

# Messenger



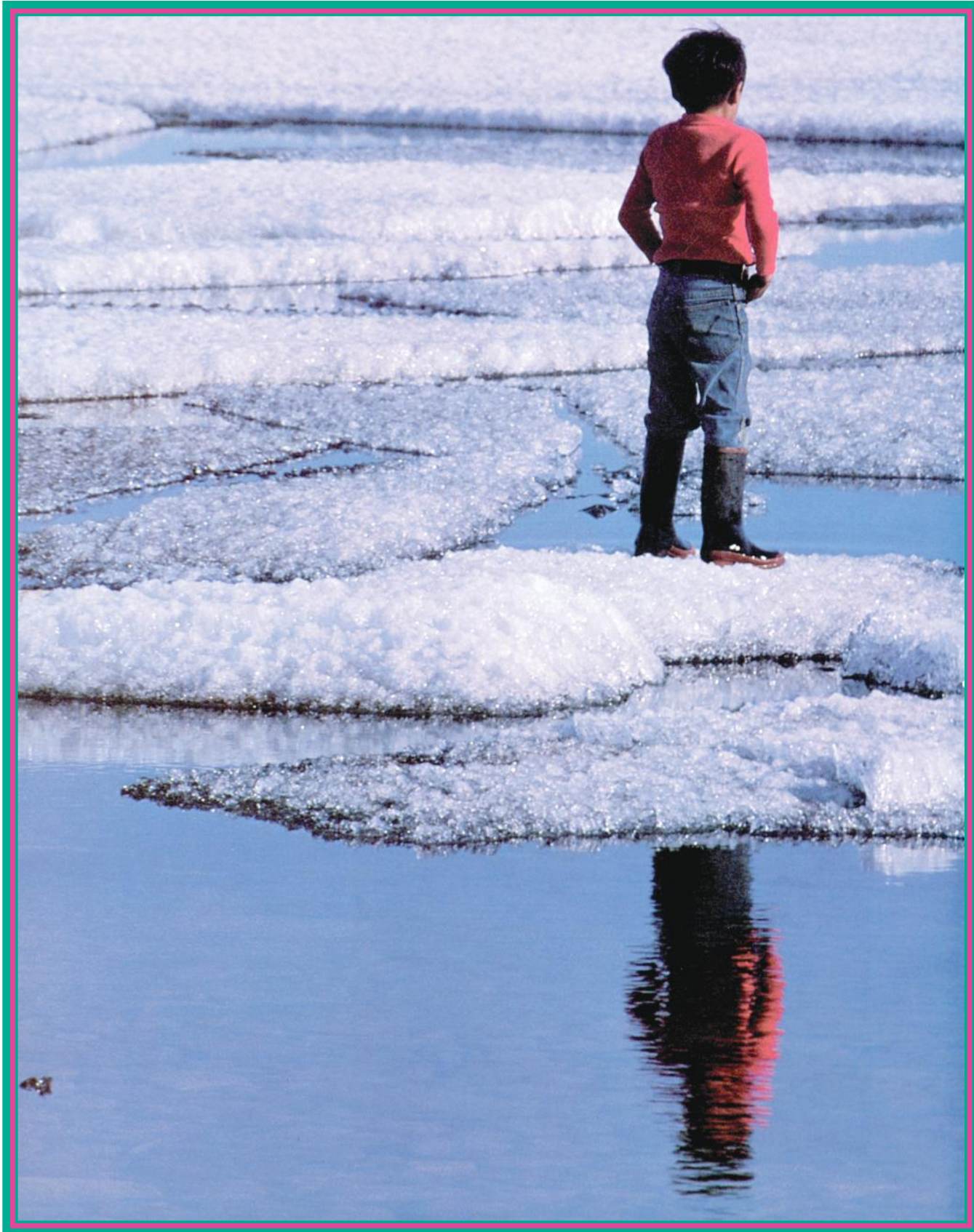
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René Fumoleau, OMI

But now, thus says the Lord,  
who created you, O Jacob, and formed you,  
O Israel:  
Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name: you are mine.  
When you pass through the water, I will be with you;  
in the rivers you shall not drown.  
When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned;  
the flames shall not consume you.  
For I am the Lord, your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your saviour.

— Isaiah 43:103



# UN’s top official visits camp for Syrian refugees

By Dale Gavlak

ZAATARI, Jordan (CNS) — As the UN secretary general visited the world’s biggest camp for Syrian refugees in late March, he made an impassioned plea: Stop Syria’s devastating war.

“I want to make a strong appeal to the parties of the conflict and those who have an influence on (them) to understand that we must make peace,” Antonio

Guterres, a former Portuguese prime minister, told reporters at the camp on the eve of a summit gathering Arab leaders on the shores of the Dead Sea in Jordan.

“This has not only become a tragedy for the Syrian people, but it has become a threat to the stability of the region, a global security threat for the world, as terrorism is benefiting from the crisis in Syria and other crises in the world,” he said.

Guterres, 67, is no stranger to the camp, having served as the UN refugee agency’s high commissioner for a decade, visiting the dusty desert facility numerous times. He headed UNHCR when the Syrian conflict broke out in March 2011. But this visit was different, now as the UN chief, coming with the burden of Syria’s grinding war on his shoulders.

“I remember six years ago at the border, when I saw the first

Syrian refugees coming to Jordan. How sad it is, how terrible it is, that today we still have Zaatari camp . . . and that the tragedy of Syrians is going on and on and on,” he said.

Syria’s war has killed more than 320,000 people and has forced 4.9 million people to flee their country.

Guterres is a practising Catholic and clearly demonstrates his compassion for people. He listened carefully to the concerns of refugee women battling family violence and early marriage in the camp of some 80,000.

“These things are very worrying. Are there people to listen and solve the problems?” he asked,

inquiring about the appropriate support systems available to help them.

He empathized with another woman requesting the need for family reunification. Her husband and a son are now in Germany; another son is in Turkey; she and two other sons are in Zaatari camp.

“This is not good. It would be much better if everyone could be reunified,” Guterres told her.

“When I was head of UNHCR, we discussed family reunification a lot. It always seemed like the right thing to do. But, unfortunately, a lot of countries are still not willing to do it. But we will see what we can do,” the UN chief said.

Guterres’ face lit up as he visited a boisterous classroom of fourth-grade refugee children learning English. He encouraged a special book club and information technology forum, dubbed the “Tiger Girls,” to keep pursuing their dreams.

The adolescent girls are championing reading and are considered role models for their community. He encouraged them to do

well in school so they can one day return to Syria and perhaps become members of parliament.

One told him that she wanted to become a psychologist when she grew up, to help her people traumatized by the conflict.

Guterres told the teen that his wife and sister are psychiatrists. “Psychiatrists do very important things. They make people feel happy again.”

“He is very open about his Catholic identity,” said Msgr. Robert Vitillo, secretary general of the Geneva-based International Catholic Migration Commission. “I have always found him so passionate and compassionate for refugees and how he tries to find a solution.

“While visiting refugee camps, he isn’t someone who goes off in a suit and tie. He went as someone who really wanted to listen. You could see that he is someone who cares a great deal. This is what impresses me most about him,”

— STRONG STAND, page 5



CNS/Paul Haring

**CANADIAN BISHOPS IN ROME** — Seamus McKelvey of Winnipeg crashes a group photo with Canadian bishops in front of St. Peter’s Basilica March 27. From left are Archbishops Richard Smith of Edmonton, Richard Gagnon of Winnipeg, and Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski of the Ukrainian Diocese of New Westminster, B.C. The bishops were making their *ad limina* visits to the Vatican.

## Western Canadian bishops meet with pope

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — “That’s your bishop!” a woman shouted to Seamus McKelvey of Winnipeg, as he leaned in for an impromptu picture with three prelates posing for a professional portrait with St. Peter’s Basilica in the background.

McKelvey was with a large group of tourists from Western Canada that just happened to be crossing the large boulevard in front of St. Peter’s Square when he decided he would crash the lineup and jump right in for his own souvenir snap with Archbishops Richard Gagnon of Winnipeg, Richard Smith of Edmonton, and Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski of the Ukrainian Diocese of New Westminster, B.C. It was a prize picture with the prelates dressed in their finest, fresh from a meeting with Pope Francis March 27.

The day started “in a rather spectacular way” with an early morning mass at the crypt at the tomb of St. Peter, followed by a two-and-a-half-hour conversation with the successor of Peter, Gagnon told Catholic News Service.

Those two events, one after the other, would make it “a hard act to follow for the rest of the week” as the archbishop, who is president of

the Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops, and another two dozen bishops from Western Canada made their *ad limina* visits and pilgrimage to Rome and the Vatican.

Gagnon said the major concerns and issues the group brought to the table for discussion included the Catholic Church’s relationship with the indigenous people and how to minister to them in their communities. For example, the decline in religious vocations means that diocesan bishops “need to integrate more fully into that missionary mode” for indigenous peoples.

Smith told CNS that the pope spent “a lot of time talking about immigration,” reaffirming that people from other lands and cultures “are a gift” that should be integrated. He said the pope told them, “Migration is a human phenomenon, don’t be afraid, trust in the Lord, welcome people.”

Nowakowski said the pope reminded them to listen to young people, to understand their perspectives.

When the bishops told the pope how young people are so bombarded with “so many anti-Gospel messages,” he showed deep concern and said: “Please be close to your people. Accompany, be near them” so the church can offer “the hope that comes uniquely from the Gospel,” Smith said.

The archbishop said the pope emphasized the point that when the church listens to young people, “you’re listening to reality,” and he urged them not to “confine yourselves to those in your parishes or dioceses, but reach out to those who are maybe having diffi-

culties with the church or don’t like the church: talk to them, listen to them and go forward with that.”

Smith said the pope “is not afraid to say he doesn’t have immediate answers” and therefore, neither should the bishop. But that does mean there is “a need for deep, sustained prayer, because the protagonist in all of this is the Holy Spirit leading us to Christ.”

The only way to discern and accompany people properly, he said, is being “men of prayer, deep prayer, and listening to where the spirit is leading.”

Gagnon said that during their lengthy conversation, Pope Francis displayed “a powerful openness.”

“Certainly his pastoral style is such where people feel affirmed and assured that there is a listening ear,” he said.

There was “a feeling like we were talking with our brother,” Nowakowski said.

Gagnon said Pope Francis left them with a strong message of not giving up, despite the challenges.

The pope also reaffirmed the need for “a collaborative approach, understanding where people are coming from and knowing, at the same time, that clear decisions need to be taken on certain issues” that underline church teaching, Gagnon said.

Smith said this approach was particularly timely at this moment in history when outlooks, technology and culture are changing so quickly and “very often catching us all off guard.”

It shows “discernment is exactly what has to be done” for the church “to respond with clarity with the Gospel,” he said.

## Congo’s bishops give up on peace mediation

KINSHASA, Congo (CNS) — Catholic bishops in Congo have abandoned attempts to arrange a government-opposition power-sharing agreement, amid rising violence.

Archbishop Marcel Utembi Tapa of Kisangani, the bishops’ conference president, said the latest round of political negotiations were not satisfying the Congolese people. He said bishops had continued working with both sides until March 27, but that all parties were pulling back from a consensus on issues previously agreed upon.

“This lack of sincere political will did not allow for an agreement,” the archbishop said at a March 28 news conference.

“We are therefore bringing the political impasse in these discussions to national and international attention — as well as the lack of political goodwill and the incapacity of the political and social actors to find a compromise.”

Utembi said the bishops believed power-sharing negotiations, which followed a Dec. 31 church-brokered peace accord, were now “in a state of failure.”

He added that the politicians involved had failed to prioritize the nation or the people’s welfare.

“The bishops’ conference cannot mediate endlessly. It will now be up to President (Joseph) Kabila to find quick ways to implement agreement on a national unity government that can lead the country to presidential and parliamentary elections.”

The bishops’ conference launched a mediation bid after opposition leaders accused Kabila of seeking to retain power after the Dec. 20 expiration of his second and final term.

Under the Dec. 31 accord, the president was to remain in office pending elections by the end of 2017, alongside a government headed by an opposition-nominated prime minister, but it also had to comply with constitutional provisions barring him from a third term.

However, press reports said the accord’s implementation had been left in doubt since the Feb. 1 death of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who was to have headed a 28-member National Transition Council.



CNS/Aaron

**VIOLENCE IN CONGO** — Human skulls suspected to belong to victims of a recent fight between the Congolese army and Kamuina Nsapu militia are seen March 12 on the roadside near Kananga, Congo. The Catholic bishops in Congo have announced they are withdrawing from the peace process because of lack of progress.

### Front Cover

The cover image of a child on Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories is by Rene Fumoleau, OMI, from *Denendeh: A Dene Celebration*. It was featured in the March 28, 1994, *Prairie Messenger*.



# ‘Spiritual abuse’ had deep roots for First Nations

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Blair Stonechild knows first-hand the devastating effects residential schools had on First Nations spirituality. He spent nine years at Qu’Appelle Indian Residential School in Lebreton, Sask., beginning in 1956.



Catholic Register/Evan Boudreau

Blair Stonechild

## CNEWA celebrates 12 years in Canada

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — As the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) marks its 90th anniversary this year, CNEWA Canada celebrates 12 years. CNEWA Canada came into existence Feb. 12, 2005, said Carl Héту, its national director, and since then the Holy See charity has seen “an increased trust from Canadian Catholics toward our agency.” “We are transparent and we deliver on our mission,” he said. “We’re good at delivering on what we say we’re going to do.” “Our niche is always to work with the church, wherever the church is present,” he said. “If you want to reach out to Christians, whether persecuted or not, to the church that cares for the poor and the marginalized, CNEWA is very strong in working with the local church in providing social service support.” Pope Pius XI founded CNEWA in 1926 to support members of the Eastern Catholic churches in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, India and Ethiopia plagued by conflict, poverty and natural disasters. Héту pointed out the needs in these parts of the world remain strong. Over the past year, 4,500 Canadians have contributed \$4.3 million to CNEWA Canada to help local churches provide food, shelter, education and health care. With the ongoing crisis in Iraq and Syria, CNEWA has added aid to refugees and displaced persons to its programming, Héту said. CNEWA has also maintained a focus on the Horn of Africa afflicted by a major drought.

“As a child I remember the shock of being removed from my family,” said Stonechild. “One thing that really stands out in my mind was the endless torrent of prayers, masses and confessions.” Today, as a professor of indigenous studies at First Nations University of Canada, Stonechild looks back on that dark period of Canadian history as “spiritual abuse,” and its roots go deep.

“As I began to examine the cultural holocaust of residential schools I began to realize that this discounting of indigenous ideology was a phenomenon that started much further back in history and has extremely deep roots,” Stonechild said as he delivered the 2017 Royackers Lecture at Regis College in Toronto on March 22. “While indigenous people were largely decimated by diseases, the bias against a spiritual and cultural system that was not understood by Europeans led to constant efforts to undermine indigenous societies. “Europeans did not understand indigenous spirituality anymore than modern archaeology understands the spirituality of ancient people.” Stonechild was only six years old when his parents arrived at Qu’Appelle.

At the school, mostly run by religious orders, First Nations students were made to regularly repeat the Christian sacraments as teachers sought assimilation rather than spiritual awakening, said Stonechild. “The real intent of the schools was to eradicate any vestiges of traditional indigenous beliefs and replace it with an alien belief system,” he said to about 200 people who attended the lecture. Not only did First Nations students have Christianity imposed on them at residential schools, they were also restricted from practising indigenous spirituality or culture. Recalling the school’s uniform, in which a personal identification number was on the front, Stonechild compares schools like Qu’Appelle to correctional institutions.

“The bottom line was that the schools were run much like reformatories where inmates are badly in need of discipline and moral training,” he said. “But the only thing that we had done wrong was that we were born indigenous.” Had First Nations been allowed to practise and preserve their culture, Stonechild believes life on Canadian reserves — which are plagued with issues of poverty, abuses of all forms and suicides — would be much different. “If they had been allowed to continue practising their spirituality, their societies would have been maintained and remained largely intact,” said Stonechild, a member of the Muscowpetung First Nation. “(But) indigenous spirituality . . . is an ancient system that is greatly misunderstood and came to be sidelined and suppressed.”

