Armed with a doctorate in canon law, he was immediately useful to the archdiocese as vice-chancellor and secretary to the Toronto Archdiocesan Matrimonial Tribunal. When the tribunal became the Toronto Regional Marriage Tribunal he became defender of the bond and judge.

In 1957, at the age of 42, Pope Pius XII named Foy a Prelate of Honour, earning him the title of monsignor.

When Cardinal Paul-Emile Leger convoked the first meeting of the Canadian Canon Law Society in 1965, Foy was among the founders.

He retired in 1979, but in 38 years of retirement Foy was never idle. His dedication to the pro-life movement was constant.

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Bishop-elect Daniel J. Miehm, who will be installed as the new Bishop of Peterborough on April 19, may be a canon lawyer by training, but his first love is pastoral service.

"If I'm putting together my resumé, I start with the 15 years I was a pastor," said Miehm, who has served as Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton since 2013. "That I think was most formative for me in the way I will be a bishop."

"As a pastor, you have the care of souls," he said. "As a bishop you have the care of souls. That's the most relevant job experience, I think."

As a pastor, Miehm said he will work out his priorities "in dialogue with the priests, religious and lay people of the diocese."

But first he will build relationships with his priests.

"A bishop has to be a brother and father to his priests," he said. "I think that's so very important. They are my closest collaborators."

"I think it's important I get to know them and that they get to know me and trust me as a brother and father and we join together pastorally and collegially in pastoring the diocese," he said.

He also intends to visit the 40 parishes plus missions to get to meet the people of the diocese.

Born in Kitchener, Ont., in 1960 and ordained to the priesthood in May 1989 for the Hamilton diocese, Miehm studied at St. Jerome's College of the University of Waterloo, St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto, and at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. He studied canon law at the request of his bishop.

"Is it the first thing I would have chosen to study? Maybe not," he said. "But we don't write

our own tickets in the church."

He obtained a licentiate in canon law in 1996 from the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

He considers his two years in Rome as a "tremendous opportunity," and subsequently served "happily and probably capably" doing marriage tribunal work as a Judge and Defender of the Bond for the Hamilton diocese's Office of the Toronto Regional Tribunal from 1996 to 2012.

Miehm credits his vocation to the priesthood to growing up in a strong Catholic family. His parents met through the Legion of Mary, which helped pair up young Catholic men and women long before "Catholic Singles" and "Christian Mingle," he joked.

Another influence on his vocation was his aunt, who was a School Sister of Notre Dame, and through her "seeing religious life was productive and happy and really doing good work."

But perhaps the strongest influence in his youth was Msgr. Bill O'Brien, the founding pastor of his parish in Kitchener. "He was a man of considerable energy and a very strong, forceful presence," he said. "I had the privilege of being the celebrant of his funeral mass last year and reflecting on his life."

In his 15 years as a pastor Miehm served at Our Lady of Lourdes in Hamilton, St. Ann's Parish in Ancaster, and "then a brief stint as founding pastor of St. Benedict's Parish in Milton."

"I found that very exciting work, pioneering work, saying mass in a school gym," he said, describing it as similar to what "my great mentor Msgr. Bill O'Brien had done with our parish 50 years earlier."

## Miehm's first love is pastoral service

Less than a year with St. Benedict's, however, "I was plucked out of that" and made auxiliary bishop in Hamilton in February 2013.

Miehm said he knew auxiliary bishops in Ontario would be under consideration for Peterborough



CCN/D. Gyapong

**Bishop-elect Daniel J. Miehm**

when Bishop McGrattan was named to Calgary, "but I didn't think my number was quite up, so I was surprised at the nuncio's call."

"I was certainly heartened and gladdened and ready to accept it," he said.

Though Miehm recalls vacationing with his parents and three siblings in the northern part of the Peterborough diocese, he admitted he did not know the city of Peterborough well. But he sees similarities between it and Kitchener, where he grew up in the 1960s and '70s, describing both as communities of "solid working, middle-class people, with a manufacturing base but a changing economy."



# Living Simply workshop held in Saskatoon

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The local Saskatoon group Churches for Environmental Action hosted a workshop March 4 at Mayfair United Church, highlighting the call to live simply.

“Drowning? Ways to Live Simply” included a theological introduction, a presentation from a city councillor about the vision and challenges around environmental action at the civic level, and workshops offering practical tips and ideas for action.

Christopher Hrynkow of St. Thomas More College opened the afternoon event, reflecting on Christian ecological ethics and the call to battle our “addiction to stuff” as a way to care for the earth and to live justly with those in poverty and on the margins.

“When the market and its chief



Kiply Yaworski

**Christopher Hrynkow**

product — stuff — is worshipped, simple living is too often displaced,” Hrynkow said.

“There are alternatives on offer

for Christians who struggle to put their heads above the torrent of excess consumption that seeks to drown them, even if it is just long enough to hear the voice of the prophets calling us back to more nourishing relationships with God, our self, our neighbour and the rest of creation.”

Hrynkow noted that the market model of endless consumption is neither sustainable nor fulfilling. “We suffocate ourselves in the service of broken story; we drown in the stuff we own and hoard.”

He pointed to a growing Christian understanding that the dignity of the human person and the integrity of the natural world are inextricably linked.

“For instance, the World Council of Churches and several Roman Catholic orders seek to have ‘Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation’ (JPIC) as a mutual set of commitments or a covenant underlying all their programming.”

Embracing simple living is a prime path of action in this regard. “This need not be an overly austere asceticism, but there remains an imperative to limit consump-

tion through a type of green simplicity that frequently activates the potential for joy among ‘deep greens’ of both the secular and religious variety,” he said.

A vision of something better than what the advertising industry offers will drive transformative action, Hrynkow suggested, saying that such a vision could embrace the virtues of hospitality,

co-living, respect, tolerance and communality, and bring “the joy and health benefits that come from simple living.”

Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* firmly connects the vision of simple, responsible living to peace. “This is a choice against both domination and consumerist orientation, in favour of growth understood in terms of the growth of positive relationships,” Hrynkow said. “*Laudato Si’* offers a specific antidote to a ‘prosperity gospel’ that equates God’s favour with spiritual, physical and financial mastery.”

As Pope Francis writes, “Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures.”

— GOALS, page 7

## Challenging moment for Catholic education

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — This is a challenging moment for Catholic education, but it is also a promising time. Catholic education is of great importance in our time for all of society, said Msgr. James P. Shea in a March 10 public lecture in Campion College’s Riffel Auditorium.



Frank Flegel

**Msgr. James P. Shea**

Shea, president of the Bismark, North Dakota, Catholic University of Mary, told the almost sold-out crowd that society has changed. A society based largely on Christian principles and Gospel values is no longer the norm.

“This is a radical change in society and this presents us as Catholic educators with great challenges. We need to pay attention to the signs of the times and respond accordingly.”

He then went on to speak about Catholic education in terms of a wounded society and the “salves” Catholic education offers for those wounds.” Shea spoke with the *Prairie Messenger* a few days after his lecture.

“As Catholic educators we have a tremendous amount we can contribute to the common good by being who we are, and by doing Catholic education in an authentic and uncompromising way,” he told his audience. “The message that we carry to the world and that we give as a sacred trust to our students is communicated to them

through education,” he said. “That’s really world-altering and life-changing stuff.”

He listed six “wounds” in today’s society and offered seven “salves” to heal those wounds. The first wound he described was: religion, or faith, has become a matter of opinion and feeling rather than truth and knowledge. The second wound was the loss of the sacramental version of the created world — no designer, no design. Third was a return to the subject as the source of truth. His fourth wound described the loss of unity of life; fifth, selective moral relativity; and the sixth was what he called increasing social fragmentation which arises partly out of an increasingly technologized society.

The first salve to address these wounds is a duty for Catholic education to form responsible citizens, but the second and most important is to get people ready for heaven, preparing them for eternal life with God.

Archbishop Donald Bolen thanked Shea for his address and focused his remarks on Shea’s presentation of the third salve. The third salve is a sacramental version of the world, that life is an adventure, the world is an enchanted place, and God is present.

The fourth salve is an encounter with God and the realization that faith and reason are the way to truth, the education of the whole person. Fifth is intellectual charity. He said, “Our work as Catholic educators is to ensure our schools are places of love, and that we are training our students to love because at the end of our lives we will be asked, ‘How did you love with what you have been given?’”

The sixth salve offered was initiation into the life of the church and, lastly, the promotion of the common good.

“Catholic education in a very particular way, a way that is unique, is able to carry a more adequate, more satisfying, more holistic vision of the human person through its work of education. Because, more than anything, education is a search for truth.”

## Minister Wyant meets with Just Youth

By Caitlin Ward

SASKATOON — St. Thomas More College student leaders met with Saskatchewan’s Minister of Justice Gordon Wyant and Deputy Minister J. Glen Gardner on March 10 to discuss issues around phone access in provincial prisons. The meeting featured members of STM’s Just Youth Group, as well as students involved with Canadian Roots Exchange, a national organization dedicated to improving settler-indigenous relations through grassroots reconciliation initiatives.

Wyant and Gardner sat with the students for an hour and a half, discussing systemic problems in the province’s corrections system, speaking to the students’ concerns about phone access for inmates in Saskatchewan’s correctional facilities.

Students expressed some concern about the government’s use of a privatized phone system in Saskatchewan prisons, but their main focus was in the human cost of practically depriving inmates of contact with their families. As phone calls can be prohibitively expensive, the system by which

inmates set up phone accounts is needlessly complicated, and corrections officers are often not adequately trained to assist inmates; prisoners find themselves increasingly isolated from family and community while they serve out their sentences.

Combating this sense of isolation is a benefit not only for the inmate and that person’s family, but for the larger community as well. According to a report submitted to the ministry by a coalition of community-based organizations led by CLASSIC (Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.), regular contact with family and friends allows inmates to integrate back into society much more easily upon release.

The coalition found in their research that this connection to community helps reduce recidivism rates by between 13 and 25 per cent. Moreover, children with incarcerated parents are less likely to act out or follow their parent into a life of criminality if they are allowed to maintain regular contact with that parent.

Members of the ministry took these concerns seriously, dis-

cussing the need to pursue restorative justice initiatives in the province generally, as well as the particular recommendations made in the community coalition’s report. These changes would not only improve the lives of inmates and their families, they said, but also help address important economic and security concerns.

Equally significant to Wyant and Gardner, though, was the desire to lower crime rates by identifying and addressing issues around why people enter the justice system in the first place. The deputy minister noted that the justice system in the province sometimes lags behind other ministries in terms of its ability to develop evidence-based policy, as historically the ministry has not closely tracked how people enter and exit the justice system. Both relatively new to the Ministry of Justice, Wyant and Gardner hope to begin to address some of these issues.

This meeting with the minister serves as a followup action for STM’s Just Youth Group, who co-hosted a panel on the issue of phone access in provincial prisons with STM’s Engaged Learning Office in February.



Cooper Muirhead

**JUST YOUTH** — Members of St. Thomas More College’s Just Youth Group in Saskatoon recently met with justice officials from the provincial government. From left: Deputy Minister of Justice J. Glen Gardner, Jessica Froehlich, Minister Gordon Wyant, Ana Meckelborg, and Angela Couture.



# Fresh produce available for food bank clients

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — “There’s a continuous food supply that goes through here, so we’re not tied to the summer season,” said Regina Food Bank CEO Steve Compton.



Frank Flegel

**FRESH GREENS — Regina Food Bank CEO Steve Compton stands with some of the produce now being grown onsite for clients of the food bank and others.**

He was speaking with the *Prairie Messenger* in what was a storage shed and is now called the Four Seasons Agriculture Centre.

It was -15 C on March 8, but warm and humid inside the well-insulated hard shell building that resembles a circus tent. Compton explained that the building was onsite when the food bank moved to its present location and had

been used as a storage facility and for some training programs.

Inside there are 48 “growing towers,” each containing 70 growing pods peeking out the side of a circular multi-tiered structure. An irrigation system is connected to each tower. “Plants are watered for one minute every day, so it’s very efficient,” said Compton. “The centre of each tower is a compost, with worms that convert food scraps into nutrients, so it is self-sustaining.”

Most spaces are growing various types of lettuce, but Compton said they have successfully grown and harvested beans and are still experimenting with other vegetables. Radishes, carrots, cabbage, and broccoli are currently being grown, as well as some herbs not usually seen in North American diets.

“We are seeing a change in what clients are requesting with a

more diversified population,” Compton continued.

The plants are harvested about every five weeks. Close records are kept to determine the amount of food that can be grown, but it’s still too early to estimate how much food the system is capable of producing.

We are standing in an empty space that Compton says will soon contain a series of raised garden platforms handling deeper-rooted vegetables such as potatoes, beets and corn.

The greenhouse was estab-

lished for two reasons: “We were getting requests for culturally sensitive foods and spices, and from people with allergies. It allows us to supplement what is needed, and we can provide training and education for people to grow food in their apartment, community centres and community schools,” Compton said. “You take ownership of that food security continuum beyond the charitable offering.”

The interest in the project has been incredible, he said.

Besides food bank clients,

there is also an outreach program with different community partners. Individuals or groups can claim one or more towers to plant and tend their own produce and there is expert help and advice available.

Federated Co-op Community Services provided the food bank with a \$100,000 grant. The funds were used to set up the natural gas heating system, special lights to replicate some elements of sunlight, and the irrigation system. Compton says natural light panels will eventually be installed.

## Members blessed by belonging to CWL

By Terri Scott

WINNIPEG — The Manitoba Catholic Women’s League Provincial Day of Celebration is a day set aside once a year for CWL members to rejuvenate themselves, to learn about the league, and to study various issues. In February this year, the largest gathering since its inception in 1999, 125 members met at St. Peter’s Church for this very reason.

Faith Anderson, provincial president, opened the gathering by quoting Alice Makodonski, the provincial president who initiated this tradition, by saying, “Just being together is a celebration by itself.”

