



Multifaith challenges

Living in a multifaith world is a real-life challenge for



Muslim women who wear a niqab. Angus Reid Institute found that only one in three Canadians support a person wearing the niqab. The same poll found that 46 per cent of Canadians view Islam unfavourably, as opposed to 33 per cent who have a generally favourable view.
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Dangerous subject

Matt Eisenbrandt, the author of a new book about the men who killed Archbishop Oscar Romero while celebrating mass 37 years ago, says the subject is still dangerous to talk about.
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Way of the Cross

Some 200 people participated in the Good Friday outdoor Way of the Cross through the streets of Saskatoon. Reflections on the suffering and death of Jesus were connected to the suffering in our world today.
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Called to Serve

This week's Prairie Messenger highlights vocations to the religious life.



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Open to interpretation

There are at least three reasons that the words from Jesus in Matthew 19 do not prove that Pope Francis is wrong in opening up the possibility of some divorced and remarried Catholics receiving communion, writes Thomas Reese, SJ.
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Culture of resistance

Despite four years of Pope Francis' calls to break down walls erected out of fear and ivory towers built on arrogance, abuse survivor Marie Collins said a kind of enclave mentality can still be found in some corners of the Curia.
— page 20

Church continues to preach: 'He is risen'

By Cindy Wooden and Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Jesus is the risen shepherd who takes upon his shoulders "our brothers and sisters crushed by

evil in all its varied forms," Pope Francis said before giving his solemn Easter blessing.

With tens of thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square April 16, the pope called on Christians to be instruments of Christ's

outreach to refugees and migrants, victims of war and exploitation, famine and loneliness.

For the 30th year in a row, Dutch farmers and florists blanketed the area around the altar with grass and 35,000 flowers and

plants: lilies, roses, tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, birch and linden.

Preaching without a prepared text, Pope Francis began — as he did the night before at the Easter Vigil — imagining the disciples desolate because "the one they loved so much was executed. He died."

While they are huddling in fear, the angel tells them, "He is risen." And, the pope said, the church continues to proclaim that message always and everywhere, including to those whose lives are truly, unfairly difficult.

"It is the mystery of the cornerstone that was discarded, but has become the foundation of our existence," he said. And those who follow Jesus, "we pebbles," find meaning even in the midst of suffering because of sure hope in the resurrection.

Pope Francis suggested everyone find a quiet place on Easter to reflect on their problems and the problems of the world and then tell God, "I don't know how this will end, but I know Christ has risen."

Almost immediately after the homily, a brief but intense rain began to fall on the crowd, leading people to scramble to find umbrellas, jackets or plastic bags to keep themselves dry.

— RISEN, page 23



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE'S EASTER MESSAGE BLESSING — Pope Francis delivers his Easter message and blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican April 16.

'Backbone' is needed to eliminate nukes: Roche

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — As tensions rise between world powers over events in Syria and Korea, Canada needs to show some "backbone" when it comes to nu-

clear weapons disarmament, says former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament Doug Roche.

The retired Progressive Conservative senator charges that Canada has given in to American demands which uphold U.S. interests in maintaining a nuclear weapons program. This abandonment of principle is "irresponsible," said Roche, who has advised

the Holy See on nuclear disarmament issues since 1989.

"I'm calling on the Canadian government to get some backbone," he said.

Roche's comments come as diplomatic tensions are rising among nations, from the United States launching missiles into Syria after a chemical attack, to Russia warning the U.S. against

crossing "red lines" in Syria, to North Korea expanding its nuclear weapons program and the U.S. planning to spend \$1 trillion modernizing its arsenal over 30 years.

Late last month Pope Francis sent a message to representatives of the 132 nations who met at the United Nations to discuss ways to

— OTTAWA, page 4

Theodore court decision has far-reaching effects

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — The judgment that came out of a Yorkton court case involving Good Spirit Public School Board and Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board has sent shock waves through the Saskatchewan education community — especially in Catholic school boards.

Essentially, Queen's Bench Justice Donald Layh ruled that the Government of Saskatchewan is violating a section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms under the Canadian Constitution by funding non-Catholic students in Catholic schools, and as of June 30, 2018, such funding must end.

— DECISION, page 24

Foodgrains Bank tour visits Lebanon

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — While on a recent Canadian Foodgrains Bank learning tour to Lebanon, Christine Zyla saw first-hand how relationships, community and peace are being strengthened through food assistance.

"Sometimes food assistance can be very messy. We've seen that with television coverage of trucks bringing in food, showing a demeaning scramble by desperate people. But it can also be very eucharistic — becoming a source of community-building and social cohesion," says Zyla.

"Food assistance can bring deep community connection, relationship-building, peace-building. That is what I saw in Lebanon — food assistance that goes way

beyond food assistance."

Founded in 1983, Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working to end global hunger. Food assistance accounts for 62 per cent of the organization's programs — last year Foodgrains provided \$26 million in food assistance in 24 countries, as well as \$14 million in agriculture and livelihood programs in 31 countries.

A member of the board of directors of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Zyla also co-ordinates the Office of Migration in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, which assists parishes, organizations and small groups who are involved in refugee sponsorship. In addition to providing information about food assistance programs, the March 8 - 20 learning tour to

Lebanon brought Zyla new insight and understanding into the refugee situation in that country.

Lebanon is host to some 1.5 million refugees from the surrounding region — many from Syria, but also from Palestine, some displaced for decades.

"One in four people in Lebanon is a refugee," says Zyla. "The impact on the local community is huge. It is not even a question of whether they are welcoming or not. They are dealing with a tremendous number of needy people, and the community is trying to find ways to cope."

Even before the most recent influx of refugees from the conflict in Syria, which is entering its seventh year, Lebanon was a

— WORK, page 4

Mideast church leaders affirm Christian presence

BEIRUT (CNS) — In Easter messages, Catholic patriarchs in the Middle East deplored the widespread carnage and suffering, yet affirmed the presence of Christians in the region by calling upon their faithful to carry on with hope.