## Students gather for Intercordia event

By Caitlin Ward

SASKATOON — Students and alumni gathered at St. Thomas More College on the evening of March 24 to mark the STM-Intercordia program’s 10th anniversary. The event celebrated the study abroad program’s challenges and successes over the course of the past 10 years, as well as key people who have worked to ensure STM-Intercordia’s longevity. The night featured video greetings and congratulations from the national program’s co-founder, Joe Vorstermans, and community partner Esteban Polanco, the executive director of *La Federacion de Campesinos Hacia El Progreso*, STM-Intercordia’s host partner in the Dominican Republic. STM’s Chair in Catholic Studies had sponsored a visa for Polanco to visit Saskatoon concurrently with this anniversary, but the Canadian government refused his application. STM-Intercordia, a flagship program in the college’s Engaged Learning Office, seeks to help students develop a sense of moral responsiveness and educated soli-

darity through living with and learning from marginalized communities across the world. Students take a course focusing on global inequalities and solidarity during the school year, and participate in four seminars that prepare them emotionally, spiritually, and philosophically for their experience. Students then spend a summer term abroad in a host community, connecting these larger theoretical concepts to their personal lived experience encountering poverty, social inequality, and cultural differences. Intercordia Canada, a national NGO, was co-founded in Toronto by Jean Vanier and longtime L’Arche community member Joe Vorstermans. In 2006, a few years after Intercordia Canada’s founding, STM partnered with the organization to bring the program to Saskatchewan, and sent their first cohort of students abroad in the summer of 2007. Since then, STM and Intercordia have sent 98 students to live with host communities in seven different countries, as well as sending students to L’Arche homes throughout Canada. This

year, the program will send nine students abroad: five to communities in the Rio Yuna basin in interior Dominican Republic, and four to live with indigenous families in the Ecuadorian Andes. One student will live with a L’Arche community in Cape Breton. The celebration also featured a special thank you to STM’s associate dean, Dr. Darrell McLaughlin, who has been instrumental to the program’s success, and is retiring this year. When the program began at the college 10 years ago, McLaughlin developed and taught the first sociology class associated with the program. Once he became associate dean of the college, McLaughlin was instrumental in preserving the program at STM while the national Intercordia organization went through a process of revisioning. Students from years past sent videos of gratitude and congratulations to McLaughlin, which were edited into a presentation that showcased the contributions he has made to the program and the positive impact he has had on students’ education and their lives.



Vanessa Leon

INTERCORDIA — Dr. Darrell McLaughlin (seated) poses with STM faculty and Intercordia students past and present.



# Doctors say they are bullied over assisted suicide

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Doctors are being bullied, silenced and coerced in a pro-euthanasia environment which is forcing those who object to medically assisted suicide to provide an effective referral for patients who wish to die, provincial legislators were told during hearings into Bill 84.



Catholic Register/M. Swan

**Ellen Warner**

Oncologist Dr. Ellen Warner told an all-party committee that physicians at Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital are "being bullied" and are experiencing a "horrendous stress level." She described colleagues who object to assisted suicide speaking in code and using alternative email addresses to discuss doctor-assisted death.

"Physicians are afraid that they will lose their jobs if they say anything," Warner said. "We feel sometimes like we're in some sort of dystopian novel."



Catholic Register/M. Swan

**Maria Wolfs**

NDP health critic France G  linas said she was "horrified" by Warner's testimony.

A majority of witnesses appearing before the March 23 hearings of the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee want conscience protection for physicians and other health care workers written into the new law. Bill 84 will bring a host of provincial laws governing coroners, the insurance

industry, privacy and freedom of information, workers compensation, etc., into line with federal legislation that legalized assisted suicide last June.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction in the world that forces doctors to provide an effective referral for assisted suicide.

Hamilton Dr. Jane Dobson held back tears as she described the pressure she's faced since the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario ruled that doctors who have a moral, ethical or religious objection to assisted dying must nevertheless provide an "effective referral" for the procedure.

"If I don't comply, I face fines and the possible suspension of my licence," Dobson said.

Dobson described how her own brother became suicidal when, at the age of 50, he discovered his tonsillar cancer had spread to his brain.

"He was admitted to the psychiatric ward for therapy. His mood rebounded and he spent the next months of his life receiving care, first at home and then in hospice, where he was able to reconnect and reconcile with old friends and family members and he spent meaningful time with his two young sons and his wife," Dobson said. "He was truly grateful for the extra time."

University of Toronto professor and St. Michael's Hospital endocrinologist Dr. Maria Wolfs said medical schools are facing pressure to weed out students who might object to assisted suicide.

"If conscience protection is not included in Bill 84, future physician training in Ontario may be at risk," Wolfs said.

The University of Toronto School of Medicine encourages doctors in training to act on their consciences and to form an ethical foundation for their future practice, but the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's duty-to-refer policy is undermining student training, said Wolfs.

"Those who are objecting conscientiously are worried that they might not be able to practise in areas that are either remote, because of the need for effective referral, or in areas such as palliative care, critical care and oncology. I've definitely heard that (from students)," she said.

Representing the B'Nai Brith Canada, psychiatrist Dr. Janice Halpern said the College of Physicians and Surgeons' policy is at odds with the subtleties of a psychiatric doctor-patient relationship. How long can a psychiatrist work with a patient "on finding their will to live again" before referring that patient for assisted suicide, she asked.

"My regulatory body says this must be done in a 'timely manner,'" Halpern said.

"Participating in killing, putting my need to keep my job first — none of you would want that on your conscience," Halpern

said. "We need protection from our own regulatory body, which is demanding something that no other province and no other country requires of their physicians — mandatory referral."

The co-founder of MAID-GTA, Dr. Chantal Perrot, defended the duty-to-refer policy.

"There is already a lack of effective referral for MAID in Ontario," Perrot said. "The CPSO policy on effective referral balances the rights of true conscientious objectors with the rights of patients to access a legal medical service. The focus should be on enforcing the policy, not eliminating or eroding it."

Perrot dismissed the idea of creating a third-party care co-ordination system to replace the duty-to-refer policy.

The president of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, London Bishop Ronald Fabbro, emphasized that seeking conscience rights for doctors is not about trying to re-fight the Supreme Court case that made assisted suicide legal.

"The law needs to strike a balance between legal rights here and fundamental rights that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of our country say we stand up for — say



Catholic Register/M. Swan

**Jane Dobson**

it's absolutely essential for us in a free democracy," he said. "It is alarming to hear good doctors say that they would have to leave the practice of medicine in Ontario if they were forced to act against their conscience."

Toronto Archbishop Cardinal Thomas Collins said health care institutions should be free to make moral choices about whether or not to offer euthanasia and assisted suicide.

"Institutions have consciences too. It's called their mission,"

Collins told Progressive Conservative health critic Jeff Yurek.

Liberal parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health John Fraser repeated the government's intention to create a care co-ordination service. However, at present, that proposal would still require a doctor's referral. Fraser claimed any protection of conscience rights inside the "technical" bill was not appropriate.

Yurek said he will introduce an amendment to protect conscience rights for medical professionals.



**BISHOPS MEET IN ROME** — The Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops met recently for their *ad limina* visit in Rome. Among those who attended the meetings are, from left: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB, Prince Albert Bishop Albert Th  venot, M.Afr., Regina Archbishop Don Bolen, Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas Murray Chatlain, Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, and Saskatoon Diocesan Administrator Rev. Kevin McGee. (See story, page 2.)



**Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**  
**Христос Воскрес ! Воісмуху Воскрес!**

**"I am the resurrection and the life;  
He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies;  
and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."**

John 11:25-26

Through the intercession of the Mother of Perpetual Help, may all come to experience true Joy in the suffering, death and Resurrection of our Redeemer - Christ Our Pascha!

Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR,  
Bishop Emeritus Michael Wiwchar, CSsR,  
Clergy, Religious Members and all the faithful  
of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon





# Syrians choosing to remain need help to rebuild

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Syrians need help to rebuild their lives, says a Syrian refugee who manages centres funded by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

“Most are talking about supporting refugees, how we support refugees and neighbouring countries,” said Rand Sukhaita, who manages the Darna Centres in Syria funded by the Canadian bishops’ overseas development agency. “That issue is very important; we should give solutions and support.”

“Also there are people who choose to stay in Syria, we should also support them,” said Sukhaita in a Skype interview March 24 after she had returned to Turkey from a trip to Canada that included visits with federal government representatives in Ottawa.

Supporting them includes giving them tools, knowledge and help building resilience, she added. “After all, they are the ones who stay and who build.”

Rebuilding in Syria remains “very dangerous,” but people need hospitals, education, safe spaces and a future, she said.

The Darna Centres help its

members, primarily women, to learn basic job skills to improve their living conditions.

“Darna means ‘our home’ in Arabic,” Sukhaita said.

When meeting with Canadian government officials, she said she hoped to convey some “small, positive stories” of how the Darna Centres have helped women who have been forced by the civil war to take on new roles that challenge traditional ones. Most of them have now become the breadwinners in their families, she said.

These changes have affected all communities that are fighting not only for their rights with the government, but against ISIL extremists. “I wanted to highlight how Syrians still survive, what they want and why they are still in Syria.”

“Most of the people know there is war in Syria and few of them know it was a revolution and why it all started,” she said. The war between the regime, rebel groups and ISIS has led to confusion on the ground. “No one knows what is daily happening,” she said. No one knows how women and youth face all the traumatic circumstances.

Sukhaita recommended Canada support Syrian civil society and let civil society groups take the lead in

developing new leaders. “It’s very important to invest in Syrians, to build their capacities and give them tools to build their country again.”

Those inside Syria do not need immediate humanitarian relief as much as previously, she said. “It’s not just relief that can solve or respond to needs. We should also support and invest in development projects.”

The Darna Centres help people to “have an income” and give children, youth and women psychosocial support, she said. “All of us, the Syrians, are traumatized because of what’s happening — displacement, violence. Just following the news every day is traumatic.”

According to Development and Peace, the Darna Centres aim to “promote women’s economic autonomy; to lay the foundation for an egalitarian society; and break the cycle of poverty.”

Development and Peace - Caritas Canada began supporting the vocational training centres in Maarat-AI-Numan (Idlib) and the city of Aleppo in 2015. The centres offer women a monthly stipend and child care so they can attend classes. They also have social workers on staff who can help with psychosocial support and services.

For the year beginning June 1, 2016, and ending May 31, 2017, the Darna Centres expect to have given 280 women access to an 11-week sewing course; 265 women English language training; 300 women a computer course; and 80 women courses in reading and writing.

Development and Peace estimates 80 per cent of those who have taken the sewing course will be able to find a job using those new skills.

Sukhaita manages the Darna Centres from Turkey, where she fled in 2013, not long after giving birth to her daughter in December 2012. She and her mother and her baby daughter joined her husband who had already gone to Turkey. The family has been there for almost four years. “We didn’t know what would happen,” she said. “After one year, I started to realize I would stay in Turkey, and I wanted to engage with the refugees from Syria so I started working with Syrian Medical Society.” She worked with the society for one year as they supported field hospitals inside Syria, and then began working with the Darna Centres where she was eventually made manager.



CCN/D. Gyapong

**Rand Sukhaita visited with federal government officials in Ottawa in mid-March to share her concerns about the needs of Syrians who have chosen to remain inside the country.**

Three million Syrians live in Turkey where they do not have official UNHCR refugee status, but have been treated reasonably well by the government. Sukhaita hopes eventually to return to Syria.

# Archbishop Durocher hopes to make Psalms accessible in new book

By Deborah Gyapong

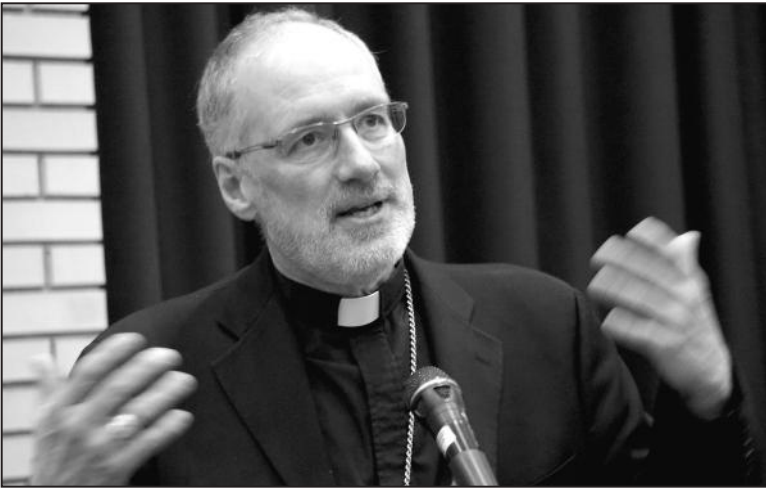
OTTAWA (CCN) — Archbishop Paul-André Durocher hopes his new three-volume *The Psalms for Our Lives* will help people gain a deeper appreciation for the Psalms.

At a book launch March 24 at Saint Paul University hosted by Novalis, the Archbishop of Gatineau said he hoped the books would help people connect the Psalms to their Christian faith,” to their personal lives and to their prayer life.

The idea for the volumes came out of columns he began writing 15 years ago in French and in English for local papers while he was Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall. He knew he had both Catholic and Protestant readers as well as those with little or no faith at all.

Writing once a week, it took him three years to get through all 150 Psalms, he said.

Durocher would usually write on Saturday mornings. Though his academic specialty had been sacramental theology, he had always loved studying Scripture, and preaching was important to him, he said.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Archbishop Paul-André Durocher

Consequently, he had a collection of commentaries he could consult: a Catholic commentary; a Protestant commentary; a feminist commentary; and commentaries by the Church Fathers.

If he was writing about Psalm 15, for example, he would read what the various commentaries had to say, and then sit for a while in prayer to discover the focus he would take for the newspaper.

He examined the origins of the

Psalm and the “sense of the text”; he would connect the Psalm to the Gospel message in the New Testament; and connect the Psalm to his life. Then he would look at the broader relevance of the Psalms.

Novalis publishing director Joe Sinasac said he had met Durocher at a reception and, after learning about the columns, suggested this “labour of love” would make good books, accessible to readers.

“He brings his inspiring wis-

dom and passion for the Psalms not only to a new generation, but also the entire Canadian community,” Sinasac said.

Carol Kuzmochka, a specialist in faith education and director of Saint Paul University’s School for Ministry Formation, described *The Psalms for Our Lives* as “150 gifts” that can “nourish and deepen our faith” and that of others.

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council in their Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* identified the “disconnect between faith and life” as one of the problems facing the modern world, Kuzmochka said.

Fifty years later, their “thinking endures,” she said. Durocher’s book can help heal that disconnect between faith and life and “help us to be better evangelizers.”

Durocher “lifts up the Psalms for us as a place to fully and authentically be a human being,” she said.

The Psalms present “real human beings” who are fearful, angry, sorrowful, even “demand-

ing vengeance,” she said. “There is no aspect of the human condition absent from the Book of Psalms.”

They give voice to “joys, sorrows and anxieties,” she said.

During her fifth pregnancy, Kuzmochka said she experienced health difficulties. “When I tried to pray, the words were like straw in my mouth, until I found the words of Psalm 57,” she said. “Have mercy on me, God, have mercy on me. In you I seek refuge.”

Rev. Ivan Mathieu, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Saint Paul University, spoke about Durocher’s book from the perspective of a homilist. Every Sunday comes the challenge, “What can I say?”

While the archbishop’s book does not create short cuts by doing the work of the homilist for him, it teaches that God “wishes to speak to me and wishes to speak to us,” Mathieu said in French.

“That opening can help all who must prepare homilies to come before God in prayer.”

# Strong stand taken on abuse

Continued from page 2

Vitillo told Catholic News Service by phone.

“People are the centre of his attention. This will make him a very good secretary general of the UN,” said the church leader.