National president Margaret Ann Jacobs delved into the national theme, “Inspired by the Spirit: Women Respond to God’s Call,” for the workshop, which was broken into three sections: 1) Unconditional love of God 2) Empowered by the Gifts of the Spirit, and 3) Inspired by the Fruits of the Spirit.

Jacobs said that in our lives the greatest gifts we have ever received remain unopened. Open the gifts of the Holy Spirit as they remain in the wrapping of the Lord. She recalled a quotation she had read some time ago which said, “It is the wrapper, rather than the receiver who gets the gift.” The gifts we have are not the same gifts others have. Every Christian receives some of the gifts, but no Christian receives all of them. Everything you see has been given to the world through God.

“I hope that the women go away appreciating the power of the Spirit in their lives and that we are called to respond.” In a nut-



Terri Scott

**MANITOBA CWL MEETS — From left: Margaret Ann Jacobs, national president; Faith Anderson, provincial president; Donna Candelaria, St. Peter’s Council president.**

shell, this is what Jacobs said she wants members to take away from the day.

We need to love, even though some people are not loveable. A discussion on how we show love to another elicited responses of hugs, listening, and giving encouragement. Comments that we are blessed to belong to the CWL, having a common faith, and having a safe place to fail, were just a few suggestions to explain how we are blessed by belonging to the league. Eight other topics discussed in-

cluded suggestions of how to bring peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control in our relationships.

The second part of the day included a discussion with five life members which was a parody of a well-known TV show, *The View*. Life members are the elders who are the holders of the wisdom. Interesting questions from the floor enlightened new members of what a life member is and what they do, which led to many laughable and teachable moments.

## Youth learn about liturgy

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Youth from three Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools recently gathered for four half-day training sessions, learning about liturgy and how to plan liturgical celebrations in their elementary school settings.

Teams of Grade 6 students from Bishop Roborecki, Mother Teresa and Georges Vanier schools took part in this year’s Youth and Liturgy Project, learning more about prayer, Scripture, the eucharist, the liturgical year, liturgical symbols, music and different Catholic traditions.

Teachers Jana Lalach, Janine Baier and Nicole Gursky accompanied youth for the program funded by the Greater Saskatoon

Catholic Schools Foundation, and led by Rachele Ng of GSCS Religious Education Services.

Held at local Catholic parishes, the project included an introduction to liturgy Feb. 16 at St. Francis Xavier Parish, a session on liturgy and sacraments March 2 at St. John Bosco Parish, presentations on music in liturgy and on First Nations spirituality March 9 at St. Mary’s Parish, and on Byzantine spirituality and Scripture March 16 at Dormition of the Blessed Mother of God Church.

“The best part of this program for me are the questions the students ask about our Catholic faith — why do we do what we do? As we explore these questions together, we grow in our love for Jesus and in our understanding of the gift of our faith,” said Ng.



Kiply Yaworski

**YOUTH AND LITURGY — Teachers Jana Lalach, Janine Baier and Nicole Gursky accompanied Saskatoon youth as they gathered for four half-day training sessions, learning about liturgy, prayer, Scripture, the eucharist, liturgical symbols, music, Catholic traditions, and how to plan liturgical celebrations in their elementary school settings.**



# Church is present at heart of Austin arts festival

By Matt Palmer

AUSTIN, Texas (CNS) — The juxtaposition was striking.

During the early evening of March 11, 59-year-old Bishop Paul Tighe worked his way through the hallways of the Austin Convention Center, weaving his way through thousands of young people who were in town attending the South by Southwest Festival, more commonly known as SXSW.

This year’s festival began March 10 and will conclude March 19.

“On one level, it’s kind of strange because you’re wandering around the place,” said Tighe, who is currently adjunct secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture. “You’re certainly the only one in a collar and you’re possibly the only one with white hair.”

When Tighe walked the convention floor, many of the attendees had recently emerged from panels hosted by tech giants, comedians, actors, politicians and more.

As they passed by Tighe, no one seemed to realize they had just encountered one of the Vatican’s most influential communicators during the last decade.

Tighe was at the festival to be part of a panel called “Compassionate Disruption,” which was hosted March 12 at the Hyatt Regency. Tighe was joined on the panel by Helen Osman, former chief communications officer for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Michael Hertl and Christoph Krachten, who are digital media innovators for the Catholic Church in Germany.

At a festival known for its music concerts, movie premieres and tech



CNS/Matt Palmer

**FILM FESTIVAL — Irish Bishop Paul Tighe, adjunct secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture, speaks March 10 during the South by Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas. At right is Helen Osman, a communication adviser.**

company displays, the Catholic Church certainly stuck out.

“People might be surprised there’s a church presence, but there’s so many places where the church is not invited any longer that it’s important to respond positively to invitation,” Tighe told Catholic News Service. “Even if it looks a bit different or not like our usual gatherings.”

Tighe is no stranger to speaking at unconventional festivals. He once spoke in front of 12,000 people at the Burning Man arts festival in Europe.

He added: “Despite all the sophistication, coolness, sarcasm and the irony at an event like this, I think if you speak with authenticity, there’s still a possibility of

touching people’s hearts.”

A faith session at SXSW is still a relatively new concept, said the interactive festival’s director, Hugh Forrest. Forrest said he likes panels that take attendees out of their comfort zones.

“I think it is an outlier, but I think the outliers here are what makes ‘the thing’ so interesting,” Forrest told CNS. “A faith-based session at a technology event that’s focused on startups? That’s really neat. I love that we have the capacity to host sessions like that which attract people with strong faiths. I hope it attracts people maybe who don’t, but are interested in this stuff.”

Forrest said he sees the Tighe appearance as the start of a poten-

tially longer relationship with the Catholic Church. He dreams that one day Pope Francis might Skype with an audience at SXSW.

“This pope and the current Vatican is embracing technology,” Forrest said. “It makes sense to connect with this crowd. They are in a sense embracing disruption very significantly. I think the pope has a leadership role few other people have. We like to showcase innovative, creative leaders.”

The first start was Tighe, who was born in Navan, County Meath, in Ireland, and is a former director of public affairs for the Archdiocese of Dublin. He is largely known for his eight years as secretary of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. The Catholic Church’s presence in digital media increased heavily during that time.

In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI launched a massively popular Twitter account, which was later transferred to Pope Francis. A pope app for mobile devices also debuted in recent years. Then-Msgr. Tighe was named adjunct secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture in late 2015 and consecrated a bishop Feb. 27, 2016.

Despite his official move out of Vatican communications, Tighe maintains a deep interest in the topic.

The day before the “Compassionate Disruption” panel, Forrest acknowledged it was a gamble and that he didn’t know what kind of crowd would show. The bet appears to have paid off for the festival. During one point at the festival, #GODatSXSW was Twitter’s No. 1 trend in Austin. On a day that

featured former vice-president Joe Biden, billionaire and tech leader Mark Cuban, and other celebrities, being such a topic of discussion was no small feat.

Questions from attendees of the panel ranged from whether the Catholic Church should position itself as a brand and how the church can use digital media for good.

For several decades, SXSW has been a constantly evolving festival. Now, it could be known as a place for fertile faith discussions.

“It’s an event that brings together very, very creative people and helps those creative people make connections and discover new things,” Forrest said.

A sizable crowd attended the session inside a ballroom at the Hyatt Regency. The session was the result of years of discussions between Osman and Forrest. Osman, who lives in Austin and served the U.S. bishops from 2005 to 2015, led the panel discussion.

“Hopefully the conversation will continue,” Osman told attendees at the end of the panel. “South by Southwest has been very encouraging of us to talk about coming back in 2018.”

Tighe said young people are at the heart of the festival, which boasts thousands of ambitious techies attempting to launch start-up Web platforms. For some, it is the opportunity to get the attention of investors. It’s a high-pressure situation for many.

“The compassionate disruption is to say,” Tighe added, “fundamentally, you’re a person of value, a person of dignity and worth. God loves you and cares for you whether you pitch well or not.”

## Love is present in all things, and our expressions of that are unique

By Caitlin Ward

A few weeks ago there was an article about “conscious consumerism” making the rounds among my friends and acquaintances. I know this because it was sent to me several times via email, Facebook, and also mentioned in person. The article, written by a

**Heroes**  
David Bowie

woman who had dedicated her life and work to studying and practising ethical purchasing practices, spoke about how, ultimately, conscious consumerism is not particularly useful when it comes to effecting real world change. The individual’s decision not to participate in an unjust system does not dismantle that unjust system, so it is perhaps better to put our energy into trying to dismantle it.

Now, the reasoning behind people sending me this article varies from person to person, and some of their motivations were not entirely pure — what’s the

*Ward is a Saskatoon-based freelance writer who spends her days (and most nights) working at a small Catholic college. Her less eloquent thoughts can be found at [www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings](http://www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings)*

point, Caitlin, in what you’re trying to do? You can’t fix it, so don’t bother trying.

That particular line of reasoning is actually considered a logical fallacy, mind you: if you can’t make it perfect, there’s no point in doing anything at all. It’s called the Nirvana Fallacy — heaven, or muck. Hero, or villain. Nothing in-between.

I think the discomfort around pointing out the ethical quandaries in purchasing practices goes back to the idea of being inconvenient. I’ve been ruminating on this recently. It’s something the article touched upon as well: the strength of these convictions tests the relationships around you. Many people joke about how having a vegan at the party is no fun. What most people don’t realize is that it is probably the least fun for the vegan, who’s usually either taken a very defensive stance, or an apologetic one.

Navigating your way between staying true to your feelings on these matters and not alienating the people around you can be a struggle. It’s hard to hold onto convictions without coming off as judgmental of the decisions of others.

But I also know that I’m candid about how concerned I am with how my personal decisions (consumerist or otherwise) affect the wider world. I easily get neurotic

about it. And so when certain friends sent the article to me, I knew it was a gentle reminder that I don’t need to sweat blood over everything. I am lucky enough to work in an environment where a fundamental part of my job is working toward educating people about these unjust systems, and teaching different ways of challenging them. You’re trying, these friends were telling me. They were also telling me to calm down, but in a way that was meant kindly.

And I know those friends are right. Tying oneself up in knots over these things is ultimately

unhelpful for everyone involved. The underpinning of that anxiety can easily be a kind of self-obsession: wanting to make all the right decisions yourself, irrespective of the general consequences. It spikes anxiety levels, irritates loads of people, and doesn’t actually help those who are suffering — which, ostensibly, is the point.

I know I’ve reached that conclusion many times. I’ve probably reached that conclusion in the pages of this paper many times. But I’ve been thinking about St. Ignatius’ spiritual exercises today, and I realized something about myself that pushes all of this a step further.

You see, I’m not a particularly contemplative person. I remember a time on retreat where we were supposed to have an hour of silent prayer and I ended up eating popcorn in my room with my sister and one of our friends, instead. I say the rosary . . . never. Well, rarely. Mostly when something’s

I, I wish you could swim  
Like the dolphins  
Like dolphins can swim  
Though nothing, nothing will keep us together  
We can beat them, forever and ever  
Oh, we can be heroes just for one day

I, I will be King  
And you, you will be Queen  
Though nothing will drive them away  
We can be heroes just for one day  
We can be us just for one day

I, I can remember  
Standing by the wall  
And the guns, shot above our heads  
And we kissed, as though nothing could fall  
And the shame, was on the other side  
Oh, we can beat them, forever and ever  
Then we could be heroes just for one day



# Empowering indigenous people’s voices on screen

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



*The right to prior and informed consent should always prevail. Only then is it possible to guarantee peaceful co-operation between governing authorities and indigenous peoples, overcoming confrontation and conflict. . . . For governments, this means recognizing that indigenous communities are a part of the population to be appreciated and consulted, and whose full participation should be promoted at the local and national level.*

— Statement of Pope Francis, Feb. 15, 2017

Canadians are being challenged to come to terms with historical wrongs arising from the subjugation of Aboriginal peoples, as in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report on the “cultural genocide” perpetrated by residential schools. The “Idle No More” movement has spurred a renewed indigenous activism demanding redress. First Nations are centrally involved in many sites of protest, notably concerning large-scale resource development projects

block the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline from risking contamination of the Missouri River as well as disrupting sacred sites and burial grounds. Their cause has attracted international attention and large numbers of protesters. With representatives of some 200 tribes in solidarity, it became the largest indigenous gathering on American soil in a century. It is also the latest “war story” in a history of violations of native rights that includes Wounded Knee. A

the violence against women that is a symptom of the intergenerational trauma suffered by many indigenous peoples. A healing process is needed that connects both.

When I interviewed Ms. Latimer at Sundance she also spoke about how a movement that is truly multi-generational is galvanizing solidarity networks across borders. It will not be bought off by divide-and-rule tactics such as the promise of economic benefits to communities suffering high rates of poverty and unemployment. Such promises have proved to be empty and short-lived. All citizens can help to advance this movement by standing with it. That includes not supporting the corporations and politicians behind developments that fail to respect the rights of indigenous people.

Director Melinda Janko’s *100 Years: One Woman’s Fight for Justice* (<https://www.100yearsthemovie.com>) is a penetrating investigation into over a century of gross mistreatment of Indian reserve lands by the U.S. government. It is also a stirring profile of Montana Blackfeet elder Louise Cobell who was the driving force in seeking redress through the largest class action suit in U.S. history on behalf of some 300,000 Native Americans.

The native peoples who, as one says, “could not imagine that one day Earth Mother would be real estate,” had their lands broken up. Their territories were reduced to defined scattered reservations and they were also reduced to a state of dependency and control. The millions of acres of reserve land was henceforth to be managed for them by an Indian Trust Fund responsible for revenues from resource development (oil and gas, mining, timber, etc.) on these lands. What actually happened was that much of this accrued wealth was stolen while many Native Americans lived in deplorable conditions. They were effectively defrauded of what was rightly theirs at the same time as they faced other forms of deprivation, loss of culture and respect. (The youth were sent to boarding schools for assimilation similar to



Courtesy of Sundance Institute

**RUMBLE FILM** — Buffy Sainte-Marie appears in *RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked The World* by Catherine Bainbridge and Alfonso Maiorana, an official selection of the World Cinema Documentary Competition at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Canada’s residential schools).