From Bkerke, the patriarchal seat of the Maronite Catholic Church in Lebanon, Cardinal Bechara Rai condemned “all kinds of wars, persecutions and attacks.”

Rai, Maronite patriarch, urged the international community “to find political and diplomatic solutions to conflicts and to lay the foundations for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace” in the region. He implored the international community to stop countries from providing cover, aid and weapons to terrorist organizations.

“It is shameful for the rulers of states — with financial and military influence — who have made our eastern land a land of war, killing and destruction, a haven for terrorist organizations and fundamentalist movements,” Rai said. “They

Closed hearts unable to be surprised by the resurrection

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christian faith is a grace and can be perceived only in the hearts of those willing to be surprised by the joy of the resurrection, Pope Francis said.

“A closed heart, a rationalistic heart” is incapable of understanding the Christian message which has God’s love — manifested in Christ’s victory over death — at its centre, the pope said at his weekly general audience April 19.

“How beautiful it is to think that Christianity is essentially this: It is not so much our search for God — a search that is, truthfully, somewhat shaky — but rather God’s search for us,” the pope said.

The pope, bundled up in a white overcoat due to the unusually chilly and windy weather, entered a packed St. Peter’s Square in his popemobile. Immediately, he invited two girls and a boy, dressed in their altar server robes, to board the vehicle and ride with him around the square.

Continuing his series of talks on hope, the pope reflected on St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians in which the apostle emphasizes the resurrection as “the heart of the Christian message.”

“Christianity is born from here. It is not an ideology nor a philosophical system but a path of faith

that begins from an event, witnessed by Jesus’ first disciples,” the pope said.

St. Paul’s summary of those who witnessed the risen Christ, he noted, ends by describing himself as the “least worthy of all” given his dramatic history as a one-time adversary of the early Christians.

St. Paul “wasn’t a ‘choirboy.’ He was a persecutor of the church, proud of his own convictions,” the pope said, departing from his prepared remarks. But “one day something completely unpredictable happens: the encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus.”

It is the surprise of this encounter, the pope continued, that all Christians are called to experience “even if we are sinners.”

Like the first disciples who saw the stone overturned at Jesus’ tomb, all men and women can find “happiness, joy and life where everyone thought there was only sadness, defeat and darkness,” the pope said.

God, Pope Francis said, is greater than “nothingness and just one lit candle is able to overcome the darkest night.”

“If we are asked the reason for our smile and our patient sharing, we can respond that Jesus is still here, he continues to be alive in our midst,” the pope said. “Jesus is here, in this square with us, alive and risen.”

have ignited a fire they think burns in its place, but it has spread.”

He also condemned the “blatant and repeated persecution of Christians” in Egypt. He called upon “Muslims and Islamic countries to take active positions and initiatives to deter this persecution and to preserve the positive image of Islam.”

Rai reiterated that Christians have existed in Egypt and the Arab countries for 2,000 years. “They laid the foundations of their civilizations before the advent of Islam by a half-century.”

He assured all those who are suffering that even if those wielding power “can destroy your homes and the achievements of your civilization, they will not be able to destroy your faith and love for your homeland and hope in your hearts.”

Syrian-born Melkite Catholic Patriarch Gregoire III Laham pointed out in his Easter message that in early church history, Christians often were called “children of the Resurrection.”

“Can we forget that Damascus and its surroundings are the place of the appearance of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, to his persecutor, Saul, who had come to Damascus to destroy fledgling Christianity and slaughter the children of the resurrection?” Laham said.

“Saul was converted by the light of Christ risen from the dead and was himself transformed from persecutor of the children of the resurrection into a child and apostle of the resurrection,” he said.

“We pray, with our children in our Arab Eastern world, for peace to return to our suffering countries, especially Syria, Iraq and Palestine,” the patriarch said. “We invite everyone to hope, especially in the face of scenes of death, violence, explosions, terrorism, criminal killing and burning,” Laham said.

In his Easter message from Baghdad, Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako lamented the “suffering and daily grief” endured by Christians in Iraq and the world. He asked government officials and religious authorities for concrete initiatives to support the continued existence of Christians in Iraq and to guarantee their rights as equal citizens.

He encouraged Catholics “not to dwell in (the) unsecured solution of immigration” but instead “to return to their towns and their normal lives, keeping this strong bond with their history, heritage, language and the memory of their ancestors, saints and martyrs.”

Although the Chaldean Church in Iraq has become a “small flock,” the patriarch said, it continues to be a “lively, powerful, and ecumenically open-minded church” that helped and is still helping the

poor and the displaced by providing accommodation and related support to all, “regardless of their faith and ethnicity.”

In Jerusalem, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, said knowledge and faith of the mystery of the resurrection does not exempt the faithful from experiencing trials, pain and darkness.

In countries such as Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, “it seems that hatred and contempt in social and religious relations prevail over everything, and so human, religious and civil respect have become empty words,” he said. “Woe to us if we surrender to all this.”

He praised Christians in those circumstances, saying they “remain open, with serene confidence, to every collaboration. No word of hatred and contempt. No violent reaction, but only the serene and correctly strong desire for justice.”



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE BENEDICT'S BIRTHDAY — Retired Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Georg Ganswein, prefect of the papal household, left, toast men in traditional clothing with a beer during the German pontiff's 90th birthday celebration April 17 at the Vatican. The pope's birthday was the previous day.



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE VISITS PRISON ON HOLY THURSDAY — Pope Francis kisses the foot of an inmate April 13 at Paliano prison outside of Rome as he celebrates Holy Thursday mass of the Lord's Supper. The pontiff washed the feet of 12 inmates at the maximum security prison.