Vitillo served for years as the *Caritas Internationalis* head of delegation to the United Nations in Geneva before assuming his current post with the International Catholic Migration Commission.

The commission is a network of Catholic bishops’ conferences and organizations that work with migrants and refugees, and it advocates on the global level. In the Mideast, the commission pro-

vides humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including medical services for pregnant women and children, and makes available safe play spaces for children.

Guterres has established new procedures at the UN against sexual abuse to address violations carried out in by UN peacekeepers and staff. There are now internal controls to prohibit someone with such history from consideration for a UN job, Vitillo said.

“He made it absolutely clear that there is zero tolerance for such behaviour. I’m very impressed with his strong stand on this,” Vitillo said. “We have to make sure that this is not happening in the refugee community.”



## MAY THE LIGHT OF THE RISEN CHRIST SHINE UPON YOU AND BRING HOPE FOR A FAITH-FILLED FUTURE.

from the

**SASKATCHEWAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

Paula Scott  
President

Ken Loehndorf  
Executive Director



# St. John's Bible touring Winnipeg archdiocese

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The St. John's Bible, a handwritten and illuminated creation 15 years in the making at a Benedictine Abbey in Minnesota to mark the third Christian millennium, is touring the Archdiocese of Winnipeg for the next year.

The scripture is accompanied by 160 illuminations designed for specific passages but with touches of humankind's accomplishments over the past 500 years. All the text is written in calligraphy, with a

script designed specifically for the project. It is the first handwritten Bible commissioned by the Benedictines since the invention of the printing press 500 years ago. It is based on the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

"The New Revised Standard Version is a revision of the RSV, which is descended from the King James, so, for English speakers, it has a great pedigree," said Rev. Michael Patella, OSB, a monk of St. John's Abbey. Patella is an author, theologian, and professor at

St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., part of the St. John's Abbey campus, which also hosts St. John's Preparatory School and the graduate School of Theology Seminary. The affiliated St. Benedict's women's college is in nearby St. Joseph, Minn.

"As a translation, it is truly an ecumenical effort, with nearly every major Christian denomination represented among the translators, including Roman Catholic," said Patella, who presented this year's Hanley Lecture Series,

March 19 - 20, sponsored annually by St. Paul's College at the University of Manitoba.

The Bible tour is displaying renditions of Gospels and Acts, which include illuminations of the genealogy of Jesus, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Luke's anthology, the crucifixion and the Gospel of St. John.

Modern images used to bring the ancient words to life include a double-helix DNA strand, images sent from the Hubble telescope, the Twin Towers of 9/11, jet airplanes, modern architecture, an allusion to the AIDS virus, and scenes of genocide, but all with a subtle and stylized method. Such items are intended to give future generations clues as to when the Bible was created. Other images come from Eastern religious and Native American traditions. Many illuminations emphasize women, neglected peoples, and the poor. All animals, fauna and insects in the artwork are native to Minnesota. The volumes are two feet high by three feet wide when open.

ered. It also uses inclusive language, which was a requirement from the beginning," Patella said.

The Bible is a collaboration of scripture scholars and theologians at St. John's University with a team of artists and calligraphers. In 2000, Donald Jackson, senior scribe to Queen Elizabeth, and a crew of artists and calligraphers began the first of the Bible's 1,150 vellum pages.

The Bible is written and drawn entirely by hand using quills and pigments ground from minerals and stones such as malachite, silver and 24-karat gold. A team from Minnesota and Wales worked together to complete the project.

Patella believes the legacy of the work "will be a realization of the role of art in faith and theology. Scripture is more than a text. Truth is more than a treatise or essay. Some things can only be expressed with colour, design, and image."

"The word of God is not limited by the five senses but involves all of them and things we have not yet imagined."

To find out where the St. John's Bible will be on display, contact St. Paul's College at (204) 474-8582.

## Omar Khadr the focus of Nash Lecture

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — You don't hear much about Omar Khadr these days, but he is alive and well, living in Edmonton with the intent of pursuing a career in nursing. At

nary conference held in Edmonton in 2008 and it was at that point that Zinck and some of The King's students became interested in his plight.

"What happened next with the students," said Zinck, "was remarkable."

They began writing letters to Khadr. They researched his story, discovered the military had altered records to make him look guilty, and became advocates for his release.

"It was a moment when they came into adulthood," said Zinck in response to a question. She used PowerPoint slides to emphasize her points. One slide contained the line, "Hope must find its way through lies, fantasy into facts and existence."

Because Khadr expressed an interest in advancing his education, a group of faculty at The King's University developed a special curriculum for him that included several Canadian novels, including *Who Has Seen The Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, that would help teach him the basics. His military guards became his

stand-in teachers.

At Millhaven he requested and was granted a transfer to the maximum security institution in Edmonton where he continued his education. He was eventually transferred to Bowden medium security institution at Innisfail, Alta.

Throughout her presentation, Zinck talked about the value of a liberal arts education in teaching values needed throughout life. She and some of the students from The King's University remain in touch with Khadr.



Frank Flegel

Dr. Arlette Zinck

one time, in the early 2000s, he and his Canadian family were the subjects of much diplomatic activity between the United States and Canada as various groups in both countries advocated for and against his release from prison.

His journey from Afghanistan to Guantanamo Bay Prison to Edmonton was the subject of this year's Campion College Nash Memorial Lecture held March 21 in the University of Regina's Education auditorium. Lecturer Dr. Arlette Zinck is an associate professor of English and dean of the faculty of arts at The King's University, a private Christian institution in Edmonton. The title of her lecture was, "Discerning a Path Toward Hope: A Liberal Arts University's Journey with Omar Khadr."

Khadr was 15 years old when he joined his father fighting with the Taliban against the United States invasion of Afghanistan. He was seriously wounded and eventually charged by the U.S. military for throwing a grenade that killed an American medic. He was sent to Guantanamo Bay where he was held for 10 years without trial.

As he was a Canadian citizen, attempts were made to have him released. Because he was not yet 16, various factions appealed to both the Canadian and U.S. governments and the U.S. military to return him to Canada. Eventually he was sent to Millhaven maximum security prison in Ontario.

His Canadian lawyer told Khadr's story at an interdisciplinary



OSU

**URSULINE DIES — On March 13, in the 79th year of consecrated life, Sister Ambrosia Wending, OSU, completed her earthly journey and peacefully entered her eternal home, joining all her immediate family members and her many Ursuline companions. Wending's life was one of service — as teacher, local and general superior, as well as a variety of jobs at Marian Press in Battleford, Sask. In her retirement she joined the Brescia Prayer Apostolate in Saskatoon. She enjoyed life's lighter moments, such as fishing, picnic lunches and gardening, and will be remembered for her caring, her sense of humour, and her ever-ready smile.**

## Jewish community celebrates Purim

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — The Purim celebration is sometimes called the Jewish Mardi Gras where people dress in costume and make a lot of noise.

Each year Jewish children are told the story of Queen Esther, who is the hero of Purim, a celebration that commemorates the survival of the Jewish community in ancient Persia.

Haman, the King's chief minister, falsely accused the Jews of not obeying the king's laws, and so the Persian king planned to exterminate all the Jews in his kingdom. They were saved through the intervention of his queen, the beautiful Esther, who, unbeknownst to the king, is a Jew.

The chief minister, Haman, is hanged by the king for his evil intentions, and Mordecai, Esther's cousin who originally presented Esther to the king when he was searching for a bride, is elevated to the chief minister's position.

The noise and partying come when the *Megillat Esther*, which is really the Book of Esther in the Old Testament, is read. Whenever



Frank Flegel

**PURIM — Rabbi Jeremy Parnes of Beth Jacob Synagogue in Regina mixes with participants at this year's Purim celebration, which is sometimes called the Jewish Mardi Gras as people dress in costume and make a lot of noise.**

Haman is mentioned the noise-makers and the booing are supposed to drown out the mention of his name.

After the reading, refreshments are served, including *Haman taschen*, which are fruit-filled pastries in the tri-corner shape of what is supposed to be Haman's hat.

Most of the children come dressed in costume, but a few adults always join in the fun as well. This year children had the added fun of an air-filled boogie bouncer, and prizes were awarded at the end of the celebration to children who participated in creating art while sitting at their tables.





# Spiritual care funding eliminated in Sask. budget

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The elimination of provincially funded spiritual care services in hospitals and care homes across Saskatchewan will seriously affect patient care and health outcomes, predicts Simon Lasair of the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care.

As part of the 2017 provincial

budget announced March 22 by Finance Minister Kevin Doherty, “pastoral care services” were eliminated from provincial health care funding, amounting to some \$1.5 million annually.

The cuts affect spiritual care departments and personnel funded through the provincial health care system. Pastoral care provided by clergy, staff and volunteers from

faith communities is not funded by the province. Some faith-based facilities also use funding from foundations or endowments to cover spiritual and pastoral care beyond what the province has provided.

The decision does not take into account the invaluable and unique skills that spiritual care providers bring to a health care team, says

Lasair.

Stress, fear, and loss are commonly experienced by patients, families and staff in health care and long-term settings. Spiritual care providers address the spiritual dimensions of these difficult or life-altering situations, says Lasair.

“One of the implications of this decision is that there is actually going to be a greater burden of care upon the system, because professionals will not be there to provide the emotional and spiritual support needed,” he says.

“Without spiritual care departments to oversee the dissemination of information, we are not entirely sure how community clergy are even going to know if their people are in hospital.”

It will leave many without any form of spiritual care at all. “The majority of clients we see in the health care system are people who have no religious background, and although they may not understand what spiritual care is all about, these people have spiritual needs as well,” Lasair says. The elimination of spiritual care means that a significant segment of the population will no longer have their emotional or spiritual needs met at often-critical moments.



Kiply Yaworski

**DEDICATION** — After leading a dedication liturgy March 23 at Holy Family Catholic School, students gathered around a photo of Msgr. Len Morand. The school and its chapel have been dedicated to Morand, who served in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon for some 51 years before his death in 2007.

## School dedicated to Msgr. Morand

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Students filled the gymnasium at Holy Family Catholic School March 23 to celebrate the dedication of their school and its chapel to the late Msgr. Len Morand.

Morand died in June 2007 after serving 51 years as a priest in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Holy Family students led a liturgy of the Word to mark the dedication. “We pray in thanksgiving for Msgr. Morand; may the memory of his service to other people be kept,” students prayed. “Keep the memory of Msgr. Morand alive in our school and may the special plaque that we display in our chapel be cherished.”

Terry Cratty, who served in youth ministry at Holy Family Parish when Morand was pastor,

shared memories of his mentor and friend.

“Monsignor was the holiest and the best man that I have ever known,” Cratty told the children, who listened intently and looked at images in a slide show of Morand’s life.

“Monsignor was originally from a small community just outside Windsor, Ontario. He was one of nine children, two girls and seven boys. Six of those boys became priests,” Cratty said.

“Since your school is dedicated to Monsignor, there are some very important things that you should know about him. First, there was no greater advocate for youth in our diocese,” Cratty said of the priest and one-time teacher, who also worked with the Catholic board of education.

“As pastor of Holy Family, Monsignor came to all the ele-

mentary feeder schools, he came to all their sporting activities, and most importantly he prayed for all the students that were in the schools, and that was something really exciting for you, because I know right now Monsignor is praying for each one of you.”

Cratty described Morand as a man of wisdom, of prayer and of great love. “Monsignor was a good shepherd and he cared for everyone. He founded Guadalupe House, served in many parishes and in every level of leadership in our diocese,” he said. “Your school is truly blessed to be dedicated to him.”

The dedication concluded with the assembly singing the school song, with signing by school Sign Club members from Grades 1 to 3.

After the celebration, student leaders brought a gift of candy around to students in every classroom to mark the special event.

“We have a number of techniques that we use to facilitate clients in the telling of their stories, their experience of health care, their experience of their illness, (or) of being in long-term care. By drawing attention to spiritual concerns within those stories, our hope is to alleviate emotional and spiritual suffering.”

As a professional practice, spiritual care requires technical skill and training that makes it distinct from other health care professions. “Most spiritual care practitioners in the province have achieved at least a master’s level in academic training, (and) all of us have had multiple units of specialized spiritual care training through the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care,” Lasair says, adding that this “enables us to understand some of the psycho-social issues that might be contributing to a person’s emotional or spiritual distress, and we are also specifically trained in how to reflect theologically on the experiences of illness or being in long-term care.”

While other health care professionals are trained to be sensitive to spiritual needs, they do not have the same specialized training, nor are they primarily focused on the spiritual dimension of care. “This training is unique among the health care disciplines we work with, and I think it is also fair to say that even among community clergy this training is unique.”

Cutting professional spiritual care in hospital and long-term care settings also eliminates the partnership and support that spiritual care departments routinely provide to clergy and faith communities that are offering pastoral care to their mem-

bers, points out Lasair. “Without spiritual care departments to oversee the dissemination of information, we are not entirely sure how community clergy are even going to know if their people are in hospital.”

Accreditation Canada recommends that professional spiritual care be an integral part of health care teams. “There will now be a significant gap in most health care institutions in Saskatchewan, which will need to be remedied to ensure the highest standards of accreditation are maintained.”


A letter addressed to Premier Brad Wall, the finance minister and the health minister has been written by spiritual care practitioners in the province, expressing grave concerns about the cuts, and asking for the funding to be restored.

“I think that as a profession we have a lot of stereotypes working against us,” suggests Lasair, noting that spiritual care providers are not simply “nice people who go in and say a prayer.”



Tim Yaworski

**PARISH MISSION** — Theologian and storyteller Megan McKenna led a parish mission March 25 - 29 at St. Mary’s Parish in Saskatoon. With energy, humour and proclamation, McKenna explored three lenten Gospels from the Gospel of John: the woman at the well, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. Combining theological insights, engaging stories, and an understanding of how tentative faith develops into full-blown discipleship, McKenna shed light on the catechumenate, the call of all the baptized into a deeper relationship with Christ, and our Christian identity as “beloved disciples.” McKenna was also facilitating an Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish series March 31 - April 2 about the power of storytelling in passing on faith and tradition, particularly for indigenous communities.




*In the triumph of the Lord . . .  
May you always rejoice!*

*In the Glory of the Lord . . .  
may you always find happiness!*

WISHING YOU & YOUR FAMILY  
A HAPPY AND BLESSED EASTER!

**Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus**





# Sixth season of beloved ‘Midwife’ series underway

By Chris Byrd

NEW YORK (CNS) — Sister Ursula’s (Harriet Walter) arrival at Nonnatus House shakes things up in the sixth season of *Call the Midwife*, PBS’ warmly engaging and popular limited-series drama.

Having debuted on BBC 1 Jan. 22, *Call the Midwife* premiered Sunday, April 2, and concludes its eight-week run on Sunday, May 21.

As veteran viewers will know, *Call the Midwife* chronicles the lives of nuns from the fictitious Anglican order of St. Raymond of Nonnatus who, together with their un-vowed colleagues, assist expectant mothers in the Poplar area of London’s East End during the 1950s and ’60s.

The series contains realistic scenes of childbirth, descriptions of medical complications, and frank, necessary discussions of sexuality and reproduction. Reflecting the reality of its mid-20th century setting, the show also depicts clinics distributing contraceptives.

Although Sister Julianne (Jenny Agutter), the nun in charge, expresses reservations, the sisters’ overall attitude falls far short of vigorous opposition to this emerging trend. That’s in keeping with the cautious acceptance the Church of England extended to artificial contraception beginning with the Lambeth Conference of 1930.

However, when use of the pill engenders complications for local

woman Wilma Goddens (Olivia Darnley), with ultimately tragic results, the midwife who cared for her, Trixie Franklin (Helen George), revises her attitude.

Thus, stylish Trixie tells Anglican vicar Tom Hereward (Jack Ashton), her former fiancé, “You and I have different ideas about miracles. I honestly thought that was what the pill was, and if the doctors are right, and there are issues over its safety, then I’m

suspending all belief in miracles until further notice.”

The fact that midwife Patsy Mount (Emerald Fennell) and nurse Delia Busby (Kate Lamb) try to keep their lesbian relationship a secret also accurately reflects the era. Like the other mature elements already mentioned, *Call the Midwife* makes appropriate viewing for discerning adults.