This sorry history finally provoked a series of legal actions, notably the class action launched by Cobell and others in 1996 seeking damages of \$27.5 billion. Along with pressure through the courts, the mismanagement of funds also attracted attention in Congress. There were setbacks and stalling tactics by the George W. Bush White House. But in 2009 - 2010 under the Obama administration a settlement was finally approved, albeit for the much smaller amount of \$3.4 billion. A measure of justice had been achieved thanks to the tireless efforts of women like Cobell who died of cancer in 2011. Her legacy was recognized by the posthumous awarding of the presidential medal of freedom by Obama in 2016.

Director Nettie Wild’s *KONELINE: Our Land Beautiful* (<https://www.canadawildproductions.com/film/koneline/>), awarded best Canadian feature at the 2016 HotDocs festival, captures indelible images of what is happening in the mountains of northwestern British Columbia. This unceded traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation is increasingly being impacted by mining operations for copper and gold along with major infrastructure projects such as roads and electrical power

lines. Watching the enormous transmission towers being put in place by helicopter gives a sense of the transformation.

*Koneline* comes from a Tahltan word combining beauty of the land and the mind. Their language encompassing this magnificent wilderness had needed no word for “wild.” Wildlife was so abundant that the region has been called the “Serengeti of the north.” But big changes are happening while some remain determined to preserve their language and cultural traditions along with the lifestyles dependent on the land. The promise of economic benefits from large-scale development can create divisions within indigenous communities as well as with other residents. Wild’s stunning cinematography makes the land itself a character in this ongoing drama, which raises the question of how to preserve the land’s natural beauty and integrity in the face of increased commercial activities. Wild worries about different viewpoints growing farther apart. What does responsible development mean in this context? It’s clear that an adequate inclusive process is still lacking to resolve outstanding issues in a way that truly respects the land and its people.

*Rumble: The Indians that Rocked the World* is a Canadian production of Montreal-based Rezolution Pictures (makers of the documentary *Reel Injun*). Co-directed by founder Catherine Bainbridge and Alfonso Maiorana, it received a Sundance special jury award for “masterful storytelling” in bringing to light the little-known indigenous contribution to popular music. She observes that “native American music — born of this land — was violently suppressed for many years as both American and Canadian governments outlawed native ceremonies and rituals in a deliberate attempt to break the people. As a result, the music was forced underground and found its expression in alternative ways.”

As the Sundance press notes state, “the early pioneers of the blues had native as well as African American roots, and one of the first and most influential jazz singers’ voices, was trained on native American songs. As the

Rise (Canada, 2017 Viceland TV series)

100 Years: One Woman’s Fight for Justice (U.S. 2016)

Koneline: Our Land Beautiful (Canada 2016)

Rumble: The Indians that Rocked the World (Canada 2017)

within their traditional territories. Peoples long cast aside by the forces of “progress” are reclaiming their place.

In finding their voice, indigenous peoples are also increasingly determined to tell their own stories. That is evident in the impressive Canadian-produced eight-part docuseries entitled appropriately *Rise*. It began airing in late January on Viceland, the television arm of VICE Canada. The other broadcast partners are the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and Rogers Media. Supported by the Sundance Institute’s indigenous voices program, the first three episodes had their premiere showing during the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, including a post-screening discussion with many of the featured indigenous activists. The series is directed by Toronto-based filmmaker Michelle Latimer, who is of Métis-Algonquin ancestry. The narrator host is Sarain Carson-Fox, a dancer and choreographer with Anishinaabe roots who travels with a camera crew to the front-lines of contemporary indigenous resistance.

The first episode, “Apache Stronghold,” observes the generational struggles of the Apache people suppressed by the armed might of the U.S. government leading up to the current flash-point at Oak Flat, Arizona, where the Apache are fighting to save a protected sacred site from encroachment by Rio Tinto’s copper-mining operations.

The second and third episodes, “Sacred Water” and “Red Power,” are devoted to the fight of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North and South Dakota to

victory for people power over corporate interests was celebrated in December 2016 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers revoked a necessary permit. However, the Trump administration strongly backs the project and new approvals have been granted to complete the pipeline. The Sioux won’t give up the fight however hard it becomes.

What these episodes reveal is a deeply spiritual aspect of the struggles that are connecting the elders to a new generation of activists often led by dynamic young indigenous women. A parallel can be made between the violence being done to mother earth and



Courtesy of Sundance Institute/Michelle Latimer

**RISE** — LaDonna Bravebull Allard appears in *Rise* by Michelle Latimer, an official selection of the Special Events program at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.



# Letters reach out to the c

By Angela Saldanha  
Catholic Register Special

Sipping my morning espresso, I often envision Donnie making coffee.

“So how do you make hot coffee,” I asked, “when you’ve got no means of heating water?”

“Like this,” Donnie wrote. “I have this thing we call a stinger. Two wires, connected to one-inch screws, separated by a piece of plastic. The screws go into a cup of water, the other end into an electric socket. You throw some salt in the water and the screws get hot and the water boils.”

“Sounds highly dangerous,” I wrote. “Does it really work?”

“Oh yeah. I get my hot coffee. Well — sometimes I just cause a minor explosion.”

When I think about Donnie’s coffee making, I wonder what it must be like to live the way he does, locked up, in prison, without freedom — like Peter and other inmates I’ve let into my life.

I was put in touch with Donnie after signing up with Human Writes, an organization based in England that organizes letter-writing to American death-row inmates. I signed up and was put in touch with Donnie. He was being held in the notorious H Unit at a correction centre in Oklahoma.

Donnie was overjoyed to have a pen pal. He wrote frequently, sometimes two letters in a week, but told me I should not feel compelled to write back that often.

“Even if you don’t write much, it’s enough to know that you care,” he said. “When they first brought me to this place I felt so terribly, desperately alone. I begged God to send angels to be with me. And then this letter came, a letter from a stranger — signed Angela!

Saldanha is a writer who lives in Brechin, Ont.



Catholic Register/Jim O’Leary

**A GIFT —** Angela Saldanha shows a painting she received as a gift from a prison pen pal. The artwork adorns the walls of her Brechin, Ont., home.

“God heard my prayer.” I’m not sure when it happened, but I know exactly what sparked my interest in prisoners. Flipping through *National Geographic* many years ago my attention was caught by a picture of a man holding a seedling. But this wasn’t just another article about plants — it was about planting by prison inmates.

I’d never given more than a passing thought to prisoners, but I’ve loved gardening since I could toddle and so I read the article

with interest. Someone had come up with the idea of teaching inmates basic gardening skills. The results of the experiment were remarkable. Most prisoners became less violent, more compliant, even docile — changed men.

I couldn’t stop thinking about this wonderful idea. The image of hardened criminals tenderly handling baby plants was embedded in my mind, like a seed, where it germinated. Prisoners, and their unhappy lives, were often in my

thoughts. I joined the local chapter of Amnesty International (in Italy) and for years wrote letters on behalf of prisoners to princes, presidents and ministers of justice around the world. I pleaded for stays of execution, for access to legal or medical assistance, for ending torture.

Then one day I learned about an American prison chaplain who had spoken about the terrible loneliness of prisoners. Worse than harsh living conditions, poor food and ill-treatment by guards, was a prisoner’s sense of abandonment. Prisoners were rejected often by family and friends. Some prisoners went months, even years, without a visitor, or even a phone call or letter. A lucky few had a pen pal. The chaplain said other men wished they had one too.

I’ve always enjoyed writing letters. I’d honed my skills writing to our four kids who were studying in Canada while my husband and I worked in Italy. So I asked for the name of a prisoner. I was sent Peter. In Illinois. On death row. I think the year was 1999.

The first letter wasn’t easy. What could I say to a condemned man? Knowing he was on death row, I assumed, correctly it turned out, that he must be guilty of murder — at least one. Would he know that I knew? How would he feel about that? What would he think of me, a strange woman, writing to him?

With Christmas approaching, I sent him a card, and a brief letter to explain how I’d heard about him and asking if he’d like to correspond. I told him a bit about myself (born in England, raised in India, a dozen years in Montreal, a year in Switzerland, then living in Italy). I mailed my letter and began to worry. What had I got myself into?

I didn’t have to worry long. An envelope arrived, stamped in red ink with the words “This corre-

spondence comes to you from an inmate.” I tore it open so fast I nearly ripped the letter.

Peter was delighted to have a pen pal. He was intrigued by my background. “Wow! So many different countries! Sounds like a United Nations roll call!” he said. He asked me what it had been like, living in all these places.

I asked him what it was like on death row. But I did not then, or ever, ask him about his crime. From the start, I did not want to know any of those details. Whatever it was, I reasoned, it concerned him, his victim(s) and God. Judge and jury too, I guess. But it wasn’t my business.

But he told me he’d been arrested at age 21 and had been on death row for nearly 10 years. In the years that followed, I learned a lot about Peter and his life on death row. He found it frustrating that inmates on The Row were not allowed to work like other prisoners. He was lonely. His dad and stepmom lived in another state and rarely visited. He had a cell to himself — usually — but was moved frequently and sometimes had a cellmate. With each move, guards would go through his belongings, discarding things as they saw fit. Once “they confiscated my address book because it was a homemade one,” he said. He likes to paint (whenever he can afford art supplies from the prison commissary) and several of his “masterpieces” adorn our home. He practises yoga and has led yoga classes for fellow inmates.

Peter had been nominally Catholic but converted to Buddhism in prison. We compared notes on meditation; mine, Christian, his, Buddhist. He explained Metta to me — the practice by which he would think about people in his life and send them positive thoughts of love, peace, well-being. He started with loved ones

— Continued on next page

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# condemned and forgotten

Continued from previous page

and moved through a list until he got to those he positively hated. "I've finally got to the point where there's nobody left on my hate list!" he wrote jubilantly.

One day we learned that an outgoing Illinois governor was planning to commute some death sentences to life without parole. As the discussion about this dragged on for months, Peter became jittery with the uncertainty.

"I wish they'd just kill me now and be done with it," he wrote. "I don't want to think of spending the next 30 or 40 years in jail anyway."

I scolded him. "Life is not lived in chunks of 10 or 20 years, but one day at a time."

He wrote back: "Thanks for reminding me — that's one of the basic tenets of Buddhism!"

A few weeks later another letter came. Peter had been given life.

Unlike Peter, who admits he is a murderer, Donnie claims to be innocent. I believe him. But so many things have gone wrong in his case there seems little likelihood he'll walk free any time soon. I suspect being black doesn't help. Nor his limited education.

"I made it to Grade 12 and I'm the most educated person in my family," he told me.

He writes a lot about life on The Row. Everything is drab, grey cement — walls and floor. The cell has two beds, separated by a combination sink/toilet. A naked bulb provides the only light. Food comes through a slit in the door known as the beanhole, "because beans, in one form or another, is what we get most often." By the time food gets to him "it's not even warm."

Last Christmas Donnie was moved temporarily to another jail. There "they gave me the first hot meal I'd had in two years," he wrote.

Communication with the guy in the next cell is by an elaborate system of knocks on the wall.

"Last night I got some awesome happy knocks," he wrote.

He doesn't say much about the guards but I gather they're not hired for their kind-heartedness. They returned the first letter I wrote because it had an address sticker. Stickers aren't allowed. Another letter was returned be-

cause, writing my address in a hurry, I'd put A instead of Angela before my surname. Initials are not allowed either.

Some months ago he told me that a little bird had been flying around The Row, unable to find its way out. On one hand he felt sorry for it being trapped, on the other I know he was glad to see it.

I recalled Byron's poem "The Prisoner of Chillon" about seven brothers imprisoned for their faith in the dungeon below Lac Leman. After seeing his sixth brother die, the surviving one was alone in utter misery and despair. But then: "A light broke in upon my brain; it was the carol of a bird."

A recent letter from Donnie told me, "Bird is getting thin. He don't sing much anymore."

Donnie has faith in God and he remains surprisingly upbeat and hopeful. A born-again Christian, he was baptized in a water trough in the prison yard and never fails to end his letters with some uplifting Bible verse.

The organization Human Writes publishes a quarterly magazine that showcases sketches, paintings and poems of those on The Row. Reading the magazine, I think there is good — much good — in even the worst of us. Many of these people are guilty of terrible acts of violence, but that does not mean they are devoid of any finer feelings. I am often awed by the depths of love and tenderness revealed in some of their writings.

My newest pen pal is awaiting trial in the Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ont. I'll call her Victoria May. Also in Vanier is Mary Wagner, with whom I correspond. She and fellow pro-life activist Linda Gibbons have spent years behind bars, on and off, for their defence of the pre-born. Like Donnie, who once asked me to send him a photo of the grass in my backyard because he'd "almost forgotten what grass looks like," Victoria May has requested a photo of flowers to brighten up her room.

I also send letters to prisoners I learn about through Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), a non-profit, international organization that supports persecuted Christians worldwide. Many men and women who risk their lives to spread the Good News have been tortured and imprisoned. VOM publishes lists of those it can verify are in prison and asks people to write letters to encourage them. But when

I write a letter and mail it, I have no way of knowing if it will be received.

Men who have survived a stint in prison have testified to the great joy of receiving a letter from a stranger. The guards often tell prisoners that they are forgotten by the world and that their god has abandoned them. The arrival of a letter speaks to the contrary and becomes a huge source of encouragement.

Prison Fellowship is another organization that supports the incarcerated. The founder, Charles Colson, understands the needs of prisoners, having been locked up for a few months for his part in Watergate. His experience behind

bars, during which he came to know Christ, changed his life forever.

In a small way, the "seed" sowed in my mind by that *National Geographic* article has changed my life. Maybe not changed, but given it an added dimension. I devote a good amount of time to prisoners, writing to them or reading about them.

Thankfully, my husband and children have always accepted and supported my letter writing. They've never been unduly concerned that mom corresponds with condemned men. In fact, my oldest daughter was so taken with the idea that she now has a prison pen pal.