Not to be Served, but to Serve

A vocation is the call that God makes to each person to be holy in a particular way or form of life. But there are some things about this call that many people do not know. For one thing, God calls everyone. It is not that some are favoured and others rejected. Every human person upon the earth is the product and target of God’s love. Each one of us has a specific purpose. That purpose is important to God and it’s important to us. For most, the call brings them to marriage and family. A number of persons find themselves called to dedicate themselves more totally and deeply to Christ by responding to a vocation to priesthood or to religious life.

Because of the pressing needs of the Church, the Knights of Columbus has taken as a special project the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and to religious life. Through the Refund Support Vocations Program, councils receive incentives for providing an individual seminarian or postulant with meaningful financial or moral support. This encourages direct interaction and gives Brother Knights a better understanding of men and women who pursue religious vocations.

The entire church urges us all to pray, frequently and deeply, to the Lord of the harvest that he send labourers into the vineyard as together, we "Lift High the Cross for Christ."

May the Lord bring to completion in you the good work that he has begun!



Vocations are Everybody's Business!

**Saskatchewan State Council
Knights of Columbus**

Living in multifaith world is a real-life challenge

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The worst of it was the day Sumaiya Desai went grocery shopping with her then eight-year-old son.

“I was just loading my groceries in the car and a man comes up to us,” Desai recalled. “Because I was wearing the niqab he says, ‘So little boy, when are you going to join the ISIS?’”

Desai’s son, Bilal, had no idea what the man was talking about.

“How dare you talk to my little baby like that?” asked Desai before bundling her boy into the car.

“Just because I wear a niqab doesn’t mean you can pick on my baby boy like that.”

Desai is a Toronto-born mother of four — a part-time school bus driver devoted to her family and to her faith. She’s anxious to defend her hometown as open and accepting.

“In Toronto, it’s actually OK,” she told *The Catholic Register*. “When I go outside of Toronto,



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

REAL-LIFE CHALLENGES — Sumaiya Desai, centre, realizes if her daughters Habeebah, left, and Faizah were to adopt the niqab, they would face much difficulty in Canada.

that’s when the stares come. . . . In Toronto people are not exactly used to it, but they’re beginning to understand the whole reason why we wear a niqab. It’s not as bad.”

Nationally, a recent survey from the Angus Reid Institute found that only one in three Canadians support a person wearing the niqab — a veil

which covers the face below the eyes. The same poll found that 46 per cent of Canadians view Islam unfavourably, as opposed to 33 per cent who have a generally favourable view.

There is also significant disapproval of the religious garb of devout Muslim women — the niqab — with 32 per cent acceptance and the burka with 29 per cent. Clothing that declares a different, more familiar, piety gets broad support from Canadians. The most widely supported is the traditional habits of Catholic religious women, supported and approved of by 88 per cent of Canadians. The kippah or yarmulke worn by many Jewish men gets 85 per cent support. Turbans required of Sikh men are supported by 77 per cent. Even the hijab or headscarf worn by many Muslim women has 75 per cent support.

Contempt for faith and for public displays of faith is an old form of hatred and one Pope Francis has spoken out against.

“People who speak badly about religions or other religions, who make fun of them, who make a

game out of the religions of others, are provocateurs,” Pope Francis told reporters just after the 2015 attack which killed 12 employees of the French satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo*. “And if they go past the limit of acceptable speech, violent retaliation is to be expected. . . . There is a limit.”

It was not a popular stance when there was widespread outrage over the murdered cartoonists and writers, but Pope Francis has been a consistent advocate for what he calls “healthy pluralism which respects differences and values them as such.”

In Philadelphia in 2015, Pope Francis directly addressed immigrants whose customs and faith are at odds with the mainstream. “Please, you should never be ashamed of your traditions,” he said.

“By contributing your gifts, you will not only find your place here, you will help to renew society from within.”

But will we let them?

Desai knows well that if either of her daughters — 17-year-old Faizah or 14-year-old Habeebah — were to adopt the niqab, it would slam the door on career opportunities and shrink their social circles.

“Yes, people obviously are going to judge us because of that one little piece of cloth we wear on our face,” she said. “They don’t understand that it doesn’t take long to get behind that one piece of cloth and we’re just regular people.”

“Right now, we’re in a situation where Islam has become identified with terrorism and all kinds of terrible things,” said Mosaic Institute executive director Bernie Farber. “Every Muslim in Canada becomes wrongly identified with this. We have a lot to learn about what Canadian Muslims are, what Islam is and what it isn’t.”

Farber is the former CEO of the now defunct Canadian Jewish Congress and a longtime cam-

— ISLAM, page 7

Christians already united in common faith

By Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers

WATROUS, Sask. — What happened in the 16th century that fragmented the western Christian church, and what has taken place in the past 50 years that is now mending these 500-year-old fractures? This was the central question addressed in a series of five sessions bringing together Lutherans, Anglicans and Roman Catholics in Watrous this past Lent. The series entitled

on in the past 50 years,” said Adeline Reihl, a lifelong Lutheran. “I also acknowledge that communication has not always filtered down (to the people) as it should have to explain what these dialogues contain. This then prevents the average parishioner to move forward in their impressions of the other churches.”

“For me it was exciting to see us come together for a common goal, to acknowledge, understand, appreciate and respect each other,” according to Lynn Tarasoff, a Roman Catholic.

“It is exciting to learn so much more about Lutheran and Catholic practices and traditions, moving from past misinterpretations to a more united future, said Anglican parishioner Linda Leslie. “This 500th anniversary of the Reformation is truly a time for finding and rediscovering our common faith

instead of only focusing on differences.”

Julie Davies, a Catholic married to her Anglican husband, found that the sessions fostered a very open and accepting environment. “There was no blaming each other for the divisions but instead I learned so much about our various traditions.”

Joan Hanson, a Lutheran, concurs: “I have come away with an appreciation for how much has been achieved over the past 50 years through the various councils and conferences/dialogues to reconcile our differences and to move us closer together. It was so informative and I have enjoyed the dialogue at our local level, the sharing of opinions and the realization how very similar we are.”