In the 2016 Christmas Day spe-

cial episode, a Nonnatus House contingent travelled to South Africa to shore up the order’s clinic there, which was in danger of closing due to inefficiency. A preoccupation with ineptitude informed Sister Ursula’s actions when she subsequently replaced Sister Julianne at the head of the staff.

Sister Julianne clashes with her new superior. But she also understands that an experience of failure in Sister Ursula’s past moti-

vates her to be exacting now.

When Sister Ursula limits her midwives to 20-minute home visits, however, one of Barbara Gilbert’s (Charlotte Ritchie) patients suffers the nearly fatal consequences of this misguided policy.

In keeping with the program’s fundamentally humane approach, instead of feeling vindicated when a villain receives her comeuppance, we’re moved with compassion toward Sister Ursula as she penitently confronts her demons and grievous flaws.

The death of the redoubtable, cantankerous, but compassionate Sister Evangelina (Pam Ferris) at the end of Season Five, has brought Sisters Julianne, Monica Joan (Judy Parfitt) and Mary Cynthia (Bryony Hannah) more to the forefront.

Concerned with Sister Mary Cynthia’s mental fragility after she was violently assaulted in Season Five, Sister Julianne entrusts the motherhouse with the care of the young sister, who is preparing to profess her vows.

In her 90s, and contending with dementia, Sister Monica Joan accompanies convent handyman Fred Buckle (Cliff Parisi) to a mental hospital called Linchmere as he looks for a possible home for Reggie (Daniel Laurie), an orphaned young man with Down syndrome who is in Fred’s care.

Having concluded the place isn’t appropriate for Reggie, Sister Monica Joan is distraught to discover that Sister Mary Cynthia



CNS/PBS

**BELOVED SERIES** — Judy Parfitt stars as Sister Monica Joan, centre, and Victoria Yeates as Sister Winifred, in the PBS series *Call the Midwife*. The series chronicles the lives of nuns from the fictitious Anglican order of St. Raymond of Nonnatus who, together with their un-vowed colleagues, assist expectant mothers in the Poplar area of London’s East End during the 1950s and ’60s.

Byrd is a guest reviewer for Catholic News Service.

— MIDWIFE, page 14

## Be wary of the temptation to being busy: rest is part of our faith

By Caitlin Ward

Today I told my officemate he had to take some time off. He’s worked a lot of overtime in the last month, and even though he swears he feels fine, it’s obvious to me he’s exhausted. Well, actually, I didn’t tell him he had to take some time off. While he was at a meeting I scheduled a day and a half off for him and said it was non-negotiable. There was a small and mostly convivial argument on the subject when he saw it in the calendar, but I put my foot down and he acquiesced to my authority in due course. Now, I don’t really have the authority to make him take time off, but he doesn’t seem to realize it. Let’s keep that last part between you and me, though, shall we?

I know that may read as pretty paternalistic in its way, and I probably come off a bit authoritarian, too. Generally speaking, I’m *not* particularly authoritarian at work. That said, I am cognizant

*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)*

of how easy it is to invest too much time and effort into a job, and how one’s well-being and work can suffer as a result. I know this because I have been quite bad for it in the past, emerging from the school year emotionally and physically exhausted and sometimes pretty hateful as a result. I do not want this for my officemate. My officemate is also my friend, you see, and I don’t want him to be exhausted and hateful as I have been in years past. He needs rest. I need rest. We all need rest, sometimes.

I’ve been thinking about rest as we approach Easter. Easter doesn’t have quite the same secular profile that Christmas does. At the end of December we let go of some of our regular obligations for a few days and pay closer attention to our faith. We are not afforded the same luxury at Easter. Though it is the holiest of seasons for us, there isn’t much space to breathe and live in these moments outside the Triduum itself. The rest of life doesn’t stop in quite the same way.

That being said, I don’t know if the Christmas season affords us that much more time to contemplate and live in these moments, either. There’s time off from work for many of us (though not all), but the time off can easily be consumed with family obligations, Christmas preparations, and meeting with friends who have returned from away. These

things can be good, certainly, but they are not restful. And the funny thing is, a lot of it is ritual that we have constructed around Christmas, rather than having much to do with the holy day itself. We make work for ourselves in places where there once wasn’t meant to be work. We make ourselves busy.

I’ve been thinking about the Book of Genesis, and the wisdom of the Israelites: “. . . so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” Because of Easter, of course, we Catholics instead rest on the first day of the week, rather than the last. And for some, the day itself cannot always be a day of rest. Rest is meant to be part of our faith as much as anything else.

And yet, here we are living in a society that is

obsessed with being busy. It begins to feel as if we in North America must have something against resting. Not everyone can take space to rest, I know, but even those who can take space tend not to do so. There’s probably something about prestige with it — our importance is in part determined by just how much is our responsibility — but there’s more to it, too. There’s a certain kind of capitalist obsession with being productive. There’s a certain kind of work ethic that finds virtue in the act of doing work as much as it finds virtue in what is accomplished. There’s this idea that anything less than perfection is by definition not good enough, and so we must work tirelessly until things are flawless.

I don’t mean to characterize any of these as personal failings. Each one carries a weight of social expectation that affects all of us to varying degrees, and in some cases having so much to do is not a choice, but simply the reality of one’s life. Some types of work actually never do end; sometimes there is too much to do.

It’s hard not to think of all of these reasons as symptoms of a rather unhealthy society, though, and I do wonder why we have allowed it to develop this way. I’m not entirely sure what we’ve gained by it. But I’m also not sure how it stops.

When I wake up early in the morning  
Lift my head, I’m still yawning  
When I’m in the middle of a dream  
Stay in bed, float up stream (Float up stream)

Please, don’t wake me, no, don’t shake me  
Leave me where I am, I’m only sleeping

Everybody seems to think I’m lazy  
I don’t mind, I think they’re crazy  
Running everywhere at such a speed  
Till they find there’s no need (There’s no need)

Please, don’t spoil my day, I’m miles away  
And after all I’m only sleeping

Keeping an eye on the world going by my window  
Taking my time  
Lying there and staring at the ceiling  
Waiting for a sleepy feeling . . .

Please, don’t spoil my day, I’m miles away  
And after all I’m only sleeping

Keeping an eye on the world going by my window  
Taking my time

When I wake up early in the morning  
Lift my head, I’m still yawning  
When I’m in the middle of a dream  
Stay in bed, float up stream (Float up stream)

Please, don’t wake me, no, don’t shake me  
Leave me where I am, I’m only sleeping



# SXSW vibrates with insight, passion and thrills

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



March weather in Austin, Texas, can swing between cool and sizzling. An atmosphere of both what's fresh and what's hot could be said to apply to the South By Southwest (SXSW) Conference and Festivals, now in its 34th year, offering an awesome array of media, technology and arts-related events. The 2017 film program was the 24th edition and proved to be stronger than ever. Over nine days some 130 features were screened — 84 world premieres and 54 by first-time filmmakers — along with 128 short films; this total selected from over 7,600 submissions. The diversity ranged from high-demand headliners to innovative low-budget independents at the critical cutting edge. Some of the most interesting work was in documentaries as well as hybrid forms blending non-fiction with dramatic elements.

While SXSW has its own distinctive approach, I was pleased to see the programming of several festival favourites which I had missed during the Sundance festival where they premiered. Notable among them were *The Big Sick*, a superb comedic drama drawn from real life that took the audience award in that category, and the urgent environmental documentary *Chasing Coral*, which was a Sundance audience award winner. More about these in subsequent columns on narrative and documentary highlights.

The festival's opening and closing headline features certainly attracted major-league attention and, as they played only once, huge lines waiting hours for even primary badge holders to have any chance of getting in to see them. The March 10 opener, Terrence Malick's enigmatic Austin-based *Song to Song* (<http://www.songtosongmovie.com/>), was presented in the largest venue, the Paramount Theatre, a grand historic movie palace on downtown central Congress Avenue leading to the Texas state capitol. As the Paramount was not available for the March 18 closer, Daniel Espinosa's space-based *Life* (<http://www.lifemovie.com/>) screened in the second largest venue, the very modern Zach Theatre, appropriate for a futuristic sci-fi thriller. While both films cast some of Hollywood's biggest stars in lead roles, they could hardly be more opposite.

Terrence Malick is a Texas treasure, one of world cinema's great original filmmakers, and his masterworks made years apart from the 1970s on will stand the test of time. That's certainly true of the Texas-based *The Tree of Life*, awarded the Cannes festival's prestigious *palme d'or* in 2011. But since then the aging master has been releasing lesser

dramas more frequently to a more critical response. For all its cinematic promise, set against the backdrop of Austin's celebrated music scene, *Song to Song* unfortunately continues that trend. It had many in the SXSW audience shaking their heads, though Richard Brody of *The New Yorker* subsequently penned a rapturous review. As an admirer of Malick, I would call it a magnificent misfire.

The movie has been long in the making with some footage apparently shot back as far as 2011. Snippets from music festivals, including SXSW venues, performances and backstage moments make it into various scenes of a meandering elliptical narrative structure. The central storyline is that of a lovers' triangle that comes together, then disintegrates. The pivotal character is that of the soulful Faye (Rooney Mara), an aspiring guitarist and songstress who is sharing a bed with a ruthless high-powered hard-living record executive and cynical promoter named Cook (Michael Fassbender). Exhibiting different hairstyles and moods, Faye will be the principal channel for expressing trademark Malickian angst questioning the mystery and meaning of it all.

Into Cook's opulent starry surroundings arrives "BV" (Ryan Gosling), another aspiring musician and songwriter. The lure of what Cook can offer — making it



in the music business — is strong. When Faye and BV fall for each other she continues to sleep with Cook. The threesome even enjoy a seemingly happy-go-lucky jaunt to Mexico by private jet. Of course this unstable triangle soon falls apart. Cook picks up Rhonda (Natalie Portman), a waitress in a restaurant, and transforms her into a high-fashion spousal accessory, an arrangement doomed to tragedy. Holly Hunter makes an appearance as Rhonda's mother. The serial attractions of beautiful women continue as Cook becomes involved with the lovely Amanda (Cate Blanchett). In another sub-narrative there's even a passing lesbian flirtation that introduces a French-speaking woman, Zoey (Bérénice Marlohe), into the tangle of confounding relationships. Most go nowhere except for that between Faye and BV, which is somewhat



Gerald Schmitz

**FILM PREMIERE** — South By Southwest Festival director Janet Pierson introduces the team behind *Life* at its SXSW world premiere March 18.

of a relief, though this only happens after he abandons the snares of musical dreams for a simpler life working in the Texas oil patch.

As usual with Malick, much of the spoken word is in the form of inner stream-of-consciousness voiceovers by characters who are searching, sprinkled with hints of the transcendental beyond. ("There's something else . . . something that wants to be found," says one.) The bond that survives between Faye and BV suggests that, in forgiveness, "mercy has a human heart." Other desiderata are scattered throughout, as the flow of life and love that still hasn't found what it's looking for (to quote a U2 lyric) moves from moment to moment,

*La La Land*.

No one should expect light-hearted musical romance from Malick. The famously reclusive 73-year-old director makes no concessions to popular tastes. It was a surprise when he appeared on a morning after an interview with Fassbender and another renowned Austin filmmaker, Richard Linklater, whose *Everybody Wants Some!* had opened last year's festival. Malick has never seen any need to explain himself or his methods.

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For something completely different, SXSW chose *Life*, a high-profile big-budget mainstream movie to close the festival. Swedish director Daniel Espinosa helms an international cast, members of a six-person Mars Pilgrim 7 mission operating the orbiting International Space Station (ISS) when a probe to Mars returns carrying material from the red planet. The lead scientists are Hugh Derry (Ariyon Bakare), a disabled man who needs no wheelchair in the weightless atmosphere, and Miranda North (Rebecca Ferguson), a microbiologist with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention who has knowledge not shared with the others — engineering specialist Rory Adams (Ryan Reynolds), Japanese technician Sho Murakami (Hiroyuki Sanada), Russian cosmonaut Ekaterina Golovkina (Olga Dihovichnaya), and physician David Jordan (Jake Gyllenhaal), the longest in space who has worked in war zones and seems relieved to have left such earthly places behind.

Hugh subjects the Martian samples to intensive examination under conditions of extreme temperature variation and different concentrations of atmospheric elements, eventually focusing on what appears to be a single-cell organism. When under Hugh's efforts it emerges from a dormant state, begins to move and grow, the news of the discovery of a life form beyond earth provokes global excitement. A girl in Time Square calls it "Calvin" and the nickname sticks. The tiny creature, which

looks like a gelatinous starfish, exhibits remarkable properties. Another new life is celebrated when Sho watches his wife giving birth to their child by video link.

Soon, however, wonder turns to horror and then terror as contact is lost with earth and the evolving Calvin proves to be anything but benign, possessed of protean and indestructible powers. Rory is its first victim, followed by Hugh whose last words are "Calvin doesn't hate us, he just needs to kill us to survive." Set to a pounding propulsive score, surviving crew members make furious efforts to try to contain and destroy the alien monster that must be stopped from reaching earth at all costs. Finally it's down to David and Miranda who share some soulful parting moments. Is this the end of the world as we know it?

*Life* certainly lives up to its tagline: "Be careful what you search for. We were better off alone." With superior set design and visual effects, and a script from Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick (*Deadpool*, *Zombieland*), it's better and smarter than any "Mars attacks" B-movie genre. Comparisons with *Alien* are inevitable. Indeed earlier in the festival Ridley Scott was present to show his 1979 classic along with a sneak peek at scenes from the highly anticipated sequel *Alien: Covenant* due out in May. *Life* isn't a mere inferior knockoff. It develops an original scenario of the mystery of extraterrestrial life that devolves into an entertaining high-octane dose of sci-fi thrills and chills.

It may be questioned whether such movies with big stars need the exposure given them by festivals. Within days of SXSW *Life* was in multiplexes across North America. *Song to Song* had a theatrical release before the festival ended, albeit far more limited. Headline premieres generate a lot of media buzz judging from the hordes of paparazzi they attract. The hope is that this will also draw attention to the broader festival program and the smaller screen gems within it.

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# Easter is about daylight: a ‘new day’ in time

By David Gibson

Easter begins in the darkness and at night, when the great vigil mass for this central Christian feast is celebrated. Yet Easter is all about daylight — a “new day” in time.

The resurrected Jesus is “the Morning Star,” according to the *Exsultet*, the rather ancient and remarkable hymn still heard during the Easter Vigil. Like the morning star shining at dawn, Jesus signals a new day’s arrival, with all the hopes attached to it.

The *Exsultet* proclaims Jesus as “the one Morning Star who never sets.” With his return “from death’s domain,” it reminds worshippers that he sheds “his peaceful light on humanity.”

It would be a shame to reduce Easter to a series of nice-sounding words and phrases to describe the risen Lord and to escape from the challenge of telling who he really is. So calling Jesus the Morning Star was anything but that for our forebears.

Christ is the light; he illumines the world. His followers, like him, are called to carry his light and to assure that it shines brightly in the universe of all their activities.

The resurrection is like the break of dawn. To state this is to reach into the very heart of Christianity and to begin a conversation about the essentials of Christian living.

Gibson served on Catholic News Service’s editorial staff for 37 years.

Christ is light, just as he is life — new life.

Yes, Easter begins in the night darkness. But, in the *Exsultet*’s words, “this is the night of which it is written: The night shall be as bright as day” and “full of gladness.”

“Gladness,” admittedly, is not a word uttered often nowadays. But we know what it implies: joy, happiness and, no doubt, a life in which hope plays a significant role and opportunities arise to experience fulfilling satisfactions.

Gladness may assume many forms, but in some form, I believe, it represents what most people desire. That’s just the point.

Easter zeros in on the desires of the human heart.

It’s true that darkness casts a shadow over the lives of too many. Pope Francis is well aware of this. “Christ wants to come and take us by the hand to bring us out of our anguish,” the pope said on Easter 2016.