But outside of immediate family, few people know what I do. When I told one woman what I was doing, she was taken aback. She said she'd been reading about serial killers who, apparently, have whole fan clubs of adoring women writing to them. Writing love letters!

She realized immediately that my letter writing is entirely different. But following that reaction I've been wary of talking about this to anyone else.

Consequently, few of my friends know what I do. That's fine with me. Donnie and Peter and Victoria May know. That's what matters.

And Christ knows. As he said quite clearly: "I was in prison, and you visited me."



Catholic Register/Jim O'Leary

REACHING OUT — Angela Saldanha reads a letter from one of the death row inmates.

## CRC to organize more events

Continued from page 1

conscientious about First Nation heritage. And more respectful too."

He believes that the residential schools and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have had a sensitizing effect.

Stephanie Gravel, associate director of regional programming and leadership support, was in charge of the initiative.

"It's really the first official meeting to talk with the natives," she said. "It is truly an official call to action of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which calls for awareness and conscience raising, and mutual understanding meetings to begin the dialogue."

In 2015, the commission detailed the treatment of Aboriginal children in residential schools supported by the Canadian government but administered by religious organizations, including the Catholic Church. The commission described what happened to the children and their communities as "cultural genocide."

Gravel said she expected the

event to be more delicate. In a context where many groups demand more outspoken apologies from Pope Francis to the First Nations, and in which Catholic religious communities played an important role in the administration of residential schools, she wondered for a moment whether the Canadian Religious Conference would prefer not to venture too much into these issues.

"To avoid this, I wanted to make a festive gathering. We go to meet natives, eat native meals, discuss, pray," she said. "It allows first steps to inspire. We did not want to delve into guilt."

She said the Canadian Religious Conference eventually will try to organize activities in which more First Nations members will participate.

In the meantime, dozens of nuns and religious, as well as some laypeople, devoted March 10 to meeting indigenous people. Several of them already work side by side with First Nation peoples, whether in pastoral care, education or health.

Every year Sister Renelle Lasalle, a member of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, takes 40 teenagers from Granby, Que., to meet members of

Abitibi's Lac-Simon, Pikogan and Kitchisakik communities.

"I've been in Abitibi for seven years, and I learn every day. An event like today, it's important for meeting people," she said, noting that it took her decades to change her outlook on the First Nations. "I had no interest in them. Then I gradually changed. Today, I see how good they are."

Of all the religious participants, only one person was of native descent. Lina Dubois works at the Har'el Bible Centre in Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que. Although she has Abenaki roots, she said that was not necessarily what motivated her to travel to Wendake.

"Every time I come here, I feel good, as if it were my house or my roots. I wanted to know more about the native life, especially the Huron-Wendat Nation," she explained. "It is a place where it is possible to exchange, to understand one another. The neighbour is not dangerous, he is rather rewarding. But it is not easy to let oneself be displaced and questioned by the other."

The Canadian Religious Conference will hold a similar event at the Wabano Centre in Ottawa April 1.

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Vaillancourt is editor-in-chief of Presence info based in Montreal.



# Once we know, we can't go back to blissful ignorance

## Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



"I'm surprised at you, a woman, not using inclusive language." The comment, scrawled in red ink on my term paper, took me by surprise. What, I wondered, was my priest-professor talking about? As a first-year theology student, woefully ignorant of theological jargon and church lingo in general, I had no clue what he meant. What theological faux pas had I committed? When questioned, he explained that the exclusive use of masculine pronouns was exclusionary of women and reflective of a patriarchal and androcentric bias. I thought he was joking. It seemed an overly sensitive reaction to the embarrassingly loud feminist critique that was popular at the time, and one I didn't buy. Why should I change my language simply because some women felt excluded?

I laugh at my reaction now, and am grateful for that first step of "consciousness-raising." It took several more years of theological study before I truly understood

what he was talking about. Critical Scripture study revealed the ancient world to operate under the social system of patriarchy, the absolute and unaccountable power of the male over wives, children, and property. The rights and roles of men and women both were defined by this system and the various laws, mores and language reflected it. As well, the texts were shown to be inescapably androcentric, meaning that they were male-centred in subject matter, authorship and perspective. The focus on the masculine is disclosed by these numbers alone: in the Old Testament, there are 1,426 personal names given; 1,315 of these are men; only 111 women are named. That's less than 10 per cent. Is it that women had no stories of God's action in their lives, or is it that their stories were not considered important?

Or consider this bias: the Tenth commandment reads, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." At face value, that commandment doesn't apply to half the population. Women have to edit it to make it fit — and we do, for the most part subconsciously and automatically. As I studied not only Scripture, but church history and our faith tradition with newly critical eyes, I saw the same patriarchal bias embedded in the culture that surrounded me. Newly awakened to the negative consequences that flowed from



Design Pics

**MALE-CENTRED PERSPECTIVE —** Biblical texts are inescapably androcentric, meaning that they are male-centred in subject matter, authorship and perspective, writes Sandy Prather. "The focus on the masculine is disclosed by these numbers alone: in the Old Testament, there are 1,426 personal names given; 1,315 of these are men; only 111 women are named. That's less than 10 per cent. Is it that women had no stories of God's action in their lives, or is it that their stories were not considered important?"

such a system, I couldn't go back. Once I knew, I couldn't not know.

For many, including my professor, it was the consciousness-raising of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s that awoke them to the hidden, pervasive and destructive effects of a male-dominated world. With an awakened consciousness, the discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes toward women that kept them as second-class citizens became obvious. That women had to fight for the right to vote or own property seems ludicrous to us now, but that's because our consciousness has been raised. Such awareness is not the norm, however. Discriminatory laws still

support unfair hiring practices and unequal pay in too many countries and women are voiceless and refused positions of power in too many places. Patriarchal systems still victimize women, treating them as chattels and as the property of fathers or husbands, unable to attend school, given away in arranged marriages or sold into slavery. Sex selection that favours males, the aborting of female fetuses and female infanticide are common in certain parts of the world.

"I am surprised that you, a woman do not use inclusive language." Once you know, you can't not know. Once started on the path to awareness, one cannot go back

to blissful ignorance.

And so it is with all of us with too many issues. What is it that we don't we know? To what injustices are we insensitive because we have never seriously considered them or because they are outside our everyday reality? First Nations people have persistently called a privileged white culture to acknowledge the systemic oppression and racism that has tainted our history, still affects our present and is shaping our future. Our LGBTQ brothers and sisters have decried the prejudice and hate that condones violence and permits discrimination against them. Voices are raised on behalf of our beautiful earth pointing to the devastation we are inflicting upon it as we ignore climate change and pollution. Pope Francis and others are decrying the plight of refugees and immigrants as they wander unwelcome and abandoned. And we go about our lives oblivious.

But once you know, you can't not know. Once you start to hear, once you become aware of the injustice, feel the pain, and experience the wrong, you can't go back. Your consciousness has been raised and now you know. Casual racial slurs become shocking epithets; homophobic jokes are offensive and crude; wasting water and leaving lights on are unjust acts; exclusionary policies are unchristian.

Such awakening changes us: consciousness informs conscience. An awakened consciousness sensitizes us and we see the sin we didn't know was there. We see our own part in perpetuating that sin and we feel the call to conversion.

Lent is about both conversion and transformation. We can get pretty comfortable with the sins we live with, the everyday petty transgressions which we readily and regularly confess. Perhaps it's time to ask for something new — a consciousness-raising that allows us to see where we are blind and know the sin we are impervious to. Perhaps this Lent, we might pray for the grace to see what we need to know, and then, knowing, can't not know.

## Turn focus of Passion to redemption through life

By Joe Foy

As Lent moves toward Holy Week, the Passion of Jesus looms larger in our liturgy and our reflections. Most Roman Catholic churches have Stations of the Cross prominently displayed, and our traditional Good Friday services are centred on Jesus' suffering and death. Many are moved by that cruel ending to his life. And many have asked themselves, at one time or another, "Why on earth did God allow that to happen?"

Last year I heard a sermon proposing that God allowed it to happen because God's justice required repayment, some restitution, for all the sins we and our ancestors have committed. And only God's divine son could adequately repay that divine debt. The Incarnation was, therefore, to this purpose, and it was precisely *Jesus' cruel death on the cross* that achieved it. I find this view to be widespread among Catholics and Protestants alike and, in a sense, it is an ecumenical understanding of Redemption.

The idea that God required the death of (the divine) Jesus to appease God's divine anger and satisfy God's divine justice surfaced in the early church. St. Au-

gustine disagreed, and mounted a powerful counter argument: If God was *that* angry, God would not have sent Jesus in the first place! However, in spite of Augustine's great influence, the idea of a divine debt did not disappear.

In the 1100s, it emerged again in the western church (actually, England), as a full-blown theory that the death of God's divine son was the price required by God to satisfy his justice, and that Jesus' painful death on the cross is the means of that appeasement. It was articulated by St. Anselm of Canterbury, an influential theologian of the early Middle Ages. This theory is, at root, a legal theory: if a crime has been committed, there must be retribution for wrongs committed, and restitution in kind. Therefore, an offended Divinity cannot accept less than *divine* restitution for the offences committed. Centuries later, Anselm's view was strongly reinforced by some leaders of the Reformation. And today it is still reflected in many of our lenten and Holy Week prayers, reflections and hymns.

It seems to me, however, to embody a dark view of our God, one increasingly unattractive to Christians and non-Christians alike. It certainly seems to clash with Pope Francis' repeated claim that "Mercy is the name of God."

An alternative understanding might unfold in this way: the Creating God loves all creation, including all of us. God's sadness at our human infidelities and failures, while real, is always overcome by that overwhelming love (see the Parable of the Forgiving Father, sometimes misleadingly called the Parable of the Prodigal Son). His love is unconditional and abiding, and induced the Divine Word to become human to signal the depth and breadth of that love. Jesus' mission was to show us a new, better Way (see Acts 9, where his early disciples are called "followers of the Way").

After a rather short life, Jesus died. In itself, this should be no surprise: death is an integral part of being human. From the moment of his birth, the Son was dying, as are we all. Jesus, whom we profess to be truly human, had to die because all humans die.

However, Jesus did not just die; he was murdered most cruelly as a consequence of his faithfulness to his determination to preach a *new* Way. Now, the world God has created for us is a world in which actions have consequences. If you speak truth to power, you will pay for it. If you upset the established order, you will pay for it. And in a Roman world, you would be crucified for it. Surely Jesus could see where

his teaching would lead. But he persevered. I can believe he knew he would be crucified if he stayed the course. And that his Father knew he would be crucified, and wept to see it happen, just as we do. But I do *not* believe that God *planned* Jesus' crucifixion, or *wanted* it, or was *pleased* by it, or was *appeased* by it, or that divine anger or justice *required* it. What kind of a God would that be?

In our parish we used to sing during lenten services: Jesus, "by thy holy cross thou has redeemed the world." Now I sing, instead, Jesus "by your brave and generous life you have redeemed the world." Dying was a part of that living, of course. As will mine be for me, and yours be for you. But let's not emphasize that dying at the expense of his living. Instead, I prefer to believe that it was Jesus' dedication, fidelity, and compassion; his honesty and bravery; his stories, his teachings, and his example; his friendships, leadership and loyalty; his love of his God, of his people and of his fellow humans; his refusal to capitulate in the face of rejection by his own peoples' leaders, and his determination to carry on in spite of the danger that clearly generated. In sum, it was his *living and how he did that living* (and, yes, including his dying) that redeemed us.



# Jesus has the power to call us out of our tombs



## Liturgy and Life

Deacon Bob Williston

There is one central theme to the Lazarus story: Jesus is the light and life of the world. John announces at the beginning of the story that Lazarus' death was yet another one of the "signs" for God's glory to shine through Jesus. The all-important thing to remember is that John is preparing us to hear and understand the meaning of Jesus' passion and death. The church places this reading at the end of Lent just before we hear the reading of the passion on Palm/Passion Sunday.

In John's Gospel, the Lazarus story is the longest narrative next to the passion event itself. Both stories have one who is dead for three days. Both have bereaving loved ones confused and mourning their loss. Both come back to life. The difference is that Lazarus' recovery is a resuscitation called forth by Jesus. Lazarus will once again enter the doorway to death at life's end. On the other hand, the recovery of Jesus is through resurrection, life after death. Still, both are accomplished by the power of the Spirit of God from within.

In the Lazarus story there are two powerful moments of healing and life. The first is heeding the voice of Jesus when he commands: "Lazarus, come out!" As Lazarus comes out from the tomb, Jesus issues another command: "Unbind him and set him free!" This is John's way of describing the role of Jesus in a person's faith and the role of the believing community. Jesus is fulfilling the promise of God made by Ezekiel in the first reading: "I will open your graves and bring you up from your graves."

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

The second command is a command issued to the believing community. We are to unbind others and set them free. Now, at the precipice of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, let us consider metaphorically how these mysteries play out in our own lives.

Part of the human condition is to find ourselves stuck in a tomb, a grave, a dead-end street. Here we are first meant to identify those mysteries of sin, addiction, slavery, self-centredness, anti-life forces that bring us to a place where we are spiritually "dead." In the midst of that, we are called to listen to the voice of the only one who has the power to save us. Jesus calls us out of that tomb. "Mary, Fred, Patti, Harry, Lazarus, come out!"

If we can somehow respond to this invitation, there is a community of faith that can complete the transformation by unbinding us. (Have you ever felt bound up and tied up in knots emotionally or spiritually?)

Following this path leads us then to the part of the unbinding of others and setting them free. Each of these "places" can be found in our life. We are at times in the tomb. We feel dead inside. No options, unfree, bound up tight as a coil. We have been called out of that tomb by the one whose voice is calling us into new life. This can be a

reflect on your experiences of times of crisis when someone has been there for you, even in times of grief when another has stood by your side and wept with you. Or on



<b>Fifth Sunday of Lent</b>	<b>Ezekiel 37:12-14</b>
	<b>Psalms 130</b>
	<b>Romans 8:8-11</b>
<b>April 2, 2017</b>	<b>John 11:1-45</b>

challenge because there is something comfortable and familiar about the tombs we've created for ourselves. As painful as these tombs are, they feel comfortable, predictable, and safe. We might see the world outside of the tomb as hostile, uncontrollable and fear bids us stay where we are even though it is a painful and deathly place.