The greatest discovery — or rather, rediscovery — is that we

are already truly united in our common faith in God through the person of Jesus Christ, that baptism has joined us together in a divine covenant with both God and with one another, and that we are justified by that faith alone. The differences that keep us apart are caused by humans, not by God.

By way of marking this lenten journey together, the Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Anglicans of Watrous celebrated Good Friday together in the Catholic parish of St. Ann’s in a worship service that drew its prayers, hymns and litanies from all three traditions. The group is committed to continued learning together, and is now considering one of the Anglican-Catholic documents as the basis for future study.

Canada’s religious tolerance on the rise

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Canadians are still leery of Islam and mostly agitated by the veils and headscarves worn by a minority of Muslim women, but our general tolerance for religious diversity is actually on the rise, according to a survey released April 4 by the Angus Reid Institute.

While nearly half (46 per cent) of Canadians view Islam unfavourably, favourable views of Islam have increased by 10 points across the country since the last Angus Reid Institute survey in 2013. The most dramatic rise in Canadians who say they have a positive view of Islam is in Quebec, where support has doubled in four years from 16 to 32 per cent.

Outside of Quebec, support for Islam has been up and down — 31 per cent in 2009, 24 per cent in 2013 and 34 per cent in 2017.

What Muslim women wear has a big influence on Canadian attitudes. One in three Canadians support a person wearing the

niqab, or face veil. An even lower percentage (29 per cent) support women wearing the full body covering known as the burka. The hijab, or headscarf, gets support from 75 per cent of Canadians.

By comparison, 88 per cent support Catholic religious women wearing traditional habits, 85 per cent support Jews wearing the kippah or yarmulke and 77 per cent support the turban required of Sikh men.

Christianity on the whole continues to have steady, stable support from over two-thirds of Canadians (68 per cent).

“When you compare the static nature of responses on Christianity and then the positive nature on all of the other ones, that’s where you get kind of an interesting view of what’s happening in 2017,” said Angus Reid Institute research associate Dave Korzinski.

Between Feb. 16 - 22, the non-profit Angus Reid Institute surveyed over 1,500 adults online using their Angus Reid Forum pool of willing survey respondents. ARI believes its results are

equivalent to a random probability sample that would carry a margin of error of plus-or-minus 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism all have support of at least half of Canadians (49 per cent, 53 per cent and 58 per cent). Sikhism gets a thumbs up from 38 per cent and Islam comes in at the one-third mark (33 per cent). But positive feeling for all of the minority religions is on the rise, said Korzinski.

“You see that big jump in Quebec for a number of different religions,” he said. “It’s not just Islam that’s being more favourably viewed.”

When religions are spoken of in the abstract they get a more negative reaction than when the question is personal, Christianity included. While a subdued 68 per cent view Christianity favourably, an enthusiastic 85 per cent would approve one of their children marrying a Christian.

A healthy 43 per cent of Canadians are OK with their children

— FAITH, page 5



ECUMENICAL STUDY SESSIONS

“Together in Christ” (available online) was produced for parish study by a Canadian Lutheran-Catholic working group.

Through 12-minute video presentations, participant guides containing prayers, discussion questions and biblical texts, the group of between 15 - 21 participants from the three churches learned and prayed together, dispelled misunderstandings and false judgments, and grew in mutual understanding and appreciation of one another’s traditions.

“Yes, we all know one another in this small community, but we don’t necessarily discuss our respective faith traditions and practices,” said one participant. “This is so enriching.”

The sessions “helped me to gain new knowledge about the history of dialogue that has gone

Romero murder still dangerous to discuss: author

By Agnieszka Krawczynski
The B.C. Catholic

VANCOUVER (CCN) — The author of a new book about the men who killed Archbishop Oscar Romero while celebrating mass 37 years ago says the subject is still dangerous to talk about.

Matt Eisenbrandt and a team of lawyers in the U.S. and El Salvador were behind the only successful legal case against Romero's murderers to date, and although *Assassination of a Saint* contains new revelations, Eisenbrandt said he can't reveal everything.

"There are people whose testimony I would love to include in the book, but it is still too dangerous," he told about 100 social justice activists in Vancouver April 3.

The case against Romero's killers began when the U.S.-based Centre for Justice and Accountability got a tip that a man linked to El Salvadorian death squads was living in California.

"What we were able to do is to bring a civil lawsuit. Our charges were extrajudicial killing and crimes against humanity," said Eisenbrandt, who details the endeavour in *Assassination of a Saint*.

The CJA, a non-profit that aims to bring torturers and war criminals living in the U.S. to account, began looking for answers in 2001. When Eisenbrandt joined the group as a young attorney, he found himself on a historical mission.

"This was going to be the only trial ever in Archbishop Romero's murder," said Eisenbrandt, who went on to become legal director of the CJA.

Romero, a vocal advocate for the poor and oppressed, was gunned down while celebrating

mass in a hospital chapel in San Salvador March 24, 1980. A judge in El Salvador was assigned to the case, but three days later suffered an assassination attempt and disappeared.

But the CJA had a lead. In 1987 the assassin's getaway driver had testified in secret and under oath that his boss was death squad member Alvaro Saravia. That same man was seen in San Francisco in 2001. CJA went after him.

"An amazing amount of evidence already existed," said Eisenbrandt.

Lawyers in the U.S. and El Salvador also researched the complex political and military climate and looked into Saravia's superiors. While collecting evidence, a laptop with sensitive information was stolen, one American colleague was followed by a vehicle with tinted windows, and a witness in El Salvador was threatened.

Then, in 2004, they brought the case before a U.S. judge. In a guarded courtroom, they found Saravia guilty.

"We ended up winning the case," said Eisenbrandt. "He was found legally responsible for Archbishop Romero's assassination."

The judge ruled Saravia would have to pay \$10 million in damages, but Saravia had fled his California home and vanished. "To this day, we have not yet gotten a penny."