The “first stone” to move aside on Easter, he said, is “the lack of hope that imprisons us within ourselves.” Living without hope is a “trap” that, in his eyes, means living “as if the Lord were not risen.”

But, the pope indicated, Jesus’ followers ought to follow his lead. So the risen Lord sends each person who encounters him “to announce the Easter message, to awaken and resurrect hope in hearts burdened by sadness, in those who struggle to find meaning in life,” said the pope.

An imprisoning trap. That is what Pope Francis believes a lack of hope becomes. No wonder the risen Lord so often is called a liberator.

What freedom do people need that reflects Easter’s new life? Freedom, possibly, from the fear of putting the finest of their God-given gifts to fuller use and thus beginning to grow again.

It would be a mistake, after all, to imagine weak hope as a sign that someone actually is hopeless. In a famous 2013 interview with Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro, an Italian communications expert, Pope Francis insisted that although a person’s life “is a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow.”

He has a “dogmatic certainty,” the pope said then, that “God is in every person’s life.”

Easter sets the tone for all Christian living. It is a matter of coming out of the darkness and into the light. It is a matter, too, of accompanying others as they attempt, perhaps haltingly, to discover what new life means for them.

“Goodness always tends to spread,” and “any person who has experienced a profound liberation becomes more sensitive to the needs of others,” Pope Francis wrote in “The Joy of the Gospel,” one of his most-read documents.

What the Jesus of Easter does is what Christians are meant to do. Remember, it was the resurrected Jesus who accompanied the two disciples making their way to Emmaus, spending time with them in ways that comforted and enriched them (Luke 24:13-35).

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich spoke

in 2014, just before becoming Chicago’s archbishop, about the Christian mission to stand alongside those who experience a “dryness” in life that “eats away” at their hopes.

“Our aim should be to make sure that everyone has a place at the table of life,” he said.

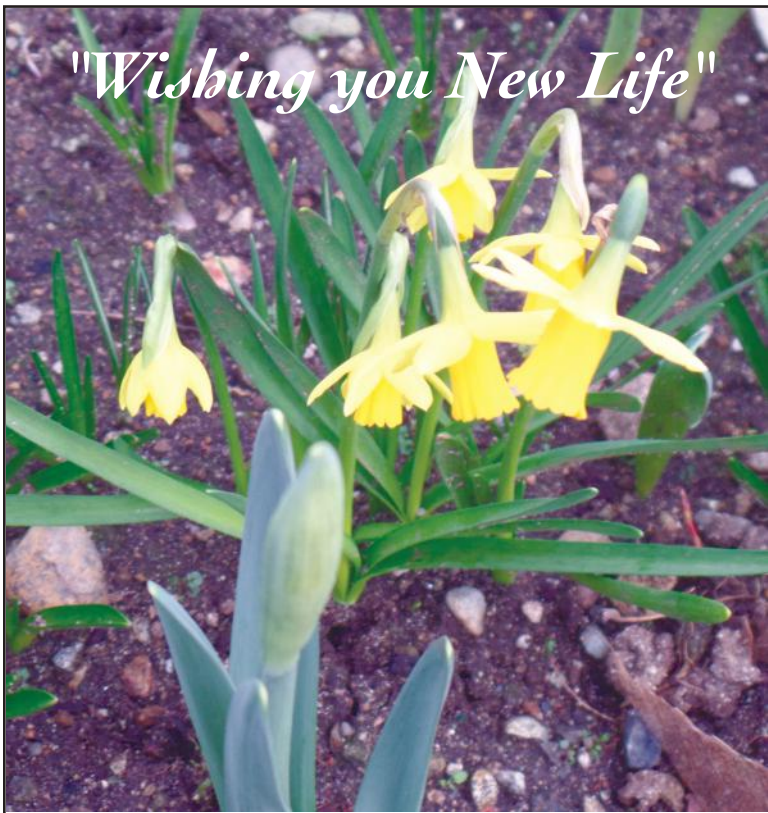
He mentioned “the mother needing prenatal and postnatal care, and protection for herself and her child, the former inmate seeking a fresh start, the drug addict who needs someone to help her take one day at a time, the father and mother who want their children to have the educational opportunities other families have.”

These people, the cardinal stressed, represent “the vast army God is inviting us to raise up with him.”



Janice Weber

**EASTER PROCLAMATION** — “Come Easter night, we are called to sing, with holy abandonment, the boundless song of new life, of resurrection. . . . Our resurrection song may not pretend that the evils in our world and in our church — and most certainly, in our hearts — do not exist. It is precisely in the midst of sin that we are asked to proclaim our belief in the risen Lord.” — Andrew M. Britz, OSB



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# The goal of Easter: to bring us to newness of life

By Rev. Tom Ryan, CSP

What will you be celebrating this Easter? A Mystery? Yes!

The Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ that lies at the very centre of Christian faith and discipleship.

The word “paschal” comes from the Greek term *pascha*, which goes back to the Hebrew *pesach*, which refers to the annual commemoration by the Israelites of their liberating Passover from slavery in Egypt.

The Paschal Mystery is intended to pick up for Christians this rich Hebrew background and to locate the historical death and resurrection of Jesus as the establishment of a new, liberating Passover — the Passover from slavery to sin to newness of life.

When we look closely at the life of Jesus, we see that it was a life lived out of love for others. And when we probe this life of love, we see that it is animated by the presence of a powerful paradox — the paradox of finding life through death and of losing one’s life to save one’s life.

The spirit of this paradox is captured in the saying of Jesus that “those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it” (Mt 16:25).

This striking paradox permeates his preaching and comes to a particular climax in his historical death and resurrection. Out of



M. Weber

**A WORK OF LOVE** — “The Lord measures out perfection neither by the multitude nor the magnitude of our deeds, but the manner in which we perform them.” — St. John of the Cross

death comes new life! Living fruitfully requires a kind of dying.

Whenever we are faced in any way, then, with a form of “dying” or letting go, the Paschal Mystery of Christ is there to shape our per-

ception of what is happening and give an affirming stamp to our hope that out of this “death” will come new life and growth.

Being a disciple of Christ involves living out of this paradox

and allowing it to serve as a special pair of lenses which enable us to see into the nature of all reality. To see this mystery at play in the seasons of the year and the stages of our lives. No dying, no new life. No emptying, no being filled.

The pattern of death and resurrection in Jesus’ life is being reproduced in our own through many little “dyings” and “risings” until one day comes “the Big Letting Go” that is our death, opening into the new life that is our resurrection.

In the meantime, all along the way in relationships of friendship and love, people do “die” for the sake of each other. Spouses give themselves in costly love and parents sacrifice themselves out of love for their children. Friends make themselves available to serve each other’s good in sometimes heroic ways.

Here is an essential truth of Christian faith: when we, like Jesus, are available for service in love at the cost of personal sacrifice, the very act of living is a

share in the dying-rising of Christ.

We are engaged in daily rehearsals for our grand finale. Death and resurrection are not separate from life. They are not just future. They are present. To look upon the resurrection as a narrow escape from death is to miss the full meaning of human life, to miss the death and resurrection that are present in every day’s living.

Death and resurrection are not to be pushed out of life, are not to be seen as ultimate events, but as immediate experiences. They are not final events but daily choices. They are every step of the journey, the inner exodus from the old self to the new. “I die daily,” said St. Paul. But he also rose daily.

Dying to what? Basically to sin and a self-centred existence. Dying to sin is not merely turning from evil, but turning to Christ ever more fully in a deepening process of constant, lifelong conversion.

One illustration of it is seen in our struggle to let go of yesterday, of the past. Not forget it, just let it go. Whether it’s turning 21, 50, 65, or 80. Whether it’s losing our health or our hair, our money or our memory, a person we love or a possession we prize.

“Dying to self” is letting go of where our security once lay. Whether it’s family or friends. Whether it’s being retired, divorced or disabled. Whether it’s a change of life or a change of pace. We must not cling to what once was but is no more.

Wherever or whatever or with whomever we’ve been, we dare not cling. We have to move on. And all moving on is a dying, a letting go. It’s the imprint of the Paschal Mystery of Easter on our lives.

Only by dying will we rise to fresh life. Only by letting go of yesterday will we open ourselves to tomorrow where the seeds of fresh life await us. The resurrection is not merely an object of faith, the acceptance of a theological truth. It is a call to newness of life.

The great Easter truth is not that we are to live newly only after death, but that we are to live newly *now* because of our experience of Christ’s continued, empowering presence through the Holy Spirit.

## The origins of Lent and Easter

By Joseph Kelly

“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain,” wrote the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 15:17), proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus to be the most important element of the faith. And such an important event would deserve a kind of memorial.

The majority of the first Christians expected the world to end almost any day, and so there was no great need for feast days. Most initial Christians were converted Jews who revered the Old Testament and thought the way to be a good Christian was to follow the Jewish law.

Rather obviously, the world did not end, and by the year 150, most Christians were gentiles, including bishops, who wanted specifically Christian feasts with liturgies centred on Sunday and not the Sabbath, the holy day of the Jews.

Those wanting to retain the Jewish reckoning lived mostly in the Eastern Mediterranean while those wanting to use a more general reckoning lived in the gentile world and especially in Rome.

An important element separating these two groups was that the Jews used a lunar calendar, so there was no way to synchronize the two calendars.

The defenders of the old way said that the resurrection should be observed on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan, a date derived from their interpretation of the Gospel crucifixion narratives, and their opponents called them the “Fourteeners.”

Sadly, the struggle became fierce because the entire Christian calendar depended upon the results. The main proponent of the

new date was Victor I, bishop of Rome (189-198), who threatened to break off communion with the “Fourteeners.”

Fortunately that did not happen, but the future lay with Pope Victor and his allies. The feast of the resurrection would be determined by the major churches, especially Rome in the Latin-speaking parts of the ancient world.

In the Bible, every major feast had a time of preparation. Since feasts included much food as part of the celebration, the Christians thought that a fast before the Easter feast would be appropriate for all people except the ill and small children.

The first such fast was three days, corresponding to the days from the crucifixion to the resurrection.

In 325, the first ecumenical council met at Nicaea. Since all the bishops of the Roman Empire were there, they discussed major matters including the pre-Easter fast.

Candidates for baptism fasted for 40 days just as Jesus did after his baptism, and the bishops at Nicaea decreed that all Christians should fast for 40 days before Easter, effectively creating the season of Lent.

Yet there was more. Lent stretched to 40 days, but the final days before Easter were significant, especially since the Gospels give accounts of Jesus’ last parables and work among the people then.

But there was more — in the last days of his life, Jesus had his last supper with his closest disciples, and this became a model for many liturgies since it involved bread and wine.

All this took place in Jerusalem, and, appropriately, it was the Jerusalem church that began to specify the different days and events of

this last week, effectively crafting what we now call Holy Week.

This practice would expand so that virtually every day of that week had something special about it. The Jerusalem approach to the last week of Lent would spread widely.

Both Easter and Holy Week would change over the centuries and in the endless number of places to which Christianity would expand, but both are key elements of the liturgy, a Greek word that means “the work of the people.”

By recognizing the great status of Holy Week and Easter, the ancient church made it clear how important the liturgy, “the work of the people,” is for us all.



Gerald Schmitz

**EASTER GLORY** — It is miraculous that tulips appear without anyone doing anything at all, even when snow might still be on the ground. And, though their lush colours hypnotize with their intensity, they still seem unpretentious. As tulips grow they become wider and wider, as if to embrace the universe. If a humble flower can return in Easter glory, why can’t we imagine it will be so for us?



# The image of God has been placed in our souls

## Both Lungs

Brent Kostyniuk



When our daughter Victoria was quite young, one of her favourite Bible stories was that of Jesus roasting fish by the shore of a lake and calling Peter over to join him. It remains one of my

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

favourite images of the risen Christ. It is a comforting image. Jesus has returned through the resurrection and wants to share a meal with his friend. Although he can enjoy a piece of fresh caught tilapia, he can also pass through walls as if they didn't exist. Is this what heaven will be like?

A very different image of the risen Christ dominates our parish church. Overlooking the sanctuary is a massive mosaic portraying an ethereal Christ floating in a

formless cosmos. Although the wounds of the crucifixion are evident, there is little to connect with Jesus' humanity. Breakfast on the beach seems a long way away.

Yet another image of the risen Christ comes from first-hand witnesses. "And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. . . . And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight" (Lk 24:15, 30-31). What was it about Jesus that prevented them from recognizing him? Did he deliberately alter his appearance to make this re-enactment of the Last Supper more dramatic?

Our interest in the risen Christ goes far beyond theological speculation because of our concern about our place in the next world. As we express each time we pray

the Nicene Creed, ". . . I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." Indeed, Jesus has told us something about that new life and even promised a warm welcome. "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2).

If Jesus is going to prepare a place for us, it must mean that it is a new place, one unlike anything we have ever pictured in our minds. Thus we are forced to create a new picture, as C. S. Lewis explains in *Miracles*. "It is not the picture of an escape from any and every kind of Nature into some unconditioned and utterly transcended life. It is the picture of a new human nature, and a new Nature in general, being brought into existence. We must, indeed, believe the risen body to be extremely different from the mortal body; but the existence, in that new state, of anything that could in any sense be described as a

'body' at all, involves some sort of spatial relations and in the long run a whole new universe." The risen Christ has indeed prepared a new world for us, a world not limited by the universe we know and, yet, somehow a world which will be familiar to us. If our own bodies are to be perfected through resurrection and achieve a new form, then nature, too, will be perfected.

The point is that we simply cannot know what the next world will be like. What is important is that we focus on the risen Christ and remember we are destined to share in his resurrection as expressed in our Easter prayers. "All you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." By putting on Christ we share not only in his resurrection, but in his humanity as well. Deep within us is a desire for that union. In his theology of the body, St. John Paul II describes it as an "original solitude," which goes beyond our natural inclinations and seeks

— IMAGE, page 16



**RISEN CHRIST** — Mosaic of the Risen Christ at St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Edmonton.

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Abbot Peter Novecosky and Monks of St. Peter's Abbey




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# Lenten penitential journey turns to celebration



## Liturgy and Life

Michael Dougherty

To feel a loss keenly, to sense the profound emptiness that comes when a person central to your life — a spouse, parent, or first friend — can no longer be with you, touches all of us at some point in our lives. When there is nothing more you can do but to say goodbye, we can be left staring into a void that may seem unbreachable. Surely it had been a quiet morning when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. Her grief was intense, love and hope lost in a violence of the crucifixion.

While years may dull the pain of separation, it remains. A friend I shared a long overdue conversation with recently told me of how profoundly the death of an adult daughter 10 years ago still affected him. He had been immobilized by his sadness for months after her fatal car accident. Eventually he felt he had to sell the home they shared in order to move on. A visit a couple of weeks ago to my family’s cemetery plot where four generations of my kin have been laid to rest no longer evokes tears, but rather a sense of peace and the fullness of life for me as I “talked” to them there.

What bridges this void for us? The 84 per cent of our world’s population who embrace some form of religion, according to the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life, would surely say their faiths offer that ability. Some evolutionary researchers studying the psychology of religion see global faiths as a byproduct of the way our brains work. They say religions develop out of our search to seek order from chaos, to understand our place in

Dougherty is co-chair of the Social Justice Committee at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse, Yukon.

the world around us and confront the finality of death. Dr. Dean Hamer, the director of the Gene Structure and Regulation Unit at the National Cancer Institute in America, goes so far as to argue for a “god gene” that predisposes us humans to believe in a greater spiritual force at work in our lives.

Faltering numbers of churchgoers in more secular societies like Canada suggest, according to Quentin Atkinson, a psychologist at the University of Auckland, that now “Basically, people are less scared about what might befall them.” However, in the same BBC article, Ara Norenzayan, a social psychologist at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and author of *Big Gods*, proposes that “Existential security is more fallible than it seems. In a moment, everything can change: a drunk driver can kill a loved one; a tornado can destroy a town; a doctor can issue a terminal diagnosis. . . . then suffering and hardship could fuel religiosity.” “People want to escape suffering, but if they can’t get out of it, they want to find meaning,” Norenzayan says.”