However, if we trust the call of Jesus and venture out into that world outside the tomb, we take the chance that the community of faith will respond to their call by Jesus to unbind us and through them we may experience healing, new life and a new freedom. The community of faith is meant to be there for us when we need them. You might

the positive side, when you have felt nourished, challenged, or healed through another person. St. Paul in the second reading calls this the Spirit of life. Even though we run up against the wall of our and other's mortality, we have within us a spirit of life, which is the life of Jesus.

We also have found ourselves in the role of the believing community of faith when we have loved in a way that unbinds others and sets them free. The journey from death to new life is difficult to understand. Sometimes it requires of us a leap of faith or an act of heroic surrender to something greater than our minds and hearts can get around. In the end, we are left with this one act of faith: "I believe in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

At the end of my life, I want to hear that gentle, loving voice of Jesus calling me to that great "something more." You see, part of understanding the mystery of Jesus' death means the willingness to wrestle with our own death and the death of those we love and cherish.

This deep and mysterious story is John's way of preparing us for the central story of the gospels, Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. As we are able to face sin and death and hear Jesus' voice calling us out from our dark night, we will then be able to walk with him through Holy Week.

# Everything we have is a gift: nothing is ever really ours

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Everything is gift. That's a principle that ultimately undergirds all spirituality, all morality, and every commandment. Everything is gift. Nothing can be ultimately claimed as our own. Genuine moral and religious sensitivity should make

us aware of that. Nothing comes to us by right.

This isn't something we automatically know. During a class some years ago a monk shared with me how, for all the early years of his religious life, he had been

resentful because he had to ask permission of his abbot if he wanted anything: "I used to think it was silly, me, a grown man, supposedly an adult, having to ask a superior if I wanted something. If I wanted a new shirt, I would have to ask the abbot for permission to buy it. I thought it was ridiculous that a grown man was reduced to being like a child."

But there came a day when he felt differently: "I am not sure of all the reasons, but one day I came to realize that there was a purpose and wisdom in having to ask permission for everything. I came to realize that nothing is ours by right and nothing may be taken as owned. Everything's a gift. Everything needs to be asked for. We need to be grateful to the universe and to God just for giving us a little space. Now, when I ask permission from the abbot because I need something, I no longer feel like a child. Rather, I feel like I'm properly in tune with the way things should be, in a gift-oriented universe within which none of us has a right to ultimately claim anything as one's own."

This is moral and religious wisdom, but it's a wisdom that goes against the dominant ethos within

our culture and against some of our strongest inclinations. Both from without and from within, we hear voices telling us: If you cannot take what you desire then you're weak, and weak in a double way: First, you're a weak person, too timid to fully claim what's yours. Second, you've been weakened by religious and moral scruples so as to be incapable of seizing the day. To not claim what is yours, to not claim ownership, is not a virtue but a fault.

It was those kinds of voices that this monk was hearing during his younger years and because of them he felt resentful and immature.

But Jesus wouldn't echo these voices. The gospels make it pretty clear that Jesus would not look on so much that is assertive, aggressive, and accumulative within our society, despite the praise and envy it receives, and see this as admirable, as healthily seizing the day. I doubt too that Jesus would share our admiration of the rich and famous who claim, as by right, their excessive wealth and status. When Jesus states that it is harder for a rich person to go to heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, he might have mitigated this by adding: "Unless, of course, the rich person, childlike, asks permission from the universe, from the community, and from God, every time he buys a shirt!" When Jesus tells us that children and the poor go to heaven more easily he is not idolizing either their innocence or poverty. He's idolizing the need to recognize and admit our dependence. Ultimately we

don't provide for ourselves and nothing is ours by right.

When I was in the Oblate novitiate, our novice master tried to impress upon us the meaning of religious poverty by making us write inside of every book that was given us the Latin words: *ad usum*. Latin for: *for use*. The idea was that, although this book was given to you for your personal use, you ultimately did not own it. It was just yours temporarily. We were then told this was true of everything else given us for our personal use, from our toothbrushes to the shirts on our backs. They were not really ours, but merely given us for our use.

One of the young men in that novitiate eventually left the order and became a medical doctor. He remains a close friend and he once shared with me how even today, as a doctor, he still writes those words, *ad usum*, inside all his books: "I don't belong to a religious order and don't have the vow of poverty, but that principle our novice master taught us is just as valid for me in the world as it is for any professed religious. Ultimately we don't own anything. Those books aren't mine, really. They've been given me, temporarily, for my use. Nothing belongs to anybody and it's good never to forget that!"

It's not a bad thing as an adult to have to ask permission to buy a new shirt. It reminds us that the universe belongs to everyone and that all of us should be deeply grateful that it gives us even a little space.



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# Call for end to poverty: unite all Canadians' voices

## Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



OK, how would you respond? You've just been asked for advice on how to end poverty in your community. What can you suggest?

You realize that more and more folks are struggling financially, and you've read in the *Prairie Messenger* that up to 4.9 million people live in poverty in this, one of the world's wealthiest countries. You've heard on the news that over 850,000 Canadians used a food bank every month in 2016. Your church collects bread and canned goods for the local soup kitchen during the weekly Sunday offertory — but when you stop to think about it, this has been done for years. The need just never

seems to decrease. . . .

Your children, now saddled with debts from their college studies, are having trouble finding a decent job. Earning minimum wage at the local coffee shop helps, but there are no benefits and everything seems to be spent well before the next payday. Young adults might as well put off planning for the future — housing prices are so high in the city that they may never be able to purchase a home.

Yet, at the same time, you realize things could be worse. Canadian poverty is more persistent among certain populations. A third of all newcomers to Canada live below the poverty line. Aboriginal poverty is shockingly high (69 per cent of First Nations children living on reserves in Saskatchewan, and 76 per cent in Manitoba, live in poverty). Youth not in school, children who live in lone-parent families (45 per cent), unattached older individuals (28.8 per cent) and disabled people

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



CPJ

**DIGNITY FOR ALL** — Since 2009, Citizens for Public Justice has co-led the *Dignity for All* campaign, along with Canada Without Poverty, a national organization of people with lived experiences of poverty. Over 11,000 individuals and 665 groups (including the bishops, the CWL and many religious congregations) have supported *Dignity for All's* call for a national anti-poverty plan.

comprise other vulnerable groups.

So it is remarkable that, for the first time in our nation's history, the federal government is now ready to develop a federal poverty reduction

strategy and has begun a national consultation process. This is something the Catholic bishops and other churches have joined anti-poverty groups in demanding for years! A historic opportunity now presents itself — but what specifically will our faith communities propose?

On Oct. 17, 1996, Canadians turned on their evening newscast to hear CBC anchor Peter Mansbridge begin, "Good evening. A blistering attack on governments across the country today, from Canada's Roman Catholic bishops. The issue is poverty. The bishops accuse governments of using the most vulnerable people in society as human fodder in the battle against deficits. And the bishops weren't the only ones speaking out. . . ." Their pastoral letter, entitled, "The Struggle Against Poverty: A Sign of Hope for Our World," explained the issues and recommended action.

Similar resolve from all faith communities is needed in 2017.

Since 2009, Citizens for Public Justice has co-led the *Dignity for All* campaign, along with Canada Without Poverty, a national organization of people with lived experiences of poverty. Over 11,000 individuals and 665 groups (including the bishops, the CWL and many religious congregations) have supported *Dignity for All's* call for a national anti-poverty plan, based on legislation that can ensure robust targets, timelines and publicly reporting on progress (or lack thereof) in reducing poverty.

For our part, Citizens for Public Justice has organized three

daylong workshops for faith communities, updating them on the federal government's plans for consultation, how they can give input, and how they can have impact. Members of Christian, Jewish and Muslim groups were invited to share their anti-poverty advocacy work, and strategize about how we could all move forward to ensure that the federal plan is strong, accountable and promotes the dignity of all people.

Over a five-year period, we gathered expert researchers to design the best possible poverty reduction plan. Recommendations were developed in six policy areas, including income security, housing, health, food security, jobs and early childhood education and care. *Dignity for All's* model anti-poverty plan can be read at <https://dignityforall.ca/our-plan/>

Some among us might find it too daunting to get involved at the policy level, telling government what they could or should do to reduce the burden of poverty in our communities. So CPJ has endeavoured to simplify the process, making it easier for you to share your concerns and ideas with government in just a few minutes. You can act, expressing your views online, just by going to [www.cpj.ca/CPRS](http://www.cpj.ca/CPRS)

No poverty plan will be immediately perfect, all-encompassing, or successful. But the federal government must hear from thousands of Canadians before the June deadline, that action on poverty reduction is the highest of moral and political priorities.

## Culture is embedded in victimhood

## Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



"God breaks the heart again and again and again until it stays open."

— Hazrat Inayat Khan

That quote by the founder of the Sufi Order in the West (see his book *The Art of Being and Becoming*) was posted on LinkedIn of all places and produced some remarkable reactions. Off the top of the comments was the charge that it represented a "very old testament, vengeful, jealous God." The discussion which followed revealed how embedded we have become in a culture of victimhood, and how the hardships of soul growth can make no sense from the ego's point of view.

Comments that ensued: "Repeated abuse masquerading as freedom? Please!!!" Someone then tried to offset the notion that God would be exercising vengeance or

punishment, invoking Hemingway's famous perspective: "Life breaks everyone, and afterward some are strong at the broken places." For a moment in the string of comments there was a note of consolation: "I suppose . . . there's a payoff — a larger self, a more compassionate heart — to which we are led by suffering."

Yet still no comprehension of the way we are loved into fuller and deeper being through our personal crucifixions. "It sounds like assault, not suffering! There's a huge difference between being assaulted and suffering an injury and the idea that God would do that 'for our own good' just doesn't strike a resonate chord. Sad we need to accept pain to cease it. A lesson does not need to be delivered with pain and suffering." That sent the discussion into a long sidebar about the difference between pain and suffering from a Buddhist point of view. In summary, when we are over-identified with the story of our pain, it becomes the kind of suffering that reinforces the self tightly contracted around its own importance.

Something about the confusion between surrendering to the meta-

noia of a broken heart not needing to mend itself with defences set off a lady who joined the online conversation "shouting" in caps: "WHAT UTTER DRIVEL . . . WE ARE MASTERS OF OURSELVES . . . UNIQUE BEINGS WHO THINK . . . GOD HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM OF CHOICE — NOT TO FORCE OUR HEARTS INTO SUBMISSION . . . WAKE UP . . . YOU HAVE A CHOICE . . . IT'S YOUR CALL NOT GOD'S . . . I DON'T BLAME MY HEART-BREAKS ON GOD."

Given all these projections directed at God, for better or for worse, we can see why all of it has to inevitably and necessarily die on the cross. All the emotional attachments of our hearts, as truthful as those might be, still leave us seeing through a glass darkly, through veils concealing our spiritual heart, which is neither created nor destroyed by the passage of time. The resurrected heart, the everlasting essence and perfume of our personhood, is exactly that which opens and stays open after all the tragic closures have deeply disappointed and disillusioned our strategies for happiness.

Thank God that God doesn't depend on anyone "getting it" intellectually. Yet it's "nice to have" and even LinkedIn debates can be broken and opened on another level: "Not God as the punitive parent. God as the source of that compassion . . . impossible to close (the heart) once it's been transformed in this way, surely?"

Yes, open even unto the last licks comment capping off the LinkedIn string about the meaning involved: "THE JURY IS STILL OUT. . . ."

*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). He also directs a documentary series entitled *GuideLives for the Journey: Ordinary Persons, Extraordinary Pathfinders*. <http://www.guidelives.ca/> Connect with Cedric on <https://www.facebook.com/cms94> or via [cms94@hotmail.com](mailto:cms94@hotmail.com)*

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# Catholic-Muslim dialogue needs wider public awareness

## Challenge of Ecumenism

Thomas Ryan, CSP



Regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues over the past 20 years “have been open and honest, appreciating our commonalities and being honest about our differences,” said Muzammil Siddiqi of the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California.

“We have to bring it to the wider public in this era of fear and mistrust,” he added.

He made the comments as Catholic and Muslim leaders and scholars met March 7 - 8 for the National Catholic-Muslim Dialogue at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. The dialogue is co-sponsored by the Committee on Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The 33 participants took on the complex topic of the names of God that are used in both religions. The dialogue itself was not open to the public, but a public session was held March 8.

During the dialogue, the presenter on the Catholic side, Rev. Sidney Griffith of The Catholic University of America in Washington, noted how the 99 names of God which Muslims draw from their Scriptures and honour in praying with beads call Christians to examine their own Scriptures more deeply to see where these names for God find representation

*Tom Ryan, CSP, directs the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in Boston.*

in Christian Scriptures as well.

“The beautiful names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” noted Griffith, “are the primary names of God that appear in our Christian holy Scriptures. And the theological formulas that have evolved over the centuries in church councils represent our efforts to understand these names of God.”

Griffith said that talking about God’s names and attributes can be an occasion for Christians to say, “You think we Christians go too far, but we don’t think you Muslims go far enough. However, if our differences cannot find a resolution, they can at least find a better understanding of how we come to what we believe.”

In his response to Griffith’s presentation, Irfan Omar, an associate professor of theology at Jesuit-run Marquette University in Milwaukee, reflected that what is of most importance is that all the divine names used by Muslims and Christians honour the one God of all creation, the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses and Mary.

Pim Valkenberg, a professor of religion and culture at The Catholic University of America, made the point that, for Christians, talking about the Trinity is a question of who Jesus Christ is. “Jesus influenced the ideas that Christians have about God,” he said. “For Christians, in God there is relationality. For Muslims, there is singleness in God.”

In another presentation, Zeki

Saritoprak, a professor and holder of the Beddiuzaman Said Nursi chair in Islamic studies at Jesuit-run John Carroll University in Cleveland, spoke on “An Islamic Theological Approach to the Essence and Attributes of God.”