None of his superiors were brought before the court. "If we were going to bring one of them into the case, we would have to have the most ironclad evidence you can imagine because these guys are multimillionaires," he said. "You can imagine the fight we would have on our hands."

Eisenbrandt decided to write a detailed account of the evidence, some of which the public eye had never seen before. However, he admits he left much out of *Assassination of a Saint*. "El Salvador remains an incredibly dangerous country, and even 37 years later, the Romero assassination is still very dangerous to talk about."

He added that Romero's chapter in history is far from closed. While the church looks forward to his canonization, some petitions in El Salvador are starting to surface about reopening his case.

Among the 100 audience mem-



B.C. Catholic/A. Krawczynski

ROMERO BOOK — Author Matt Eisenbrandt (right) signs a book for an audience member at the launch of *Assassination of a Saint* in Vancouver April 3.

bers crowded in St. James Community Hall was Daysi Bonilla, Consul General for El Salvador in Vancouver.

"Thank you for writing the memories of my country, El Salvador," Bonilla said in halting English.

Work of NGOs a reason for stability

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complex society with sectarian tensions. "It is astounding that things have remained relatively stable," says Zyla. "The work of NGOs is a big reason for that stability."

When the group arrived in Beirut, a representative of the Near East School of Theology gave an in-depth introduction to Lebanon. "Lebanon is a mosaic," says Zyla. "Many different groups have crossed this land and stayed there. Lebanon has many levels of history and complexity. Each piece is part of the story, but none of it is the whole story."

Together the group reflected

on the need for food security, which they determined exists "when all people have regular and dignified access to enough nutritious food to live healthy and active lives."

The Mennonite Central Committee hosted the group on their arrival. "They have been working in Lebanon for a long time. The work they invited us to see and the people they invited us to meet were Palestinian refugees who fled to Lebanon as refugees in 1948, and are now hosting refugees from Syria."

"For MCC and other groups, food assistance is a means for peace-building, community-building and intercultural relationship-building. It is very eucharistic."

On one memorable day, the learning tour visited a cedar grove, experiencing the same famous cedars of Lebanon that the ancient Phoenicians used to build ships, and Solomon used to build the temple in Jerusalem. Strictly protected, the grove was an oasis of sacred peace, describes Zyla. High in altitude, with snow on the ground, it was reminiscent of the Scripture reading for the day about the Transfiguration.

The learning tour met with members of a group known as Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD), who are working to provide relief to those affected by the war in Syria. Among the PARD representatives were farmers who were delighted to meet farmers from Alberta and Ontario who were part of the learning tour.

"We were speaking through interpreters, but the connection was clear. It was an amazing moment of farmer-to-farmer connection," says Zyla.

Sharing a meal with the members of PARD was another joyful moment of communion between people from different parts of the world, of different faiths and backgrounds, she related: "We saw beautiful examples of Muslim and Christian people working together."

The learning tour also visited

the Sabra and Shatila Refugee Gathering (Lebanon often uses the word gathering rather than camp, since there are official and unofficial refugee camps), site of a notorious 1982 massacre, and heard a first-hand account of that event.

Today, the Sabra Gathering includes temporary structures and concrete buildings that are expanding upward to make space for new refugees coming in. "There is no attention to building codes; these are precarious structures that block more and more of the light. The children have no place to play, no green space," says Zyla.

"The living conditions were harsh and noisy and crowded, but this was also a neighbourhood with friendly people who care about each other."

The tour participants also witnessed the dignity provided through a food voucher system of assistance. "Rather than being given food directly, people receive a voucher so they can go to the local shops and choose what to buy, thereby supporting the local merchants, helping the local economy."

Food assistance is providing social cohesion in many settings, adds Zyla, describing stops at Sidon, and at a number of other refugee gatherings. When food assistance is available to all, it builds peace.

"Palestinian refugees have been living in gatherings for 70 years. They live precariously. Legally they can't own land, they are overcrowded, with the only schools available those set up by the United Nations. PARD has realized that food assistance must be seen as being for all — for longtime Palestinian refugees as well, not only the most recently arrived Syrian refugees. That brings cohesion and builds community," says Zyla.

At one point the learning tour asked a group of Palestinian and Syrian refugees if they had any message for Canadians. One refugee said, "Keep your country, keep your peace, and thank God for it. You will not know what you have until you lose it."

Ottawa fears Trump trade negotiations

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declare nuclear weapons illegal under international law.

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

"The total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative."

Canada wasn't at the UN when the pope's letter was read. It is one of 35 countries supporting a U.S.-led boycott of disarmament negotiations.

Roche has some advice for Canadian politicians: "Go to the NATO allies and say, 'This is an intolerable position for NATO to take.' The hypocrisy is staggering."

The Canadian government claims it fully supports "a world free of nuclear weapons," but that the effort to ban them in international law is counterproductive.

"Negotiation of a nuclear weapons ban without the participation of states that possess nuclear weapons is certain to be ineffective and will not eliminate nuclear weapons," a Global Affairs Canada spokesperson told *The Catholic Register* in an

email. "If anything, it may make disarmament more difficult."

Previous bans of indiscriminate weapons, such as chemical weapons, were negotiated among countries who possessed stockpiles, said the Global Affairs spokesperson.

Canadian disarmament negotiators are concentrating their efforts on cutting off the production and trade in fissile materials needed to build nuclear bombs.

A legal ban on nuclear weapons is more than a hollow, symbolic gesture, said Project Ploughshares executive director Cesar Jaramillo.

"There's a chemical weapons convention. There's a biological weapons convention. There's an arms trade treaty. There is no unequivocal prohibition on nuclear weapons, which are by far the most destructive of them all," he said.

The Canadian ecumenical think-tank on peace and disarmament issues was in New York for the first round of talks on the UN nuclear weapons ban. The talks will resume June 15 - July 7. Jaramillo sees Canada playing both sides of the disarmament game.