<b>Easter Sunday</b>	<b>Acts 10:34a, 37-43</b>
	<b>Psalms 118</b>
<b>April 16, 2017</b>	<b>Colossians 3:1-4</b>
	<b>Luke 24:13-35</b>

Phil Zuckerman, a professor of sociology at Pitzer College in Claremont, California, and author of *Living the Secular Life*, sees “For some reason, religion seems to give meaning to suffering — much more so than any secular ideal or belief that we know of” ([www.bbc.com/future/story/20141219-will-religion-ever-disappear](http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20141219-will-religion-ever-disappear)). We want to believe that we are a part of something grander, that our suffering has a purpose and meaning.

One of the most important books I have read in the last couple of years is Robert Bellah’s *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. In it he



holds that “Just when we are in many ways moving to an ever greater validation of the sacredness of the individual person, our capacity to imagine a social fabric that would hold individuals together is vanishing. This is in part because of the fact that our ethical individualism, deriving, as I have argued, from the Protestant religious tradition in America, is linked to an economic individualism that, ironically, knows nothing of the sacredness of the individual. Its only standard is money, and the only thing more sacred than money is more money. What economic individualism destroys and what our kind of religious individualism cannot restore is solidarity, a sense of being members of the same body.”

Being joined together in a faith community provides us with another way to breach that void we face. Remember the lifeless three-year-old body of Aylan Kurdi being tenderly carried from a Turkish beach by would-be rescuer? The fact that this young boy and his Syrian refugee family had been blocked in trying to find their way to Canada and the haven sponsoring relatives would have provided here, sparked national grief and the collective resolve to open our doors to these refugees.

Gord Downie tells the story of Chanie Wenjack in his album *Secret Path*. The cold death of this 12-year-old Ojibwa boy on his solitary attempt to run home from residential school revived this heart-rending tale from half a century ago. This call to healing touched many. It challenged us to truly proclaim the truth of the residential school experience and find national reconciliation.

Our lenten penitential journey turns to celebration today. As the psalmist says, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.” What Mary of Magdala and the other disciples experienced at the empty tomb on that first Easter morning liberated them from despair. It can liberate us as well. Their experiences with Jesus “all over Judea” now reached its fulfilment in his resurrection. They now would embark on a path on which we join them. It is where we, as Paul, urges, “seek what is above.” He is risen!

# We still find religious justification for doing violence in God’s name

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Blaise Pascal once wrote: “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from a religious conviction.” How true! This has been going on since the beginning of time and is showing few signs of disappearing any time soon. We still do violence and evil

and justify them in God’s name. We see countless examples of this in history. From the time we first gained self-consciousness, we’ve done violence in God’s name. It began by sacrificing human persons to try to attain God’s favour and it led to everything

from actively persecuting others for religious reasons, to waging war in God’s name, to burning people for heresy at the Inquisition, to practising capital punishment for religious reasons and, not least, at one point in history, to handing Jesus over to be crucified out of our misguided religious fervour.

These are some salient historical examples. Sadly, not much has changed. Today, in its most gross form, we see violence done in God’s name by groups like al-Qaida and ISIS who, whatever else might be their motivation, believe they are serving God and cleansing the world in God’s name by brute terrorism and murder. The death of thousands of innocent people can be justified, they believe, by the fact that this is God’s cause, so sacred and urgent that it allows for the bracketing of all basic standards of humanity, decency, and normal religion. When it’s for God’s cause, outright evil is rationalized.

Happily, it’s impossible for most of us to justify this kind of violence and murder in our minds and hearts, but most of us still justify this kind of sacrilegious violence in more subtle modes. Many of us, for instance, still justify capital punishment in the name of divine justice, believing

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that God’s purposes demand that we kill someone. Many too justify abortion by an appeal to our God-given freedoms. Not least, virtually all of us justify certain violence in our language and discourse because we feel our cause is so special and sacred that it gives us the right to bracket some of the fundamentals of Christian charity in our dealings with those who disagree with us, namely, respect and graciousness.

Our language, in both the circles of the right and the left, is rife with a violence we justify in God’s name. On the right, issues like abortion and the defence of dogma are deemed so important as to give us permission to demonize others. On the left, issues of economic and ecological injustice, because they so directly affect the poor, similarly give us permission to bracket respect and graciousness. Both sides like to justify themselves with an appeal to God’s righteous anger.

There’s a story in John’s Gospel, delicious in its irony, which helps expose how we are so often blind to the violence we do in God’s name. It’s the famous incident of the woman who is caught in adultery. They bring her to Jesus and tell him they caught her in the very act of committing adultery and that Moses commanded, in God’s name, that women like this be stoned to death. Jesus, for his part, says nothing. He bends down and writes with his finger, twice, on the ground and then tells them the one among them who’s without sin might cast the first stone. They understand the gesture: why he is writing on the ground, why he is writing twice, and what that means.

What does it mean?

Moses went up a mountain and God, with his finger, wrote the Ten Commandments into two tablets of stone. As Moses approached the Israelite camp on his return, carrying the two tablets of stone, he caught the people in the very act of committing idolatry. What did he do? In a fit of religious fervour, he broke the Commandments, literally, physically, over the golden calf and then picked up the fragments and threw those stones at the people.

So here’s the irony from which to draw a lesson: Moses was the first person to break the Ten Commandments. He broke them in God’s name and then took the fragments and stoned the people. He did this violence in all sincerity, caught up in religious fervour. Of course, afterward, he had to go back up the mountain and have the Commandments written a second time. However before giving Moses the Commandments a second time, God also gave him a lecture: Don’t stone people with the Commandments! Don’t do violence in my name!

We’ve been very slow to grasp this mandate and take it seriously. We still find every sort of moral and religious justification for doing violence in God’s name. We are still, like Moses, smashing the Commandments on what we consider idolatrous, and then stoning others with the fragments. This is evident everywhere in our religious and moral discourse, particularly in how we, as Pascal might put it, in God’s name, “completely and cheerfully” bracket charity as it pertains to graciousness and respect.

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# Rabbi Sacks on clearing scriptural minefields

By Yonat Shimron

DURHAM, N.C. (RNS) — Rabbi Jonathan Sacks made a name for himself as chief rabbi of Great Britain for nearly a quarter-century, a time of great tumult that included the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the influx of millions of Muslims into Europe and the ongoing pressures to absorb and assimilate newcomers into a mostly secular society.

As chief rabbi from 1991 to 2013, he stressed an appreciation and respect of all faiths, with an emphasis on interfaith work that brings people together while allowing each faith its own particularity.

His two books, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* and *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*, were well-reviewed, and last year he was awarded the Templeton Prize

Recently he visited Duke University to deliver two public lectures and meet with scholars, students and clergy. He also took the time to talk to RNS.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

**What led you to take on the issue of religiously motivated violence?**

I was shaken like other people



RNS/Reuters/Paul Hackett

**RABBI SACKS — Britain's former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, left, speaks during a news conference after being awarded the 2016 Templeton Prize, as Jennifer Templeton Simpson, granddaughter of John Templeton, watches in London, March 2, 2016.**

by 9/11. I stood at Ground Zero among the wreckage with the archbishop of Canterbury, imams from the Middle East and gurus from India. I said this is going to be the battle of our generation, and I resolved to write a book on it because you have to think it through. That book was called *The Dignity of Difference*. I began almost immediately a deeper book, which I rewrote four times, *Not in God's Name*. So it's a combination of 15 years of thinking about this.

**How have the political changes of the past year in Europe and the U.S. informed your thinking?**

What we're facing here is a whole series of interlinking factors. First, there's a wave of counter-revolutions in the Islamic world — revolutions against secular nationalism, a process set in motion in Iran in 1979.

Undergirding all of this is one of the great revolutions in world history: the revolution brought about by the Internet, by instantaneous communication. This is a revolution at least as great as the invention of printing. It's affecting western economies. It's behind the presidential elections in the U.S. It lies behind the Brexit vote. It lies behind the politics of anger in the West. In any movement of epoch-making change there are winners and losers. The losers feel people are not taking them seriously, and then there's the rise of populism.

Populism is the politics of the strong leader.

And then there is a third phenomenon, and one is loath to use the phrase, which is the sense of the decline of the West. You see that in particular in the fraying of families and communities, which leaves whole swaths of people without the traditional networks of support. You're dealing with three big crises. When they come together, it's the perfect storm.

**How does religion play into it?**

In the Middle East and elsewhere, political protest is taking religious form. We haven't seen that in the West since Martin Luther. The great rows in the 16th and 17th centuries were religious rows. The cliché is right: those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. The West has forgotten what religious revolution looks like. Religion isn't something you do just in the home or in a house of worship. You can sometimes take it to the street, and we've forgotten how dangerous that can be.

**You're meeting with clergy this week. Is there any one message you want to convey to them?**

Yes. We all have hard texts in our Sacred Scriptures that have been the source of estrangement, hatred and violence. For the past few centuries we haven't worried about those texts because for the past few centuries no one has taken religion seriously outside the home and the house of worship. But now religion has become a factor in world politics. We have not yet cleared the mines from the minefields. There are hard texts in each tradition which me must confront and ask ourselves, "Can we reinterpret those texts to allow us to live peaceably

and respectfully with people of other faiths?" That is a job only Jews can do for Judaism, only Christians can do for Christianity and only Muslims can do for Islam. But sometimes the sight of someone in one faith wrestling with that faith can empower you to wrestle with another faith.

For me, it was reading about how the Catholic Church wrestled with itself in the 1960s. Pope John XXIII set *Nostra Aetate* (the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions) in motion. It changed the relationship between Jews and Catholics. Today Jews and Catholics meet as friends. If you can do that after the longest history of hatred the world has known, that empowers you as a Jew or a Muslim to wrestle with your faith.

**What role can interfaith dialogue take?**

I distinguish between two kinds of interfaith engagement: what I call face to face and side by side. Face to face is interfaith dialogue. As a religious leader, I encourage even more side by side. When you've got Jews and Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus removing graffiti from buildings or getting drug dealers off the street, that's side by side. When you do that, you take it from the very elevated level of interfaith dialogue to the street level of neighbours. You get them working side by side and they become friends. Friendship sometimes counts for more than interfaith agreement or understanding. Friendship is deeply human. Let's say there were, God forbid, riots in Birmingham. The fact that laypeople in that community are friends can stop that from happening very fast. Local friendships are very powerful.

## In 'Midwife,' no soul is beyond God's endless love

Continued from page 8

is a patient there. She says to Fred, "We must muster our cohorts. We must instruct our troops. An innocent is in danger."

When Sisters Monica Joan and Julianne arrive to remove their confrere, Sister Julianne says, "We will make amends for every day you spent beyond the reach of love." But Sister Monica Joan responds, "She's never been beyond the reach of love. For all love is His and He is everywhere."

This beautiful, touching, well-played moment underscores why *Call the Midwife* is exceptional among TV dramas. Hannah conveys perfectly the light of relief that comes into Sister Mary Cynthia's glazed-over eyes as she sees her sisters. And Agutter's warm and calm Sister Julianne makes an effective counterpart to Parfitt's wonderfully expressive Sister Monica Joan.

Even more significantly, in *Call the Midwife's* world, no soul is entirely lost or beyond God's boundless — and endless — love.

### Our Church is a Family of Families

*As we approach Easter, we walk toward the death and resurrection of Christ. May your journey of faith be filled with as much joy as the first Easter, when Peter and John visited the empty tomb.*

**Most Reverend Albert Thévenot, M. Afr.**  
Bishop of Prince Albert

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*Luke 24:5-6*

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# Luke’s gift of storytelling is an Easter blessing

*This editorial by Andrew M. Britz, OSB, titled “God’s gracious word,” was published in the April 4, 2001, issue of the Prairie Messenger. It is featured in his second volume of editorials, Rule of Faith: as we worship, so we believe, so we live.*

St. Luke wrote his Gospel for simple people, for the *am ha-ares*, “the people of the land.” These people were scorned, considered too ignorant to take advantage of the salvation available to them as members of the chosen people.

The scribes and pharisees had made the observance of the Law a complicated matter. Not only were there more than 600 laws to be carefully observed; there was also a long, extremely complicated “teaching” to accompany these laws indicating how they were to be observed or, as was often the case, how the initiated could be excused from their obligation.

Jesus saves some of his harsh-est words for this legal folly: “Alas for you, because you load on people burdens that you yourselves do not move a finger to lift . . . you have taken away the key of knowledge; you have not gone in yourselves and have prevented others going in who wanted to” (Lk 11:46, 52).

Jesus, St. Luke knew, had both simplified and complicated the message of salvation. Gone was the notion that the law of God could be captured in a number of laws — even if that number tended to grow and thus seemingly “complicated” life. Yes, what a strange “simplification” Jesus gave as his alternative; he infinitely complicated religion, making it exactly as complicated as human life itself.

So Luke, instead of attempting to theologize or legalize religion, told stories — stories that “the people of the land” could easily grasp, stories that at once gave them dignity and freedom, dignity in God’s presence, freedom from all those laws they could not hope to properly fulfil.

Theologians have written countless books on the meaning of the Lord’s death and resurrection; canon lawyers, over the centuries, have written many thousands of canons to give an institutional face to Jesus’ passing from death to life.

While certainly not intending to disparage the critically important contributions of theologians and canonists, we must remember that our faith in our salvation is at once much more simple than any law could ever indicate and much more complicated than the smart-est among us will ever grasp.

St. Luke tells two simple stories to convey to us the meaning of the death of Jesus on the cross and of his rising to an altogether

new way of life.

The tradition prior to St. Luke’s Gospel had Jesus silent on the cross. Our Saviour is presented with a silent strength — but not so strong as to make it impossible for us to identify with him. His only words on the cross are a moan from the core of his being, a moan that identifies him with the Suffering Servant tradition: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

Luke has Jesus quite talkative on the cross; right after being nailed to the cross, Jesus shocks the people by breaking this silence that had become part and parcel of the telling of his death by uttering the unbelievably gracious word of the kingdom: “Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.”

That Jesus shocked the people by his word was not something out of the ordinary. In his first recorded words as part of his public ministry (according to Luke) Jesus had shocked the people of Nazareth “by the gracious words that came from his lips” (Lk 4:22); he had quoted the prophet Isaiah about the messianic age. By stopping in mid-sentence, he presented the year of the Lord’s favour without any reference to hellfire, something the local synagogue establishment believed to be an essential part of any true practice of religion (see Is 61:2).

On the cross Jesus put his body where his mouth was. One of the thieves taunts Jesus, asking him to save him from the cross. With no sign of repentance, with no fervent promise never to thief again, the other thief simply asks Jesus to remember him in the kingdom. Hardly enough to warrant canonization!

But Jesus’ word to the thief, “I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise,” reveals to the people of the land the full meaning of the cross of Christ. Salvation is freely given. The thief had done nothing to deserve the “reward” of life eternal in the company of Jesus himself.

As the people of Nazareth were shocked that first day by the gracious words of Jesus, so the story of the cross and the Lord’s gracious judgment of the thief continues to shock the righteous in the church. In a vain effort to weaken the stark foolishness of our God, the church, in retelling the story, started to speak of the “good” thief, assigning to him a moral recti-

tude totally absent in the original story.

The second story, concerning the resurrection, is equally simple — and complicated.

Two heavy-hearted disciples are trudging home to Emmaus. They had hoped Jesus would be the saviour, but now he was dead and all their hope had vanished.

Jesus, who is never immediately recognizable to us in our daily lives, speaks of suffering by opening the Scriptures to them. Then they recognize him in the breaking of the bread.

How better could Luke tell us about meeting the risen Lord in the “todays” of our lives than by showing us the true value of the Bible and the sacraments? In word and sacrament we celebrate the Lord’s resurrection. We must ask over and over again: “Did not our hearts burn within us as he opened the Scriptures to us?” And, in recognizing the community we celebrate with as the true Body of Christ, we come to know the living Lord in the “breaking of the bread.”