He described three categories for the divine attributes with examples for each: the essence of God (power, almighty); actual activities of God (mercy, anger); attributes related to God’s beauty and kindness (generosity and compassion).

In a discussion period, Bishop Gregory J. Mansour of the Maronite Eparchy in Brooklyn, New York, and chair of Catholic Relief Services, expressed his conviction that the time has come to turn the bilateral process of dialogue into a trilateral process involving Jews, Christians and Muslims together.

“The once-thought ‘impossible’ real collaboration between Jews, Christians and Muslims is now very doable,” he said.

Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich is the Catholic co-chair of the national dialogue. The Muslim co-chair is Sayyid Syeed, director of the Islamic Society of North America’s Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances.

The USCCB’s Committee on Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs has co-sponsored three regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues for over two decades — mid-Atlantic, Midwest and West Coast. In February 2016, the committee announced the launch of a national dialogue.

Addressing the session open to the public were San Diego Bishop Robert W. McElroy, co-chair of the USCCB West Coast Catholic-Muslim Dialogue, and Sherman Jackson, a professor of religion and American studies and ethnicity at the University of Southern California Dornsife.

“Christians and Muslims are communities of believers who read

their sacred texts, pray, and seek to serve the poor,” said McElroy. “These parallel pathways are forged by common insights.”

Nevertheless, he noted, the doctrinal elements that separate the two faiths are not minor, and said there should be four characteristics to their dialogue:

— It must reflect an overriding sense of friendship among the participants.

— It must reflect honesty in delineating the differences in the two traditions.

— Participants must keep before them a sense of awe at the depth and beauty of expression of key elements in their faiths and practice.

— There must be a concern to

relate the dialogue’s formal theological reflections to the larger faith communities that the participants represent.

“How can we broadly convey this deepened level of friendship and truth to Catholics and Muslims within our nation? It does little pastoral good for a national dialogue to focus on theological themes if the pastoral life of our members is not affected,” McElroy said. “We will have to create new structures that ensure that the dialogue responds to the relations between our followers with each other.”

He added: “The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. It depends on love of the one God and love of neighbour.”



CNS/Karen Callaway

**THE IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE —** Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago visits March 8 with Scott Alexander, associate professor of Islamic studies at Catholic Theological Union, and Saleha Jabeen, a 2014 graduate of the theological union. They spoke following a public session held during the March 7 - 8 National Catholic-Muslim Dialogue, which had as its theme “Reflections on the Common Good and Hospitality in the Catholic and Muslim Traditions” and was held at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

## A movement is rising that will no longer be denied

Continued from page 9

folk rock era took hold in the 1960s and ’70s, native Americans helped to define its evolution. . . . For the most part, their Indian heritage was unknown.”

That was true of the seminal and disruptive influence virtuoso guitarist Link Wray (Shawnee ancestry), creator of the legendary 1958 instrumental “Rumble,” had on the biggest rock stars that followed including Jimi Hendrix, who was proud of his Cherokee heritage. The music industry, though, wasn’t interested in indigenous roots or issues. A case in point were the troubles encountered by iconic country singer Johnny Cash in getting released his 1964 album *Bitter Tears: Ballads of the American Indian*.

Canadians may already be aware of the indigenous ancestry of folksinger Buffy Sainte-Marie

(Cree), and musician-songwriter-composer Robbie Robertson (Mohawk), who came to prominence with The Band. But they will be surprised at how many other great artists appear in this revelatory account that draws on concert footage, archival materials, interviews and stories.

Fittingly, “Rumble” also brings that rousing influence forward into present-day indigenous rights struggles such as the Standing Rock protests explored in *Rise*. We see it in the music video “Stand Up/StandNRock” organized by Taboo, a member of the hip-hop group The Black Eyed Peas who is of Mexican-American and Shoshone ancestry. And there’s a stirring power in the blood hearing Buffy Sainte-Marie singing “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.” A movement is rising that will no longer be denied.

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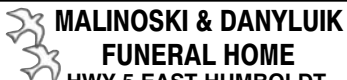
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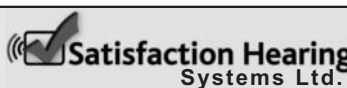
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# Wading into silence when there are no words

## Barefoot and Preaching

Leah Perrault



I have been wading barefoot into silence for the last several weeks, not having adequate words for the weight of things. Just days after writing about carrying each other, our world crashed into silence with the delivery of our baby at just 10 weeks. We held her tiny body and cried. Held by the silence. Early in the morning, before the sun rose and our kids filled our home with rising sounds, we named her Claire.

Time seemed to stop with her heart, but the sun rose anyway. It took my breath away that the world could be so beautiful without her in it. Without her inside me. When our oldest was born and we drove her home from the hospital, I remember being overwhelmed that the whole world didn't stop to notice the mir-

acle in our car. And people got up and went to work and drove past me on the road just the same now, oblivious to the death of a miracle.

Her birth was every bit as holy as those of my three living children: anticipated, aching, and real. The thing I love about birthing is the way I cannot be anywhere else, the way that giving birth takes me over completely. And this time, I was overtaken by death instead of life, a death that passed through my body, which I cannot leave behind.

There are no adequate words for the pain of losing a child, no explanation that removes the suffering. In just 10 short weeks, half of which we had only hoped for her, she had already changed our whole world. We imagined the places in the house she would occupy, the rearrangement of seating in the car and at the kitchen table, the adjustment of summer vacation plans. Our hearts had already loved her into the sandbox with the cousins



Leah Perrault

The sun rises, and the neighbourhood greets the day, oblivious to miracles of life and death.

and friends that will be born this summer and fall. Silence will fill the space that would have been her voice crying for us in the night or fighting with her siblings.

God has been so close in this season of silence, in colour and feelings, shadows and touch. The usual words and images that connect me with the Creator have fallen away, at least for now. I am held in an unfamiliar but wonderful way. Perhaps this dif-

ferent way of feeling God will make sense later. Family and friends have wrapped us in care that we knew but did not know. Food and help with the laundry, cards and emails, prayers and thoughts, all of it carrying us forward into a future without her in our arms, but nonetheless changed by her.

Six surviving flowers sit on the kitchen counter from the bouquets that slowly die after her. They pro-

claim the way of things, that death follows living, that I am not in control of either. Nothing I have touched or held, longed for or lost has ever been mine. Everything is a gift for a season.

In simply living her own growth, Claire has given us so many gifts. Growth in our marriage around the invitation to love her. Deep joy at the knowledge of her existence. A changed picture of our future and family. An invitation to sit with the silence of the mystery we cannot understand. A reminder that I need not *do* anything in order to change the world. The love poured out in response to her life and her death. They are not the gifts I would have chosen, but they are gifts of this silence that follows her.

And so I whisper into this Silence holding the miracle and misery and mystery of it all: hold me here in the holiness and reverence of living and dying, and help me to receive the grace of what is even while we feel the pain of what could have been.

## Globally, women are the heart of change



### Everyday Theology

Louise McEwan

Women are at the heart of change around the globe.

Locally, a group of socially conscious women designed and implemented a project called "Women Creating Change: Working Together for Economic Opportunity" (WCC). The purpose of the project, funded by the Status of Women, was to "determine and address barriers to women achieving economic security and stability." The project's research identified low wages, access to education, childcare, transportation and housing as barriers to economic and social well-being for local women.

With the research completed, the project leaders cast about for practical solutions to overcome some of the barriers that keep women in poverty. They are making strides in education and non-traditional areas of employment for women.

In consultation with local education and employment counsel-

lors, the project identified a significant gap in opportunities for women who were exploring access to education as a means of getting out of poverty. With generous contributions from a number of organizations, WCC created the Stepping Out Bursary to help with funding gaps. Recipients of the bursary work with an employment counsellor to identify goals, learn about the range of services and funding available, and determine where a bursary would fill in important gaps. Jan Morton, director of the Greater Trails Skill Centre and a member of the project team, describes the bursary as "a small resource that makes a big difference to the women who receive it."

Morton speaks enthusiastically about the project's Mining and Refining for Women (MR4W) program. Working closely with Teck Metals Trail Operation and Bock and Associates, experts in workplace training, MR4W has developed and is delivering an innovative mentorship program that supports the retention and advancement of women in non-traditional roles.

"The program was designed to support women but also with a view to improving opportunity for everyone," said Morton. "Teck has put a lot of heart — and hard work — into this. The impact will

be long-term."

Globally, there are numerous organizations at work to improve the lives of women and girls.

Plan International Canada is doing extensive work globally to promote the rights of millions of girls in developing countries. Education is a key component of the program. "When girls are educated, healthy and empowered, they can lift themselves and everyone around them out of poverty" (Plan International website).

Development and Peace (D&P), the official international development arm of the Canadian Catholic Church, is working with partner organizations in countries worldwide to secure the rights of women. D&P is highlighting the work of women in overcoming injustice in this year's Share Lent campaign, Women at the Heart of Change.

Mike Bouchier, a Development and Peace parish representative, explains this year's theme. "Women at the Heart of Change conjures up more than just the desire to reiterate the centrality of women as an engine of change. It is also to open people's hearts during this season of Lent to the sufferings, injustices and obstacles faced, every single day, by millions of women and girls all over the world."

Through its annual Share Lent campaigns, D&P seeks to raise awareness about injustice. It seeks to prod the conscience into a response, to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, as someone once said of the Christian message. To this end, D&P has been hosting women from Haiti, Colombia and Syria who are agents of change. The women

have been speaking in select communities across Canada about the status of women in their region. They talk about the work being done to overcome discrimination, abuse and poverty, as well as the important role that international aid plays in advancing the human rights of women and girls.

Across the globe, individuals, institutions and organizations are seeking ways to empower women. Even though gender analysis is the impetus for action, the changes wrought in the lives of women benefit everyone.

These collective and collaborative efforts illustrate the need and the desire for more equity and justice at home and abroad. "Fundamentally, we are still struggling to respect the dignity of the human person," said Ann Godderis, from the WCC project.

From one small village to the next, women are at the heart of change, shaping a brighter future for all people.

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# It's important to be judicious in who deserves trust

## Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



I couldn't believe the gall of the man. First he tried to scam me for \$3,000, and when that didn't work, he tried it again.

It started with a telephone message. A man with a pronounced accent informed me that his name was David and he was from Microsoft. They wanted to refund me \$249, he said, because they were recalling some software that had glitches in it. They were removing the faulty software from all their customers' computers and would offer it back to us at a discount once it had been debugged.

I had recently purchased a new laptop and, along with it, a bundle of software from Microsoft. It did have a glitch in it — the email program had mysteriously erased itself after being installed — but I had downloaded a different version from the Internet and now it was working fine. I erased the phone message and thought no more about it.

The next day David called again — five times. I recognized the number. On the sixth attempt I finally answered, as he was obviously not going to give up. He gave me the same spiel, and I must say he was persuasive.

It would be a simple procedure, he assured me. All I had to do was download a file from an Internet address he would give me, and he would take it from there.

I was suspicious, of course, but I was curious, too, and I didn't see the harm in starting the process and seeing where it led. That was my first mistake.

Downloading and opening the file gave him remote access to my computer. Still, his actions seemed logical, and he sounded so reasonable that I didn't see the harm in it. That was my second mistake, for he then rebooted my computer from his remote location and that meant I had to sign in again. That gave him access to my password, which he changed.

I protested, but he assured me that it was necessary, and it was only temporary; things would be returned to normal once he had finished.

That was when things became truly bizarre. He said he was going to transfer the refund to my bank account, but because it was from an offshore location he would have to deposit some \$3,000 in order to avoid paying a certain tax that I had never heard of.

"This sounds very suspicious," I told him.

"You're the suspicious one, Mr. Donald," he responded. "I'm just doing what I said I would do."

He proceeded, and by nefarious means gained access to my online banking information. My computer screen went blank for several minutes, which he assured

me was normal. He told me to let him know when the display returned.

When it did, I saw a statement from my bank listing a recent deposit from Microsoft of \$3,000. It looked authentic, but I told David I didn't trust him or the statement, and hung up.

He immediately called back, telling me that if I interrupted the process at this point my hard drive would be wiped clean and I would not be able to sign on to my computer again because I no longer had the correct password.

"Now you're threatening me," I accused.

"I'm not threatening you, Mr. Donald. I'm simply telling you the facts."

I rebooted my computer, and sure enough, it wouldn't let me sign in. At this point I saw no option but to proceed.

Of course, he said, I would need to pay back the balance of the \$3,000 he had deposited into my account — he was referring to it as "my money" now — but I

couldn't just send him a wire transfer without triggering the prohibitive tax he had referred to earlier. Instead, I was to go to the nearest Wal-Mart and purchase iTunes gift cards to the required amount, then he would call me back and I would give him the codes from the cards, which he could then cash in.

That would be a stupid thing to do, I told him. He protested. "How else are you going to pay me my money?" I said I was going to go to my bank and check my account and see if he had, in fact, deposited anything. He became very exercised at that, and warned me against it in the strongest terms. I hung up and turned off my computer.

Of course, there was no \$3,000 in my bank account. It was all a scam. I got the bank to issue me a new card, and I changed my online password.

Unfortunately, I still couldn't get into my computer, so I had to take it to London Drugs, where they assured

me they could restore it and remove any malware that might have been installed. It was a nuisance, but it was unavoidable, and I had backups of my data, so I hadn't really lost anything.

The next day I received a call from a number I recognized. "This is David from Microsoft," said a strongly accented voice.

"You tried this yesterday," I said.

"Yes," he admitted. He was about to say more, but I called him a liar and a fraud and hung up. He

hasn't called back since.

No reputable software company will make cold calls to its customers, the technician at London Drugs told me, and I should never allow anyone remote access to my computer.

It was a lesson learned: if you are too trusting, or even too curious, there is a criminal somewhere who will try to take advantage of it. It's unfortunate, but there is evil in the world, and trust should not be squandered on the undeserving.



Design Pics

**SUSPICIONS** — Unfortunately there will always be those who prey upon people's trust for nefarious purposes.

## The challenges, sorrows, and joys of a slow goodbye

By Alma Barkman

"There she is!"