"The Canadian government presents itself as an international responsible actor, a non-nuclear

weapons state," he said. "At the same time, Canada is an active member of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is an open nuclear weapons alliance with an overt policy of nuclear deterrence. . . . By virtue of its membership in the NATO nuclear planning group (Canada) is perpetuating the existence of nuclear weapons and this logic that they are a legitimate means to ensure national security."

Pope Francis calls the logic behind nuclear deterrence illogical and immoral.

"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

Like every Pope since Pope John XXIII, Pope Francis wants the money now spent on ever more advanced and destructive weapons systems invested in lifting nations out of poverty.

Roche believes Canada's acquiescence to U.S. demands on UN nuclear negotiations result from Ottawa's fears that the Trump administration might punish Canada in trade negotiations.

"We have to stand up and say, 'These are not our values,'" he said.

Yousafzai given honorary Canadian citizenship

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA — Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai was given the gift of honorary Canadian citizenship during Holy Week, and left behind some inspiring and challenging words for a couple of young Catholic women who work on Parliament Hill.

Yousafzai, 19, became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, two years after the young Pakistani-born Muslim woman survived an assassination attempt by Taliban extremists intent on ending her efforts to promote education for girls in her homeland.

The story of her heroic cause in the face of daily danger made her a international lightning rod for justice. Canada first invited her to speak in the House of Commons in 2014, but the scheduled appearance was the same day, Oct. 22, as the shooting on Parliament Hill that killed a soldier at the National War Memorial.

On April 12, the invitation was finally fulfilled and Yousafzai became the sixth person to be awarded honorary Canadian citizenship.

Kelsey Regnier, 26, who works in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, not only listened to Yousafzai’s speech from the gallery of the House of Commons, but also had a chance to shake her hand when the young



Photo courtesy Jake Wright

INSPIRING CITIZEN — Malala Yousafzai, 19, who in 2014 became the youngest person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, received honorary Canadian citizenship on April 12 in Ottawa.

Nobel Peace Prize winner visited interim Conservative Leader Rona Ambrose’s office.

“Her faith has given her the ability to endure incredible suffering and has also given her compassion and a disposition of forgiveness toward those who tried to kill her,” Regnier said in an email. “That willingness to forgive can only come from faith.

She seems to literally exude peace and acceptance, and all Catholics can learn from her example of forgiveness.”

Regnier added: “Sometimes I feel as a person of faith that society seeks opportunities to point out the evils committed in the name of religion and can overlook the good.

“Malala’s passion and her

activism are examples of that good and a reminder that we often have a lot more in common with our brothers and sisters of different faiths than we think,” she said.

Tricia de Souza, 22, who works in MP Garnett Genuis’s office, said Yousafzai’s visit had been long anticipated.

“(Her speech) was important for many to hear,” said de Souza,

who was born in Dubai of Catholic parents originally from Goa, India. “Canada has been very strong in the fight against terrorist groups like the Taliban. I think it’s important for our Parliamentarians to remember what exactly we stand for and what we should strive to protect.”

In her speech, Yousafzai talked of the hatred which infects the type of men who attacked her, hatred that is “destroying our democracies, our freedom of religion and our right to go to school,” de Souza said.

“Sometimes I do think we do forget these basic fundamental freedoms we have here that we need to exercise in order to maintain them,” de Souza said.

For de Souza, Yousafzai’s courage and heroic actions represent more than the various awards and honours she has received. She reminded her of St. Ireneaus’ saying, “The glory of God is man fully alive.”

“That quote is applicable to our life, a model for all of us — man being fully alive, man being fully free to be fully alive,” de Souza said.

“It’s an important thing for our governments to remember — being full of life beholding God. I think her life and the actions she took are a manifestation of that kind of reality.”

Aid agencies have high hopes for pope’s visit to Egypt

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Pope Francis’ visit to Egypt April 28 - 29 could be so good for the country that fanatics have tried to derail it, say the Canadian directors of two Catholic aid agencies.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Carl Héту

On Palm Sunday two separate bombings at Coptic Orthodox churches in different cities killed 44 people and injured many more. Egypt has upped its security for the visit.

Marie-Claude Lalonde, executive director of Aid to the Church in Need Canada, said the attacks were designed to “instil, drop by drop, fear within the (Christian) community.”

The pope’s visit will include a meeting with the Coptic

Orthodox Pope Tawadros II, the grand imam of the Mosque of Al-Azhar Ahmed Mohamed el-Tayeb, and Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

“Another reason the attacks took place, the extremists don’t want the pope to meet with the highest Muslim authority of Egypt,” said CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association) Canada national director Carl Héту. “For those people who want violence all over the Middle East, the pope meeting the grand imam of Egypt means we can talk, we can build peace and we can live in peace, Muslims and Christians together like we have for the last 1,400 years with its ups and downs and complexities, but it is possible.”

“This meeting of the pope and the grand imam would set the road map toward peace not only in Egypt but all over the Middle East,” Héту said. This is opposite what groups such as the Islamic State, al-Qaida and other Islamist groups trying to control the region want.

“(The pope’s visit) can only be good,” said Lalonde. “Good on different levels. One level is to show solidarity with Christians, to show them they are not forgotten. It’s very important. The pope is somehow looking after them.”

The other level is the pope’s visit with the Orthodox pope and the grand imam, she said. The imam is “the Muslim authority in the country and his speech is pretty much about dialogue.”

“If the pope and the grand imam of Al-Azhar can speak

together, then everyone can do it,” Lalonde said. “It encourages dialogue on other levels. With the Orthodox, it’s the same.”

Lalonde pointed out the Palm Sunday attacks were not “something that just happened recently,” but that similar attacks have gone on in recent years, such as one in Cairo last December at a chapel connected to the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in which 30 were killed. Attacks have stepped up before the Arab Spring in 2011, such as one in January of that year in Alexandria that killed 21.

“You have incidents here and there, quite regularly, but overall the situation is not as bad as in Syria or Iraq,” she said.

Héту, however, pointed out that before the 2003 war in Iraq and the 2011 war in Syria the level of discrimination faced by Christians in those two countries was “almost non-existent.”