We have much to celebrate at

Easter. Catholics have been enriched by learning from our separated brothers and sisters in the faith how to truly value the Scriptures in worship. We in turn can give them a sense of sacrament that moves far beyond magic and places the mystery of our redemption right at the heart of our believing community.

As a sign of God’s special Easter blessing, we can all together thank St. Luke for his great gift of telling stories by finding ourselves shoulder to shoulder “with the people of the land.”



CNS/L’Osservatore Romano

**MAUNDY THURSDAY — Pope Francis washes the foot of a refugee during last year’s Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper at the Centre for Asylum Seekers in Castelnuovo di Porto, near Rome. The pope washed and kissed the feet of refugees, including Muslims, Hindus and Copts. “More than his decision to live outside the papal palace or to eschew luxury vehicles, the pope’s washing of the feet is a deeply symbolic connection to Christ’s demonstrated ministry,” writes Gerry Turcotte.**

## Maundy Thursday: washing of the feet



### Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

*Mandatum novum do vobis:*  
I give you a new commandment.  
— John 13:34

One of my favourite words is Maundy. Growing up I never knew what Maundy Thursday meant. I just knew it was a pretty serious time during Easter. For a while I used the word interchangeably with maudlin, and came to think of the maundies as relating to sadness and gloom. So it was with some surprise that I eventually learned it meant commandment, from the Old French *mandé*, and from the Latin, *mandatum*. Its connection to church practice comes from Christ’s own words: *Mandatum*

*novum do vobis*, or “I give you a new commandment.”

We celebrate Maundy Thursday during Holy Week, during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. It was there that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. You will remember the dramatic retelling of this episode in John 13 when Jesus not only identifies Judas as his betrayer, but also humbles himself to wash the feet of his disciples. Peter appears to bristle at the intent, but Jesus explains: “If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me.” The point of the gesture, and one Jesus insists on, is that this is a moment of communion with the other that must be passed on through all our relationships. “I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.”

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

The obvious contemporary parallel to this behaviour has been modelled by Pope Francis, who time and again has chosen to wash the feet of the other, first at a youth detention centre, then prisoners and then women. More than his decision to live outside the papal palace or to eschew luxury vehicles, the pope’s washing of the feet is a deeply symbolic connection to Christ’s demonstrated ministry. It is also an example of servant leadership, where the most humbling act brings the highest and lowest to the place of common bond where God first placed us.

It is perhaps because of this that Maundy Thursday matters so much, but also that we need to move past the bristling Peter showed, especially when we look at those who are not like us: the outsider, the marginal, the struggling and the lost. Our need to look beyond formal rules and regulations and reach out, despite whatever fear or strangeness separates us, is not only important, but *mandated*. Christ did not come to make us comfortable; he came to make us grow. Are we prepared to turn away?

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Janice Weber

**EASTER CORNER** — Dulled by disillusionment we walk and walk the grey streets of our minds, leaving behind a trail of lost dreams. But life breaks through where we least expect as we turn the Easter corner and collide into hope.

# The image of God has been placed in our souls: JP II

Continued from page 12

communion with the Divine. This longing is not an accident. St. John Paul II reminds us that the image of God has been placed in our souls. Moreover, he explains that this invisible image does have a physical reality, that the human body is a sign of the divine image in the human soul, “. . . only the body is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the vis-

ible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it” (Theology of the Body 19:4).

Created in the image and likeness of God, an image tarnished by the Fall, we seek a restoration of that image. In the risen Christ we see the perfection of the human body, uniquely and inexplicably linked. As we gaze at the risen Christ, we also anticipate our own resurrection and the perfection it will bring.

*The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
new joys, new possibilities.*

— From “A Night Prayer,”  
A New Zealand Prayer Book



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# We are called to discover anew the divine within

## Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



Five-month-old granddaughter Anissa (and her mother, Leigh) spent a couple of weeks with us recently. One morning I awoke to the gentle sounds of musical baby toys, which lifted me off my bed and carried me, as if in a trance, into the living room where Anissa was playing in her saucer chair (an apparatus that looks like the planet Saturn and is no less spectacular), setting off nursery tunes and lights as she jumped up and

down. I hadn't heard sounds like that in about 25 years and it seemed miraculous it wasn't a dream. The baby sounds of my own children, sunk deep in memory, bubble up and become new with a little one in our midst. The muted tinkling of a soft pink bunny, the ears of which Anissa takes in her tiny hands and presses into her face as she chats herself to sleep. The satisfying crunchy crinkle of "baby

paper" she loves to scrunch in her fingers. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* has become a very colourful caterpillar rattle Anissa stretches toward when she pushes it beyond her reach. A few days ago Anissa wasn't even reaching. Now she grasps a toy in her hands and turns it over and over, examining it as intently as a gemologist might scrutinize a precious stone. Then she tries to cram it into her mouth.

A windup mobile plays and I am amazed that *Brahms' Lullaby* hasn't changed. The manufacturer hasn't even attempted to make it sound less tinny, but still, babies never tire of it and it's music to my ears too.

As a young mother I was never very good at playing with my children. Russ was the one who would put a blanket on the floor and transform it into a lone raft floating on a vast ocean. A major rescue was needed for the child who fell off. Leigh is good at playing too — dancing, singing, making faces and flailing her arms to elicit laughs from her daughter. "I'm friggin' hilarious and this baby is the toughest audience I've ever had!" she says. Maybe Anissa is more reserved, like her nana. Except right now I'm dying laughing.

I may not have been good at playing rollicking games, but my children knew I would stop everything to read to them. It was my favourite part of any day when they were little.

Leigh rummaged through our children's literature collection to find something that would catch Anissa's five-month-old eye (I knew our books would be put to good use again).

I sunk into a chair with my granddaughter in my arms. Outside the window thick snow fell as though a white duvet had



Leigh Weber

**EASTER JOY** — Anissa spreads her arms like wings and flies through her own world of delight. Her joy captures the wild optimism of Easter.

been shaken and settled over our world. Yesterday we walked on dry sidewalks wearing flip-flops and flashing freshly painted toes in the colours of spring flowers.

Seasons change, even in the blink of an eye. Our lives have seasonal arcs too — like the shimmering summer of young adulthood. But all seasons have their storms and youth often shimmers only in memory.

I'm still getting used to the season I'm in now. One of the strangest parts of having a grandchild is not the child herself, though that is miracle enough. It's seeing one's own child become a mother. Leigh's exuberance is exactly that of her three-year-old self, yet here she is, tossing a baby into the air who has big round eyes just like hers. It takes my breath away.

I pick up our tattered copy of *Colours* and Anissa's rosy pat-a-cake hands grasp my knobby misshapen fingers. Snow is still falling outside. Hesitant at first, I gradually find the cadence of my voice picking up the purple of

eggplants, grapes and plums, green frogs, yellow daffodils, red tomatoes. *Don't show her the tomatoes! I hate tomatoes*, Leigh jokes. Most of my kids hate tomatoes. *What did I do wrong?* Maybe Anissa's Italian grandmother, Maria, will have more luck.

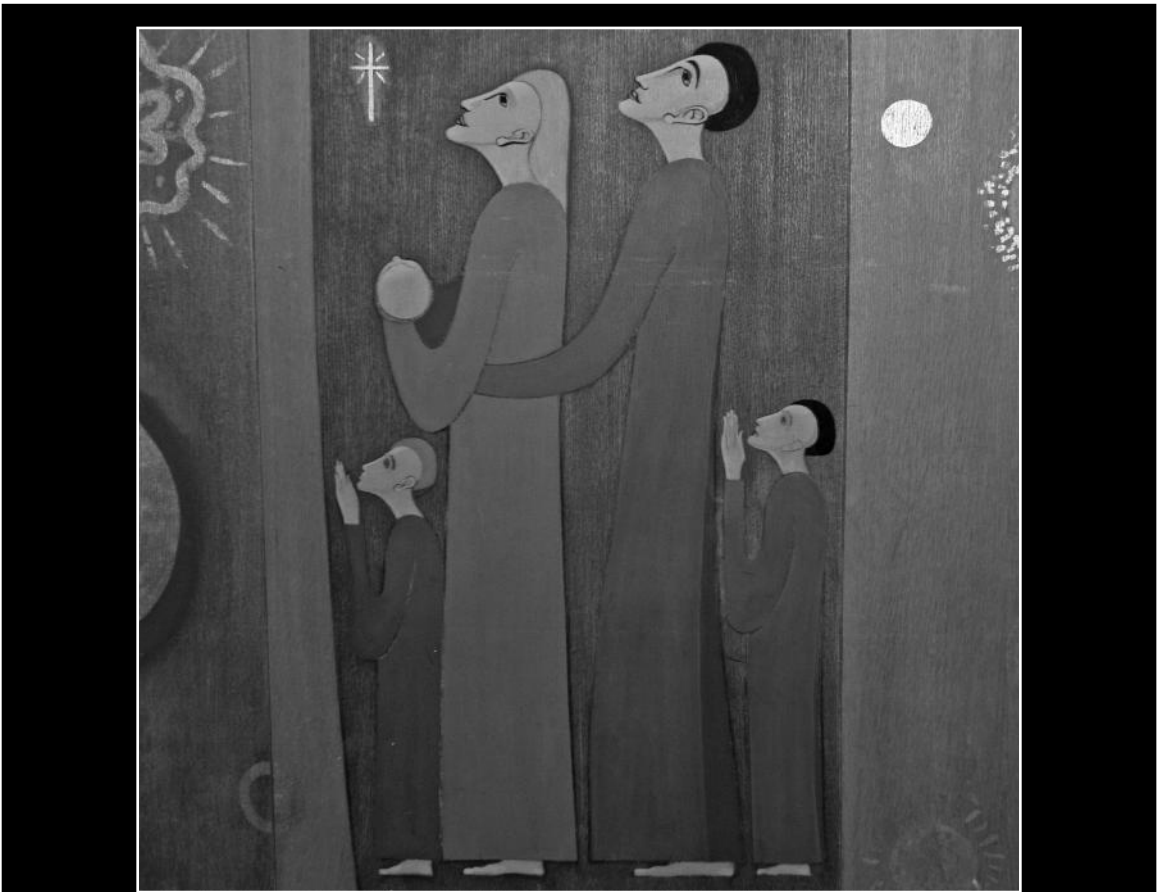
She spreads her arms like wings and flies through her own world of delight, she roars with joy at her pop-up owl when she finally figures out how to make it appear, and bounces with reckless abandon in her jumper, finding new ways and reaching new heights each day. Tiny Anissa, sparkling with divine energy in a universe that has infinite possibility.

Being in her presence makes me wonder, when do we become too self-conscious to find joy in being who we are?

Andrew Britz, OSB, once wrote that "Easter lacks all balance; it is optimism gone wild." Easter is here, and it is our season. It's our season to go wild with optimism and rediscover the divine energy within each of us.


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Love rises...  
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"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." John 11:25-26

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Jesus laughs at Easter

Easter is the most solemn feast of the Christian liturgical year. However, it is overshadowed in our society by Christmas, with all its commercial, social and family celebrations. Easter has been making a slow recovery to its place of primacy since the liturgical reforms of the 1950s under Pope Pius XII, when the liturgy was made more “user-friendly.”

While Easter is our most solemn feast day, that does not mean it should make us grim-faced and over-serious. Quite the opposite. And the authority for this is none other than the former pope, Benedict XVI.

Before he was pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger delivered occasional sermons on Bavarian Radio. His meditations covered major Catholic holidays. He connected the celebration of Easter with joy and laughter. He commented that on Easter, we imagine Jesus’ laughter of redemption. “We who share an Easter faith can say, like Sarah, ‘God has made me laugh.’”

Ratzinger connected Easter and laughter by reflecting on the story of our founding family of faith: Abraham, Sarah and Isaac. Here is an excerpt from his sermon, which focuses on Abraham’s call to sacrifice his son Isaac:

“Jesus is both the lamb and Isaac. He is the lamb who allowed himself to be caught, bound and slain. He is also Isaac, who looked into heaven; indeed, where Isaac saw only signs and symbols, Jesus actually entered heaven, and since that time the barrier between God and humanity is broken down. Jesus is Isaac, who, risen from the dead, comes down from the mountain with the laughter of joy in his face. All the

words of the Risen One manifest this joy — this laughter of redemption: if you see what I see and have seen, if you catch a glimpse of the whole picture, you will laugh! (cf. John 16:20).

“In the Baroque period the liturgy used to include the *risus paschalis*, the Easter laughter. The Easter homily had to contain a story that made people laugh, so that the church resounded with a joyful laughter. That may be a somewhat superficial form of Christian joy. But is there not something very beautiful and appropriate about laughter becoming a liturgical symbol? And is it not a tonic when we still hear, in the play of cherub and ornament in baroque churches, that laughter which testified to the freedom of the redeemed?

“And is it not a sign of an Easter faith when Haydn remarked, concerning his church compositions, that he felt a particular joy when thinking of God: ‘As I came to utter the words of supplication, I could not suppress my joy but loosed the reins of my elated spirits and wrote *allegro* over the *Miserere*, and so on?’

“The Book of Revelation’s vision of heaven expresses what we see by faith at Easter: the Lamb who was slain lives. Since he lives, our weeping comes to an end and is transformed into laughter (cf. Revelation 5:4f.).

“When we look at the Lamb, we see heaven opened. God sees us, and God acts, albeit differently from the way we think and would like him to act. Only since Easter can we really utter the first article of faith; only on the basis of Easter is this profession rich and full of consolation: I believe in God, the Father Almighty. For it is only from the Lamb that we

know that God is really Father, really Almighty.

“No one who has grasped that can ever be utterly despondent and despairing again. No one who has grasped that will ever succumb to the temptation to side with those who kill the Lamb. No one who has understood this will know ultimate fear, even if he gets into the situation of the Lamb. For there he is in the safest possible place.

“Easter, therefore, invites us not only to listen to Jesus but also, as we do so, to develop our interior sight. This greatest festival of the church’s year encourages us, by looking at him who was slain and is risen, to discover the place where heaven is opened.

“If we comprehend the message of the Resurrection, we recognize that heaven is not completely sealed off above the earth. Then — gently and yet with immense power — something of the light of God penetrates our life. Then we shall feel the surge of joy for which, otherwise, we wait in vain.

“Everyone who is penetrated by something of this joy can be, in his own way, a window through which heaven can look upon earth and visit it. In this way, what Revelation foresees can come about: every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the world, is filled with the joy of the redeemed (cf. Revelation 5:13).

“To the extent that we realize this, the words of the departing Jesus — who, parting from us, is the coming Jesus — are fulfilled: ‘Your sorrow will turn into joy’ (Jn 16:20). And, like Sarah, people who share an Easter faith can say: ‘God has made me laugh; everyone who hears will laugh with me’ ” (Gn 21:6). — PWN

Medicine Hat pioneers a reasonable solution to help the homeless

By Gerry Chidiac

Former American president Jimmy Carter said, “The measure of a society is found in how they treat their weakest and most helpless citizens.”

Serving those in need may seem simply like the charitable thing to do. When we look a bit deeper, however, we see that many social programs help the entire population. Even on a financial level, projects that benefit those in need benefit us all.

In Canada, two programs have become engrained in our culture: public education and socialized medicine. Neither is perfect and both are in need of constant improvement, but the benefits of both far outweigh their costs.

Our education system is one of the key factors in making Canada a great place to do business. We have a well-trained workforce that’s adaptable to changing demands. The resources invested in each child come back to us many times over.

Our American neighbours often point to our health care system as either a scourge or a panacea. The bottom line is that our publicly insured medical system gives service to our entire population at a fraction of the cost of their selective, privately insured system. Canadians are also able to live with peace of mind knowing that the cost for medical emergencies will be covered. This is simply not the case for many people living in the United States.

A new idea is now emerging in

Canada that’s as innovative and revolutionary as public education and socialized medicine were in their day. While the following project looks like an additional public expenditure on something that should be delivered by charity groups, it simply makes good financial sense.

In 2009, the Alberta city of Medicine Hat established the goal to eliminate homelessness. It was seen as a humanitarian effort and a money-saving initiative. By 2015, the goal was achieved. Today, people spend no more than 10 days in temporary shelters before they’re assessed and on their way to find a home.