Whatever else dementia had stolen from him, my husband, Leo, still recognized me. From his wheelchair beside the nursing station, he beamed with delight each time I stepped off the elevator, and the staff smiled knowingly.

Caring for him at home the past five years I had regretfully watched him inch down that slow decline into the abyss of dementia. At first there was only his confusion as to the days of the week, then occasional disorientation, then the failure to recognize familiar people. He slowly lost initiative in gardening, house upkeep and car repairs — things he had always done. He could not remember the deaths of his siblings and grieved for them anew each time I had to explain they were gone. As time went by he started to dress himself all topsyturvy — four sweaters, socks over shoes, pyjamas under pants, but he was compliant when I would help him.

The last six months, however, his condition degenerated rapidly, and on a frigid January night he decided to go outside to start the car, wearing no jacket, mitts, hat or overshoes. In the interest of safety I had long before swapped his real key for a fake one and when his attempts to get the false key into the ignition failed, he became irritated and angry. Determined to "go home," he started

walking down the driveway into the vicious northwest wind. Fearing for his safety, I called the city police, who kindly escorted us to the hospital where he was admitted.

I knew this day would come, but the reality was the difference between expecting a punch and feeling the blow. After 58 years of marriage, walking out of the hospital carrying Leo's hat and coat — the fuzzy one he always loved, and the tweed hat that suited him so well — I had the feeling he would never come home again.

And I was right.

My son and I drove home in silence, struggling to maintain composure. I inserted the key into the back door. Leo's old work shoes were lying there to greet me, his ragged old sweater in the closet. I fell into our son's arms and sobbed.

Shuffling down the hall, I passed Leo's music room with the star quilt and the orange thermal blanket, the Bose radio preset to classical and sacred music stations, his old Bible ragged from use, a pile of hymn books on his desk. He had been a church music conductor, starting at age 16. Now there would be no more pleasant mornings as he listened to his favourite songs while I quilted, nobody to admire my handiwork or check my progress.

Exhausted, I crawled into bed, where for over 50 years I had fallen asleep with my head resting in the crook of my husband's arm. It was here our four children had been joyfully conceived. Leo had cradled and comforted each newborn in his muscular arms, tears of

wonderment brimming in his hazel eyes. As they grew he had diligently taught each one of them piano, giving them lessons and supervising their practices until all four were accomplished pianists. Of late music had been the one thing that reassured and comforted him when he was confronted by the many imaginary fears generated by dementia.

I fell into a fitful sleep, only to keep waking because I thought I heard Leo roaming about the house. Come the morning, I set the table for one. No more bowl of porridge, two slices of toast with peanut butter, a cup of decaf coffee, cream but no sugar — his usual breakfast.

I ran the water into the sink and imagined I heard him shuffling down the hall to dry dishes. It's what he'd done every day since he had taken early retirement 30 years ago. Next to God, family and music, he loved the suburban bungalow we'd built together 50 years ago, the garden, and his car.

He enjoyed road trips because they gave him an excuse to update our cars, and there were many.

About three months after he'd been admitted to hospital I was asked to sign the paper to put him in line for a nursing home. Despite authoring nine books and publishing hundreds of articles, putting my signature on that consent form was the most difficult line I have ever written. I doubt if any divorce papers or even death certificates have ever been dampened with so many kinds of tears — of regret, doubt, tears of loss, anguish, betrayal,

tears of separation. I felt I was abandoning him even though I visited him at the hospital twice a day, always to be greeted by those same three words, "There she is!"

*At one point a nurse told me his vital signs were so stable he could live for years. Would he have to linger in this state for that long? And how could I continue to bear up under the emotional strain?* Ephesians 6:10 came to mind: "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." And God was good, providing daily support through the hospital staff, my family, my friends and my faith.

The day came when I went to visit Leo and found him in physical distress, his breathing laboured. I stayed with him long into the night and returned early the next morning. My son Lyle and his wife, Kathy, kept vigil that afternoon while I went home to grab some sleep.

I was just about to lie down when Kathy phoned. "You better come, Mom. There's been a change."

Ten minutes later I was at his bedside, but too late. Kathy said he had kept reaching up, reaching up. Then he opened his eyes wide, exclaimed, "Angels!" and he was gone.

While I was disappointed I had not been at his bedside, such a unique home-going serves to soften my sorrows and reinforces my belief in heaven. I fully expect when the day comes that the angels accompany me Home they will smile knowingly as I step onto that eternal shore and Leo exclaims, "There she is!"

*Barkman is a freelance writer from Winnipeg. [www.almabarkman.com](http://www.almabarkman.com)*



## Organ donation dilemma

Another wrinkle has been added to the quagmire the legalization of assisted suicide in Canada has initiated.

It is the close connection between the need for donated organs and the retrieval of organs from people who choose to end their lives.

In Canada in 2014, more than 4,500 people were waiting for an organ, and 278 died waiting, according to the National Post.

The March 20 online edition reported that doctors have already harvested organs from dozens of Canadians who underwent medically assisted death, a practice supporters say expands the pool of desperately needed organs. Ethicists, however, worry this could make it harder for euthanasia patients to voice a last-minute change of heart.

In Ontario, 26 people who died by lethal injection have donated tissue or organs since the federal law decriminalizing medical assistance in dying, or MAID, came into effect last June, according to information obtained by the Post. This was out of a total of 338 who died by medical assistance.

A major ethical concern is that the need for an

organ transplant may override the freedom of people who have chosen assisted suicide to change their mind.

Ethicists say organ donation could put pressure on those who qualify for assisted suicide to choose death, that the terminally ill “may feel they would better serve society by dying and saving other people’s lives,” Dr. Marie-Chantal Fortin, a transplant nephrologist at the *Centre hospitalier de l’Université de Montréal*, and ethicist Julie Allard write in the journal, *Clinical Ethics*.

Others are asking, what if people agree to donate, but then change their mind about hastening death? Would they feel compelled to follow through with the act, knowing the chosen recipients are waiting for their organs?

Jennifer Chandler, a professor in the centre for health law, policy and ethics at the University of Ottawa, said, “Imagine a situation where the workup is done — people have gone out and done the medical tests and found the recipients and set everything up. And then you change your mind.

“One wonders if perhaps that might create pressure to continue with the MAID,” she said. “It would be very important in these scenarios to make it very clear to people that they can change their mind at any time — that someone shouldn’t stick with MAID just

because they feel an obligation, having set the process in motion.”

At present, it is after people are declared “brain dead” or suffer cardiac death that their organs are allowed to be harvested. Patients are removed from life supports which have kept their hearts and lungs functioning. In the latter case, once the heart stops beating — and after a five to 10 minute “no-touch” period — organ procurement can begin.

However, death can take several hours and vital organs like the heart and lungs deteriorate. With assisted dying, organs can be harvested much sooner, making it more ideal to harvest healthy body parts.

Belgium and the Netherlands already allow organ harvesting after euthanasia.

While church teaching encourages organ donation, an ethical dilemma is raised for a patient to accept organs from someone who chose an assisted death. While typically the cause of death isn’t disclosed, including cases of suicide, unless there’s a valid medical reason to do so, a patient’s ethical dilemma would be much more serious if the donor had wanted to change his or her mind about dying, but it was ignored.

This is just another crack in the new legal situation in Canada. — PWN

# Hate crimes follow decades of fear-mongering, hate speech and lies

## Soul Mending

Yvonne A. Zarowny



*“What has happened to you, the Europe of humanism, the champion of human rights, democracy and freedom — the mother of great men and women who upheld and even sacrificed their lives for the dignity of their brothers and sisters?”*

— Pope Francis May 6, 2016

Given the tragic hate crimes committed in Quebec City Sunday, Jan. 29, resulting in the deaths of six men at prayer and the wounding of 19 others, we

need to be asking: Canada, what is happening to us?

Please stop blaming Mr. Trump! He is a symptom — not a cause.

These hate crimes follow decades of fear-mongering, hate speech and lies intentionally incubated in our communities. This includes our real, digital and faith communities.

Remember the 2015 campaign of the Harper Conservatives? It had the same divisive characteristics as Trump’s — just different intensity. Two-thirds of us rejected it!

The 2016 Brexit campaign and what is currently happening in Europe are similar.

These tactics achieve the desired result of preventing the much needed systemic change we actually know how to do to co-create a variety of authentic cultures of life.

St. John Paul II brought the

notion of “social sin” into our official church teachings in his 1991 *Centesimus Annus*. “Social” when used in this manner means “co-created by humans.”

Anything co-created by humans can be changed by humans.

“Social sin” refers to any situation flowing from our social arrangements that denies God’s Creation life with dignity — such as our economy.

The purpose of social justice is the removal, with Divine inspiration and assistance, of the causes of social sin while assisting those denied life with dignity.

To become effective in stopping these tactics corroding our, and our community’s, souls, we need to understand who developed them, why and who benefits from their use.

The intentional spread of disinformation/misinformation, fear-mongering, objectification of “the other,” and intolerance are “weapons” in the arsenal of “low-intensity warfare.”

These were developed through a clever, if disingenuous, application of insights gleaned from the social sciences over the last century.

Edward Bernays in his 1928 classic *Propaganda* outlines how these insights were used to develop social scientific techniques to manipulate “the masses” (that’s us) in democracies *without* our knowing it is happening.

During the 1970s some were morphed by the Americans and their allies (us again) into something called “low-intensity warfare.”

As American sociologist and investigative journalist Christian Parenti outlines in his 2011 *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*, the purpose of these tactics is to destroy “the sinews of community.”

## Costco finds a growing market in Canada

By Sylvain Charlebois

Unless you’re there on a Saturday, constantly trying to avoid collisions with oversized shopping carts, you probably like Costco, even though it will cost you more to shop there as of June.

The basic membership fee is going up by \$5 to \$60, while premium folks will have to pay \$120, up from \$110.

Paying to spend is an incredible business model. With more than 10 million members in Canada and a renewal rate exceeding 90 per cent, Costco makes millions before selling a single product.

And with high inventory turnover that allows it to pay for merchandise after it’s bought by customers, Costco looks a lot like a bank. It’s all about cash flow.

Recent results weren’t bad for Costco worldwide, but Canada has become a beacon of financial success for this global player.

Same-store sales for Costco in Canada were up eight per cent this

year — higher than in any other country in which the company operates. These are the kind of numbers most retailers would die for and the future looks even brighter.

The company operates 94 stores in Canada and will add seven more by year’s end. This is the most stores Costco has opened anywhere in the last decade.

And Canada will remain a growth market for Costco for the next several years, largely because it doesn’t have to compete with its U.S. rival, Walmart-owned Sam’s Club, which failed miserably in Canada a few years ago.

Costco is well-run. It sees itself as a retailer, as well as a portal to a vast but often obscure supply chain. The membership angle makes customers feel like elite guests, as members get access to special discounts from manufacturers.

Costco is also a logistical masterpiece. A typical Costco store carries about 5,500 merchandise categories, compared to around 150,000 in most other stores of similar size. So procurement is much less stressful and less costly. More choice can lead to confusion for customers and potentially fewer sales. Wide aisles for easy movement of pallets allows Costco to turn over inventory more efficiently than any other retailer,

with much less labour. And there are no signs, no weekly promotional specials and no decorations.

— FOOD SALES, page 19

*An educator, writer and engaged citizen living in Qualicum Beach, B.C., Zarowny is also on the leadership team for her parish’s Justice and Life Ministry.*

— SOUL, page 19



CNS/Thaier Al-Sudani, Reuters

**IRAQI FAMILY LIVES WITH VIOLENCE** — A displaced Iraqi family walks near destroyed buildings March 4 in Mosul, following a battle between Iraqi forces and Islamic State militants.

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



Conservative party candidates have much to offer

**The Editor:** It has been very difficult to find any forthright or in-depth reporting regarding the Conservative party leadership race. In our local paper, there has been nothing but derision nor robot-like opinion either as a followup to a debate or as a bio on the candidates.

A refreshing change

**The Editor:** How refreshing to read Mary Deutscher’s tribute to her grandmother (PM, March 15). I always look forward to Mary’s column because she is not a “feminist” in the modern version.

I thank her for having the courage to speak out about so much of our culture which is defiant to our Catholic faith.

I always cringe when International Women’s Day comes because it is often taken as a day to promote abortion as Justin Trudeau and Marie-Claude Bibeau did on March 8. — **Rosemary Lalonde, Kelowna, B.C.**

Gruending, in his blog (PM, March 15), unfortunately, does the same. For instance, he states that many candidates are unknowns and in saying so, infers that they would have nothing to offer.

I say his article has nothing to offer, other than confirming what we hope everyone knows, that Kevin O’Leary should not be running and Andrew Scheer is a good candidate. But these candidates aren’t unknowns!

Here is a snapshot of a few candidates.

Lemieux is an engineer, MP from 2006 - 2015, served in the military for 20 years, became a business owner and then joined politics. He is completely bilingual. He even would like to see an end to sex-selective abortion.

Steven Blaney was Minister of Public Safety, Minister of Veteran Affairs, and has written numerous books. He is a brilliant man with great ideas.

Deepak Obhrai, representing Calgary since 1997, was formerly

Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign affairs. He has a wealth of information on trade.

Brad Trost has served our area since 2014. He is a social and fiscal conservative, something worth opening our minds to if we want to have a secure future both in the strength of families and jobs for everyone.

Kellie Leitch is being attacked by every reporter. I wonder what is wrong with Canadian values? Do we not think Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Association, Religious Freedom and the Rule of Law are good things?

The Conservative party is not in disarray. Just because it is not homogenous does not indicate disarray. In fact it is very healthy that so many ideas can be brought forth in one party.

There is so much to report on and consider during this leadership race. Why don’t we talk about what these candidates have to offer Canadians? — **Florence Paquette, Saskatoon**



Design Pics

Orange Insurrection

In the chapel in the city jail,  
Inmates sat in orange clad,  
Pondering why they could not make bail —  
Regretting the past they had.