They tended to be from the middle class, well-educated, had businesses and were doing relatively well, he said. “In Egypt the Christians are relatively poor compared to the other Christians of the Middle East. They live in rural areas, cannot have access to certain types of jobs that are restricted only to Muslims.”

“For many years churches could not be renovated or built without a presidential decree,” he said. Baptized Christian children who ended up in Egyptian orphanages “would become Muslim automatically.”

“In Egypt there is an institutionalized discrimination that did not exist in Iraq and Syria,” Héту

said. “The new government of General Sisi wants to change that, to make life easier, to allow full participation of Christians in society so Christians wouldn’t face institutionalized discrimination anymore.”

“He’s made that public,” Héту said. “That’s part of the reason the Muslim fanatics in Egypt want to stop that.”

Both CNEWA and Aid to the Church in Need fund ongoing projects in Egypt, through the Catholic bishops in the country. Christians make up about 10 per cent of the Egyptian population; the vast majority of those Christians are Coptic Orthodox.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Marie-Claude Lalonde

Faith still a dominant personal phenomenon

Continued from page 3

marrying into a Muslim family, 10 points higher than the number who approve of Islam itself.

The lower level of support for religion in the abstract likely has to do with Canadian discomfort with religious institutions, said Korzinski.

“People have kind of soured on that (institutional religion) in the last 30, 40 years, as the trends show,” he said.

Founded just two years ago, the Angus Reid Institute has made religion one of its most important survey subjects as it tracks social, cultural and political trends in the hope of encouraging more

informed debate.

“We see religion as having a big place in public conversation,” said Korzinski.

The importance of faith in the lives of ordinary Canadians has persisted despite their waning attachment to religious institutions and formal religious practice.

“You see fewer people going to church and taking more active roles in religious communities. But faith in a lot of senses is still a very dominant, personal phenomenon,” Korzinski said.

“Faith is very important to them insofar as their own personal faith is. The religious institutions don’t tend to get the more favourable opinions.”

Way of the Cross enacted on Saskatoon city streets

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Some 200 people braved rainy weather on Good Friday, April 14, to follow the cross through the streets of Saskatoon, singing, praying, and reflecting on the suffering and death of Jesus, while connecting his passion to suffering in our world today.

The annual outdoor Way of the Cross is co-ordinated by the Justice and Peace Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, and involves people of many Christian denominations. At each station a faith or community group led prayers and provided reflections.

At the first station in front of the courthouse on Spadina Crescent, a reflection prepared by the diocesan Office of Migration was presented in conjunction with Scripture about Jesus’ agony in the garden.

“Jesus withdrew to a secluded place to pray as was his custom. He knew a time of great testing was ahead of him. He seeks strength for what is to come,” the crowd heard. “Imagine the thousands of refugees who are at the moment of being displaced, that moment when they realize that fleeing means leaving behind everything they know, everything they have and love. They know they are facing a time of great testing and trial as they run to seek freedom, security and peace.”

The reflection ended with a prayer “for all those who see home and all it means disappear behind them; for all those who cannot see a home in the days ahead of them; for all those who dwell in daily insecurity; for all those who are weary and without a safe place to rest their heads; for all families in migration; help us to be generous, just, and welcoming.”

The betrayal of Jesus by Judas was recalled at the second station, with a reflection by Nashi, a local non-profit group that raises awareness and funds to battle human trafficking.

“Human trafficking is modern-day slavery. There are 27 million men, women and children held as slaves throughout the world. Forms of human trafficking exist both locally and globally and include the sex trade and production of goods.”

Other reflections included



Tim Yaworski

WAY OF THE CROSS — Some 200 people attended the annual outdoor Way of the Cross in Saskatoon on Good Friday, reflecting on the suffering and death of Jesus and on suffering in our world.

prayers for victims of crime, for restorative justice, and for those oppressed by poverty and hurt by systemic inequities.

Reflecting on Peter’s denial of Jesus, the diocesan Hospital Chaplaincy office prayed for the sick, the elderly and the suffering. “Their hearts cry out, ‘take my hand, come be with me, I need your support, your comfort, will you pray with me?’ Like Peter, we are called to serve with courage, compassion and love those who are sick and elderly. We are called to open our eyes to see the face of Christ in those who are in need.”

Representatives of L’Arche led prayers at the sixth station, recalling Christ’s suffering endured out of love for each human being.

“Just as Jesus’ head was entangled in the crown of thorns, there are those in our communities who are entangled in other ways: in pain, sorrow, loneliness, anxiety, and fear. Through Jesus’ example of selfless suffering we too can find the strength to accompany the weary and broken-hearted in our communities,” said Wyndham Thiessen of L’Arche Saskatoon.

On behalf of the Meewasin Valley Authority, Brendan Bitz reflected on the life-giving need for clean water at the seventh station where Jesus takes up the cross. “Water is life. Without water, we die. Caring for water with reverence and respect calls us individually and collectively to be good stewards of this fundamental and increasingly fragile resource.”

At the eighth station, Bernice Daratha presented a reflection on behalf of Development and Peace (Caritas Canada) about the suffering of the people of South Sudan because of civil war and famine. She quoted her friend, a refugee from South Sudan who now lives in Regina: “I ask you to pray with me for our people in South Sudan as we become like Simon of Cyrene in

carrying their cross with them.”

The pain of having children in foster care, and the profound need for foster parents was the focus of a reflection by Hands at Work at the ninth station, Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem. “Every day in our city, province and country birth parents are separated from their children. But the number of foster parents with hearts ready to receive those children is shrinking. Vulnerable children have no home willing to take them, and new wounds grow.”

The plight of persecuted Christians around the world was the focus of prayer and reflection at the 10th station, Jesus is crucified. “Today we enter into solidarity with the many innocent victims who have embraced the cost of clinging to the cross while paying the ultimate price,” prayed representatives of the diocesan Justice and Peace Office. “Let us pray for Christians in fragile areas of the world for whom this sacred week has become a dangerous time.”