Housing and caring for these vulnerable individuals has reduced

the crime rate, reduced the workload of first responders, reduced the number of hospital emergency room visits and eased pressure on the courts. While it can cost over \$100,000 a year to service a person living on the streets, it costs roughly \$35,000 a year to give a person

a permanent roof over their heads and provide them with the services they need.

Not only does giving homes to the homeless make financial sense, it improves the quality of life for everyone. Many of the people living on the street suffer from addic-

tions and mental health issues. These are realities for many families. As Harold Kushner stated so beautifully in his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, challenges in life can happen to

— QUALITY, page 19

Letter speaks to rights of medical profession

Dear Elected Members of Provincial Parliament:

We write to you today regarding Bill 84 (Medical Assistance in Dying Statute Law Amendment Act) which is currently before the legislature and with committee hearings underway (see related

story, page 4). As leaders representing sizeable constituencies throughout Ontario, we know that thousands of our members have written to you regarding the issue of conscience rights as they relate to Bill 84 and the implementation of euthanasia and assisted suicide in the province. We echo their

concerns and encourage the government to find a pathway that respects the rights of medical professionals, facilities and patients.

Position of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

At present, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) requires an effective referral from doctors who do not wish to participate in ending the lives of their patients. For physicians who object, whether for personal or moral reasons, a referral is akin to performing the procedure itself. Whether you do something yourself or arrange that it be done by someone else (effective referral), you are causing it to happen.

We are also concerned by the language used by the CPSO in a recent deposition, which suggests that those with moral objections should pursue pathology or plastic surgery to avoid such conflicts. Canadian medical ethicist Dr. Udo Schuklenk, from Queen’s University, has publicly advocated for a morals test to be applied to medical school applicants in order to screen out those with conscientious objections of any kind. Medicine would forever be altered in our province if we were to screen out those who entered the field motivated by their religious beliefs or moral convictions.

— SUPPORT, page 19



CNS/Alaa Al-Marjani, Reuters

THIRST FOR JUSTICE — “Love the dispossessed, all those who, living amid human injustice, thirst after justice. Jesus had special concern for them. Have no fear of being disturbed by them.” — Rule of Taizé (A displaced Iraqi girl holds a lamb in a safe area in Mosul Feb. 28.)

Chidiac is an award-winning high school teacher specializing in languages, genocide studies and work with at-risk students. He lives in Prince George, B.C. [www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)



Time to bring the ‘viri probati’ in from the cold

**The Editor:** The Holy Father is no laggard. He has distinguished himself for his acumen to pick up on the most obscure and niggling issues and arriving at workable and durable solutions. The article on *viri probati* (PM, March 15) underscores this point. Organizations such as Corpus have conscientiously made the Vatican aware that the problem of steadily decreasing numbers of priests in their ranks, particularly in the developed world, does con-

fess of one obvious solution. I am certain that of the number of canonical priests still active in their faith communities, a good many have the present ability to provide meaningful service and ministry. They are and have been a visible sign in our midst labouring conscientiously doing diverse sorts of pastoral work in prisons, hospitals and the like, a good many providing service gratis. Many have been able to transition providing invaluable counselling

service and crisis intervention utilizing some of their transferable skills garnered from their seminary training and time as priests. To state the case, these men have established themselves as persons of good character and virtue long before and after receiving their dispensations. It's time to bring these *viri probati* in from the “cold.” The sooner accomplished, the better for both faithful and the church. — **Randy Fleming, Moose Jaw, Sask.**

Support conscience rights for doctors

Continued from page 18

Impact of Bill 84

Bill 84 provides immunity for those who participate in ending the lives of their patients, yet no such immunity (professional or otherwise) is offered in this legislation to those who cannot participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide. The message to health care professionals in Ontario seems to be that if you are not willing to participate in ending the life of your patient, you may be sanctioned or suspended.

Ontario stands alone in taking this position. No other foreign jurisdiction that has legalized assisted suicide requires effective referral. Eight Canadian provinces do not require effective referral. It is difficult to comprehend why Ontario chooses to be so restrictive. Freedom of conscience and religion are enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These rights must be respected, especially in matters of life and death.

Conclusion

We join in solidarity to ask each one of you to support conscience rights for those who cannot participate in assisted suicide. Please take the following action:

1) Amend Bill 84 to protect physicians and other health care professionals from being forced to refer for, perform or assist in medical assistance in dying, or being

discriminated against for declining to participate for reasons of conscience.

2) Create a Care Co-ordination Service consistent with the approach of Alberta, which protects both patients and health care workers. At present, the Ontario government has proposed a care co-ordination model that requires physician referral. The full Alberta model is a template currently in place that avoids any conflict for objecting health care professionals by providing access without requiring referral.

The Coalition for HealthCARE & Conscience has met with more than 60 members of Provincial Parliament. In many of these meetings, we have been accompanied by doctors and nurses who have shared first-hand the moral dilemma they face and the fear of sanctions or reprisals for not helping to end the life of their patients. The doctors and nurses that you have met reflect the concerns of thousands of their colleagues and patients across the province.

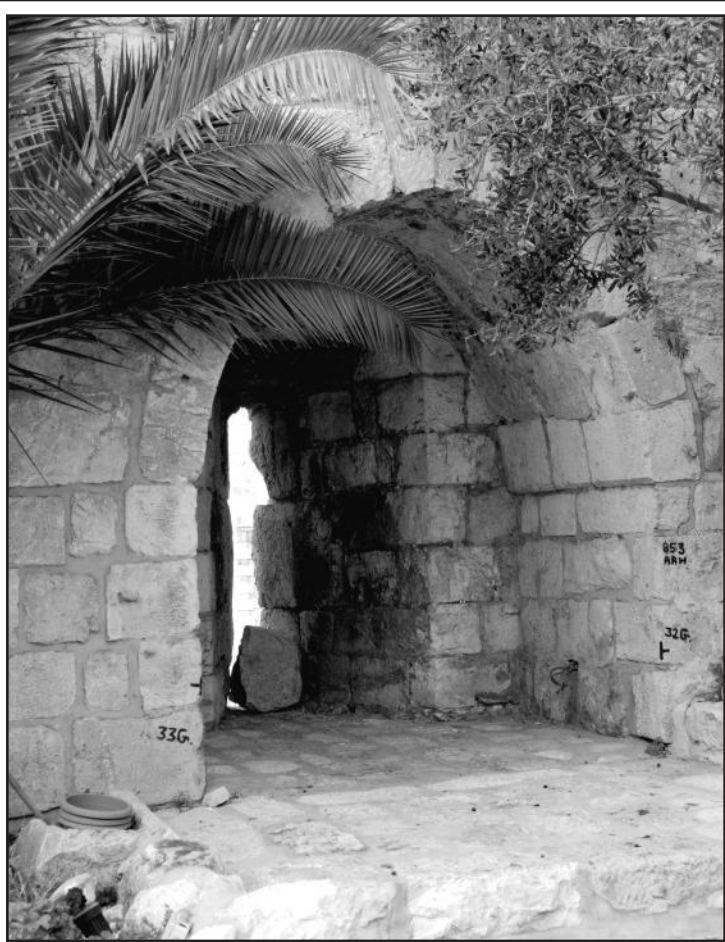
Many MPPs are still not aware of the present reality and the fact that the situation in Ontario remains a global anomaly by forcing health care workers to participate in assisted suicide.

Let each one of us reflect deeply on this issue. The medical profession must not lose those with deeply held ethical, moral and religious beliefs. We ask you to work across party lines with your col-

leagues in the legislature to ensure there is conscience protection for the doctors and nurses who serve the sick, the elderly, the dying and other vulnerable members of society each day in our province. We urge you to work together on behalf of all Ontarians, to protect and respect the fundamental freedom of conscience.

Be assured of our ongoing prayers for you and all elected members of Provincial Parliament. Sincerely,

Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios (Athanasoulas) of Toronto (Canada), chair, Canadian Conference of Orthodox Bishops  
Rev. Dr. Robert Bugbee, President, Lutheran Church-Canada  
Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka, C.M., Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Machzikei Hadas  
Bruce Clemenger, president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada  
Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto  
Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Canada  
Commissioner Susan McMillan, Territorial Commander, The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory  
Dr. Mouhammad Iqbal Nadvi, Chair, Canadian Council of Imams  
Archbishop Papken Tcharian, Prelate, Armenian Prelacy of Canada



Anne Wicks

Inside the Empty Tomb Easter Sunday Morning

So, the sun has risen again.  
The dust the boys kick up in play  
smells of all the world.  
Voices in the garden outside  
echo around these cool damp walls.

I will trap their keening and laughter  
and give them back to the One who was here  
and now is not.

By J. Oliver

Quality of life is improved

Continued from page 18

any of us. When we give homes to the homeless, just as when we provide publicly funded education and health care, we're helping ourselves.

A great deal of credit must be given to the community leaders and municipal government in Medicine Hat. Homelessness is a long-standing social challenge that has been difficult to solve. They have not only implemented a solution that respects people's human-

ity, they have proven that it's cost-effective. They also established a model that other cities are beginning to emulate.

The long-term benefits of this solution to homelessness are yet to be seen. It's not unrealistic to conclude, however, that the Medicine Hat model will spread across Canada and throughout the world.

And that it will improve the quality of life for not only the most vulnerable, but for all citizens.

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.

*Alleluia!*

*Rejoice in the glory of*

*The Risen Christ*

*Happy Easter!*

Archbishop Donald Bolen,  
Priests, Deacons,  
& Faithful of the  
Archdiocese of Regina

Christ has risen.

He has risen  
indeed!



# Loving families central to bringing joy, mercy to world

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis urges families to discover God’s love and be generous, forgiving, patient, helpful and respectful.

Family life will be better if people use the words “please,” “thank you,” and “I’m sorry” every day, he said, and the world will be a better place if the church reaches out to the imperfect and the wounded.

The pope’s reflection was part of a letter to Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, which is helping plan the World Meeting of Families in Dublin, Aug. 21 - 26, 2018. The Vatican released the text of the pope’s letter March 30.

The letter was meant to help Catholic families and parishes around the world prepare for the gathering, which will focus on the theme, “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World.” The pope said he hoped the event would help families reflect on and share his apostolic exhortation “*Amoris Laetitia*.”

“Does the Gospel continue to be a joy for the world? And also, does the family continue to be good news for today’s world?” the pope asked.

The answer is “yes,” he said, because God’s love is his “yes” to all of creation; it is God’s “commitment to a humanity that is often wounded, mistreated and

dominated by a lack of love.”

“Only starting from love can the family manifest, spread and regenerate God’s love in the world,” he said.

Making sure family life is “based on love, for love and in love” means “giving oneself, forgiving, not losing patience, anticipating the other, respecting. How much better family life would be if every day we lived according to the words, ‘please,’ ‘thank you,’ and ‘I’m sorry.’”

Every day, people experience fragility and weakness, Pope Francis said. All families and pastors need humility so they will become better disciples and teachers, better at helping and being helped, and able to accompany and embrace all people of goodwill.

“I dream of an outbound church, not a self-referential one, a church that does not pass by far from man’s wounds, a merciful church that proclaims the heart of the revelation of God as love, which is mercy,” he said.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

of Dublin told reporters that the pope’s letter shows the clear, central role families have in the pope’s great dream of renewal of the church and society.

“The family is called to be a place of encounter with that divine mercy which heals and liberates,” he said.

“The pope’s vision of the mission of the family does not attempt to hide the fact that families experience challenges, weakness, fragility and even breakdown,” the

archbishop said. “Families need a church which is with them, accompanying them in a process of discernment and integration though helping them to respond with a ‘yes’ to the divine love.”

But the church, Martin said, also must be “a place where those who have failed can experience not harsh judgment, but the strong embrace of the Lord which can lift them up to begin again to realize their own dream even if only imperfectly.”

stressed it was possible to achieve.

“Although this is a significantly complex and long-term goal, it is not beyond our reach,” he said.

Pope Francis said money currently spent on nuclear weapons could be used for “the promotion of peace and integral human development, as well as the fight against poverty.”

“An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction — and possibly the destruction of all mankind — are contradictory to the very spirit of the United Nations,” he said.

“We must therefore commit ourselves to a world without nuclear weapons, by fully implementing the Non-Proliferation Treaty, both in letter and spirit.”

In New York, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki R. Haley, told reporters the countries skipping the negotiations believe the current Non-Proliferation Treaty is a better accord. It entered into force in 1970 and is aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology.

She singled out North Korea, which has recently conducted missile tests in violation of UN resolutions.

“We have to be realistic,” she told reporters. “Is there anyone who thinks that North Korea would ban nuclear weapons?”



CNS/World Meeting of Families

**WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES — This is a promotional image for World Meeting of Families to be held Aug. 21 - 26, 2018, in Dublin. The theme of the meeting is “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World.”**

## El Salvador passes metal mining ban

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (CNS) — At the urging of Catholic leaders, El Salvador has passed a law banning metal mining nationwide, making the small Central American country the first in the world to outlaw the industry.

The new law, approved overwhelmingly by El Salvador’s congress March 29, orders the Economy Ministry to close existing mines while prohibiting the government from issuing new mining licences. It gives small-scale and artisanal miners a two-year period to phase out production.

Mining had become highly contentious in the country of 6.3 million, as environmental groups protested the effects on water sources and soil contamination. Anti-mining groups have claimed that at least four people had died in mining conflicts.

“Mission accomplished,” said Congressman Guillermo Mata of the ruling party, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, on his Twitter account. “As a political party, we were the drivers, but the hard work was done by the social movements, the NGOs and the church.”

Previous initiatives to ban the practice were defeated by conservative factions of congress. But momentum shifted last year, when the government won a \$300-million lawsuit brought against it by Pac Rim Cayman, a unit of Canadian-Australian mining giant Oceana Gold, which has operations in New Zealand and the



CNS/Oscar Rivera, EPA

**MINING EXPLOITATION — Protesters in San Salvador, El Salvador, demonstrate against mining exploitation March 9. El Salvador passed a law March 29 banning metal mining nationwide, making the small Central American country the first in the world to outlaw the industry.**

Philippines. The government had denied permits for a gold mining project in northern El Salvador that the company was trying to establish. It sued for unrealized profits.

The legal win prompted a diverse set of organizations to push for a new mining law. The push was led by Catholic bishops, who in February called on congress to pass an outright ban. Demonstrations and a petition signed by 30,000 residents furthered the push for a ban.

“We have to defend the rights of all people; as a church, we will always defend the right to life,” Archbishop Jose Luis Escobar Alas of San Salvador said at the time.

Although it is the first nationwide metal mining ban, other countries already ban some mining processes, like the use of cyanide to extract gold.

Anti-mining groups praised the Salvadoran vote.

“It is amazing what this small country has achieved against tremendous odds,” said Manuel Perez-Rocha of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. The institute, part of the International Allies coalition with the National Roundtable Against Metallic Mining in El Salvador, sees the law as “an inspiration for countries throughout the region,” he said.

## Pope Francis backs nuclear weapons ban treaty

By Josephine McKenna

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — Pope Francis says nuclear weapons offer a “false sense of security” and are an ineffective deterrent to 21st-century threats like terrorism, conflict and cybersecurity.

The pontiff spoke as talks on a proposed global nuclear arms ban at the United Nations seem doomed to fail with the U.S., France, Britain and South Korea among nearly 40 countries boycotting the talks.

In a message addressed to the conference in New York, the pope called for “total elimination” of nuclear weapons. He said there were many doubts about the effectiveness of deterrence and warned of “catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences” if nuclear weapons were ever used again.

“How sustainable is a stability based on fear, when it actually increases fear and undermines relationships of trust?” Francis asked.

“International peace and stability cannot be based on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation, or on simply maintaining a balance of power.”

The pope said the elimination of nuclear weapons was a “moral and humanitarian imperative” and

O God, whose presence is veiled from our eyes: Grant that when we do not recognize you, our hearts may burn within us, and when feeling is lost, we may cling in faith to your word and the power of bread broken in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

— Book of Common Worship