“Turn to Luke four, verse eighteen and more.  
‘He anointed me: proclaim  
Good news to captives, broken and poor,’  
To release you in Christ’s Name.”

Revolution began in their minds;  
Governments of Self collapsed.  
The Breath of God blew open their blinds—  
And in His breeze, they relaxed.

By Peter C. Venable

Soul-corroding tactics started in 1980s

Continued from page 18

That is, it is a form of “warfare” *intentionally* designed to destroy a community’s capacity to understand what is happening to it in a manner that enables it to work together for the common good.

These stealth soul-corroding tactics were turned on us in the 1980s and their use intensified through and since the Great Recession to divert us from effectively addressing the multi-faceted existential threat both Popes Benedict and Francis say is a priority.

The immense financial wealth generated for the few by the structural adjustments made to our economies since the 1970s does not “trickle down” as we were repeatedly told it would.

The 2017 Oxfam Report identified the world’s richest eight men whose 2016 combined wealth equalled that of Earth’s poorest 50 per cent. In 2015, it was nine. In 2010, it was 43.

In 2000, it took one per cent of the richest to equal the wealth of the poorest 50 per cent.

Yes, worshipping at the altar of the Bronze Bull generates unprecedented financial wealth.

It also generates an unprecedented number of refugees, accelerated environmental devastation (one symptom of which is climate chaos), social chaos, wars, increasing personal and sovereign debt, and the destruction of our democracies for which many millions died.

These are all preventable social sins generated by our current social arrangements.

If we can be manipulated into blaming Muslims, Christians, Jews or immigrants for the wealth and power being increasingly concentrated in the hand of a few, we are inhibited from working effectively with others to make the systemic changes we need and know how to do.

Who wants to prevent this?

Jane Mayer in her 2016 *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* identifies a number of Americans and how they have organized their wealth to manipulate us.

American multibillionaire and Earth’s third richest man Warren Buffett stated: “There’s class warfare all right. But it’s my class, the rich, that’s making war, and we’re winning.”

Hate speech, fear mongering and killing hope are weapons in this war.

As is “charitable” giving that does not address the root causes generating the social sins.

Warren Buffett’s son Peter stated: “As more lives and communities are destroyed by the system that creates vast amounts of wealth for the few,” philanthropists were frequently left “searching for the answers with their right hands to problems they created with their left.”

Peter Buffett dubs this the “charitable-industrial complex.” What can we do?

To begin:  
— Pray for the courage to raise good questions to stop this scapegoating.

— Pray for the strength to resist having your soul corrupted through fear and hate.

— Counter attempts to corrode your soul and that of your community with words and actions of love, compassion, inclusion and solidarity.

And remember, the Divine is always present to us if we but open to Her.

Jesus promised!

Costco increases market share in retail food sales

Continued from page 18

But it’s in selling food that Costco’s strategy has worked best in recent years. Not only has it increased its food market share to 10 per cent versus Walmart’s seven per cent, it’s selling quality products — much to the dismay of Loblaws, Sobeys and Metro.

Like other food retailers, Costco partially processes many food products in-house and makes this clear to customers.

Costco also sets up a kind of treasure hunt, enticing customers to think about food at just the right time, after having gone through pant racks and tool aisles.

Despite the fact that its stores are giant and rather uninspiring places, Costco welcomes members by serving food and lots of it. Anybody who comes hungry can walk out of the store feeling full, especially kids. The food-sampling-to-purchase conversion rate is extremely high at Costco compared to traditional food retailers. While tasting stations at Costco generate food sales, other retailers spend millions to make their stores feel like glamorous labyrinths of flavours and scents.

All of this seems counterintuitive but it’s actually working for Costco, and in Canada especially. But the picture is not all rosy.

While Costco has made an impressive ascent to the food-retailing elite, it faces a problem attracting millennials. The model doesn’t seem to make sense to this generation: some surveys suggest Costco isn’t even in their top five favourite food retailers.

It will be interesting to see how millennials approach Costco as they mature in the marketplace. As well, barely three per cent of Costco’s sales are generated online and the company seems content with that number. However, if the market moves further in this direction, as are millennials, Costco may be in trouble.

Service is also an issue. The simple functional checkout system at Costco, with no bagging supplies or service, can be annoying. More demanding customers, who don’t mind paying a little extra for this service, may end up going elsewhere for groceries.

Charging more to give members access won’t actually change much for the company. In fact, those who see membership fees as a sunk cost may want to spend more.

And Costco’s success in Canada will continue to support its global expansion.

So the next time the Costco associate goes through your receipt on your way out, just say, “You’re welcome.”

Letters to the editor

We welcome your response to articles published in the Prairie Messenger. Two-way communication assures everyone of a better exposure to the truth.

We cannot publish any letters to the editor unless you give us your full name, your address and your telephone number. *(It is especially important to remember this if you are sending your comments by email).*

Due to limited space we ask you to keep your letters short — 300 to 350 words maximum. The Prairie Messenger reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space requirements and newspaper style.



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Pope leads lenten penance service

Reaction mixed to EU rule on religious symbols

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A few hours after urging priests to be generously available for the sacrament of penance, Pope Francis went to confession, then offered the sacrament to seven Catholics.

Presiding over the annual lenten penance service March 17 in St. Peter’s Basilica, Pope Francis was one of 95 priests and bishops listening to confessions and granting absolution.

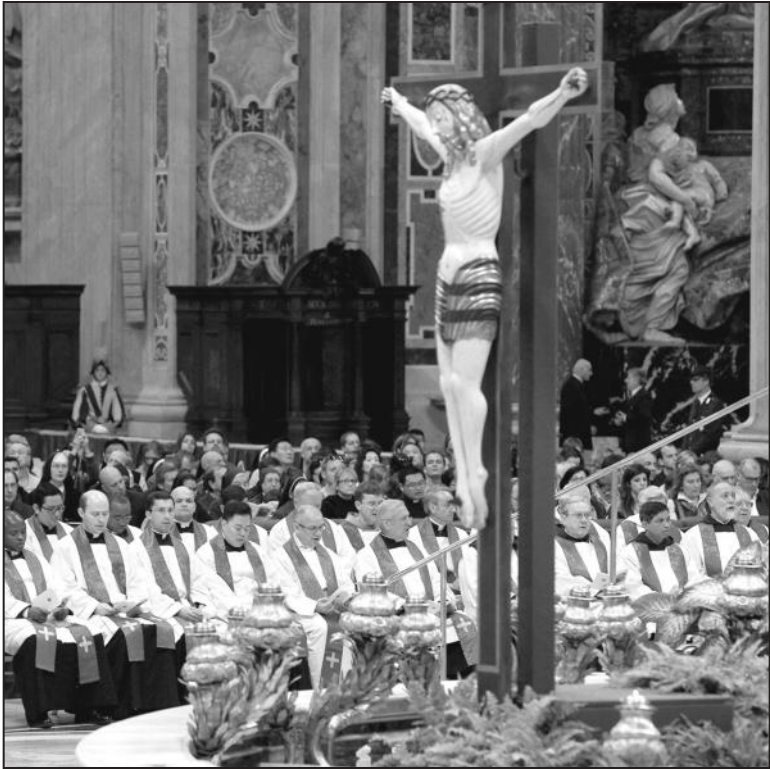
After the reading of a Gospel passage, the pope did not give a homily. Instead, he and the thousands of people gathered in the basilica prayed in absolute silence for 10 minutes.

Pope Francis spent about four minutes kneeling before a priest in one of the wooden confessionals before he walked to one nearby, put on a purple stole and waited for the first penitent to approach.

As people were preparing, confessing and praying, the Sistine Chapel Choir alternated with the organist and a harpist in ensuring an atmosphere of peace.

The pope spent 50 minutes administering the sacrament before leading the congregation in prayers of thanksgiving for the experience of the “goodness and sweetness of God’s love for us.”

The Vatican press office said Pope Francis heard the confessions of three men and four women, all laypeople.



CNS/Paul Haring

**POPE LEADS LENTEN PRAYER SERVICE — Priests attend a lenten penance service led by Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican March 17.**

The small service booklets distributed to the congregation included a guide for an examination of conscience. The 28 questions began with a review of one’s motivation for going to confession in the first place: “Do I approach the sacrament of penance out of a sincere desire for purification, conversion, renewal of life and a closer

friendship with God, or do I consider it a burden that I am only rarely willing to take on?”

Other questions involved how often one prays, mass attendance, keeping the Ten Commandments, giving generously to the poor, not gossiping and keeping the lenten practices of prayer, fasting and abstinence and almsgiving.

Vatican releases bioethical guidelines

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — To offer clearly and accurately the Catholic Church’s positions on abortion, contraception, genetic engineering, fertility treatments, vaccines, frozen embryos and other life issues, the Vatican released an expanded and updated guide of the church’s bioethical teachings.

The New Charter for Health Care Workers is meant to provide a thorough summary of the church’s position on affirming the primary, absolute value of life in the health field and address questions arising from the many medical and scientific advancements made since the first charter was published in 1994, said

Msgr. Jean-Marie Mupendawatu.

The monsignor, who is the secretary delegate for health care in the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, said the charter “is a valid compendium of doctrine and praxis” not only for those directly involved in providing medical care, but also for researchers, pharmacists, administrators and policy-makers in the field of health care.

The charter “reaffirms the sanctity of life” as a gift from God and calls on those working in health care to be “servants” and “ministers of life” who will love and accompany all human beings from conception to their natural death, he said during a news conference

at the Vatican Feb. 6. The Vatican released the charter in Italian.

While the charter does not offer a completely “exhaustive” response to all problems and questions facing the medical and health fields, it does add many papal, Vatican and bishops’ pronouncements made since 1994 in an effort to “offer the clearest possible guidelines” to many ethical problems facing the world of health care today, said the charter’s preface, written by the late-Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry. The council and three others were merged together to create the new dicastery for human development.

One issue partially dealt with in the new charter is vaccines produced with “biological material of illicit origin,” that is, made from cells from aborted fetuses.

Citing the 2008 instruction *Dignitas Personae* from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and a 2005 paper from the Pontifical Academy for Life, the charter said everyone has a duty to voice their disapproval of this kind of “biological material” being in use and to ask that alternatives be made available.

Researchers must “distance” themselves by refusing to use such material, even if there is no close connection between the researcher and those doing the illicit procedure, and “affirm with clarity the value of human life,” it said.



CNS/John E. Kozar, CNEWA

**CNEWA ANNIVERSARY — A religious sister is seen comforting a sick woman in 2016 at Snehadam Old Age Home in Gurgaon, India. Catholic Near East Welfare Association is celebrating 90 years of service to Eastern Catholic churches and the poor in the Middle East, north-east Africa, India and eastern Europe.**

By Simon Caldwell

MANCHESTER, England (CNS) — Religious leaders have criticized a ruling by the European Union’s highest court that could allow employers to prohibit staff from wearing visible religious symbols in the workplace.

However, British organizations set up to defend Christians from harassment in the workplace were untroubled by the ruling.

The European Court of Justice, based in Luxembourg, ruled differently on two cases March 14. In one case, it said a firm that demanded a Muslim employee removed her headscarf was not in breach of an EU employment directive on freedom of religion because it banned the wearing of “any political, philosophical or religious sign.”

But Catholic Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth, England, told Catholic News Service March 15 the ruling was “totalitarian” and could lead to Christians being forced to remove a crucifix or a St. Christopher medal.

“It limits the religious expression of an individual,” said Egan, who has encouraged the people of his diocese to be open about their faith.

“This is a grave infringement of human rights,” he said. “It is a disproportionate application, like cracking a nut with a huge sledgehammer . . . before we know it we are going to have huge restrictions.”

The court considered the case of Samira Achbita, a receptionist for the Belgian branch of G4S Secure Solutions, a security company. Achbita was fired in 2006 for refusing to take off her Islamic headscarf.

Asma Bougnaoui, a French design engineer fired from Micropole SA, an information technology consultancy firm, was fired when a client objected to her wearing a headscarf.

The court found no discrimination in the first case because “G4S’s internal rule refers to the wearing of visible signs of political, philosophical or religious beliefs and therefore covers any manifestation of such beliefs without distinction.”

But in the Bougnaoui case, the court concluded that “the willingness of an employer to take account of the wishes of a customer no longer to have the employer’s services provided by a worker wearing an Islamic headscarf cannot be considered an occupational requirement that could rule out discrimination.”

The Church of England, in a statement posted on its website March 14, said the ruling on Achbita “raises significant questions about freedom of religion and its free expression, whether it be Sikhism and the wearing of turbans and kara through to the wearing of a cross.”

Anglican Bishop Nicholas Baines of Leeds, England, said: “This judgment once again raises vital questions about freedom of expression (not just freedom of reli-

gion), and shows that the denial of freedom of religion is not a neutral act, contrary to how it might be portrayed.”

The ruling was criticized by the London-based Conference of European Rabbis as a sign that faith communities were “no longer welcome” in Europe, and by the Islamic Human Rights Commission, also based in London.

“This gives legal cover to what is essentially an ongoing hate campaign to make Muslims second-class citizens in Europe,” said Arzu Merali, head of research at the Islamic Human Rights Commission, in a statement posted on the group’s website March 14.

She said: “It will only increase feelings of marginalization and disenfranchisement in Muslim communities.”

However, Neil Addison, director of the Liverpool-based Thomas More Legal Centre, said: “I am perfectly happy with it.”

He told CNS in a March 15 telephone interview the blanket ban on symbols must include non-religious manifestations of belief such as “wearing a gay rights ribbon.”

“You can’t ban one without banning the other,” he said, adding: “The starting point is that you are at work to work and the employer has a right to determine its image.”



CNS/Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

**BEATIFICATION — Rev. Stanley Rother, a priest of the Oklahoma City archdiocese who was brutally murdered in 1981 in the Guatemalan village where he ministered to the poor, is pictured in an undated photo. The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City announced the North American priest will be beatified Sept. 23 in Oklahoma.**

Wisdom tells me I am nothing. Love tells me I am everything. Between these two banks the river of my life flows.

— Nisargadatta Maharaj