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish led prayers and reflections at the 11th station, recalling Jesus’ promise to the good thief.

“Teach us to reach out to our neighbour. When we think there is nothing more we can do; when we are afraid of the ridicule we might face; give us the courage to reach out and forget about our own needs,” prayed parish life director Debbie Ledoux.

“Give us the courage to reach out to our indigenous brothers and sisters and understand the suffering they have endured. Help us to learn from them the sacredness of the land. Give us the courage to bring about change so that all of us will be strangers no more, but sisters and brothers living together as family in your kingdom here on earth, and with you in paradise.”

At the 12th station, recalling the words of Jesus from the cross to his mother and his beloved disciple, a representative of the Saska-

toon Pregnancy Options Centre reflected on motherhood and the pressures facing pregnant women.

“It has been said that to have a child is to decide forever to have your heart go walking outside your body. It is a sacrificial love, a vulnerable love. Is there any more God-like act than to participate in the creation of a human being?” she asked. “And yet society sees motherhood as a curse, a burden, an infringement. Women are told: you can be a mother or you can be educated. You can be a mom, but you will live in poverty. Is that the best we can do? Society offers women choice, and then leaves them to suffer the effects of their choice alone. Let us pray that we would act as guardians toward all mothers — those parenting, struggling and grieving.”

At the 13th station, a representative of the Knights of Columbus read a Scripture passage about the death of Jesus on the cross. The crowd stood in silence before moving to the final station on the steps of St. Paul’s Co-Cathedral.

Diocesan ecumenical officer Nicholas Jesson, diocesan administrator Rev. Kevin McGee, and chair of Riverbend Presbytery, United Church of Canada, Rev. Kathleen James-Cavan, led the last reflection about Jesus being placed in the tomb.

“Jesus’ story does not end here, in the tomb of Good Friday. Our story does not end in tragedy and despair. We need not flee like the disciples in fear for the future, because we know as people of faith that Jesus will rise from this tomb, and so we live in faith and hope that we too will rise with Christ on the last day.”

OBITUARY

BARTSCH, Sister Mary Albert
School Sister of Notre Dame

Died at Notre Dame Convent on April 13, 2017, at the age of 97 and in her 78th year as a School Sister of Notre Dame. Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Mary Albert was celebrated by Rev. Pablito Labado, chaplain, on April 18. Predeceased by her parents Albert and Armella (Bichler) Bartsch, her brothers, Albert, Carl, George, Nicholas, John and her sisters, Rose Forrest and Amelia Leibel. Lovingly remembered by the members of her religious community and many nieces and nephews. Sister Mary Albert was born in Salvador, Saskatchewan. She entered Notre Dame Convent in Leipzig, Saskatchewan. After a few months she came to Waterdown to complete her formation as a School Sister of Notre Dame. From 1939 - 1986 Sister Mary Albert served as homemaker in convents in Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and England. For 24 years she was at Notre Dame Convent School, Lingfield, England. At this boarding and day school, she prepared meals for 70 boarders, as well as a hot luncheon at noon for day students. In spite of long hours in the kitchen, she found additional time to work in the vegetable garden. She also typed essays for the sisters who were studying. In 1986 Sister Mary Albert went to Saskatoon where she visited the elderly in nursing homes. In 2008 she moved to Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown. In her retirement Sister Mary Albert enjoyed her piano lessons. Her computer kept her in touch with family and friends in Saskatchewan. Throughout her life, Sister Mary Albert considered her ministry as a service of love. She died on Holy Thursday. The Gospel Acclamation for the liturgy was, “A new commandment I give to you, love one another as I have loved you.” May Sister Mary Albert enjoy the Fullness of God’s Love.

Christ understands human suffering

By Louis Hradecki

PRINCE ALBERT — Approximately 70 people of various denominations braved the weather — which included rain, sleet, wind, thunder and lightning — to participate in the annual Good Friday Outdoor Way of the Cross sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert.

Bishop Albert Th  venot, M.Afr., began the procession from city hall. Various stops were made in the downtown core. Here reflections were made and prayers were said for all those who are suffering with addictions, mental health issues, homelessness, and also for the missing indigenous

women and children.

“Good Friday is a reflection on the purpose of life and how we are living our present situation — how we love one another. That is really what this day is all about,” the bishop commented.

The procession concluded with the last station being back at city hall. Afterward, all joined together to recite the Lord’s Prayer and to exchange the sign of peace.

When asked about the significance of this walk, P.A. diocese Evangelization and Catechesis director Christine Taylor, one of the event organizers, said that “there is nothing of human suffering that Christ does not understand.”



Tim Yaworski

CHRISM MASS — With the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon still awaiting the appointment of a bishop, Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, presided at the annual diocesan celebration of the Chrism Mass at the start of Holy Week, April 10. He blessed the sacred oils — the oil of the sick, the oil of catechumens and the sacred chrism — which were taken back by parish representatives from across the diocese to be used in the celebration of sacraments in the year ahead. The retired bishop also led the reaffirmation of priestly service by priests from across the Saskatoon diocese. In his homily, Wiesner said that all the baptized have been anointed to be missionary disciples, “sent to proclaim the mission and ministry of Jesus.”

Partnership signs threat assessment protocol

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Violent events in schools are often predicted in advance by students threatening before carrying out acts of violence. To react quickly and in an organized way to that threat is behind the Regina Human Services Partnership Community Threat and Assessment Protocol signed April 10 by representatives of the partnership.

The protocol is called a collaborative response to student threat-making behaviours. Regina Public and Catholic school divisions, the Regina Police Service, the Ministry of Social Services, the Qu’Appelle Health Region Child and Youth Services, the

Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing, the Regina Open Door Society, Regina Fire and Protective Services and City of Regina Community Services make up the current partnership, but more could be added when training is completed.

Regina Police Chief Evan Bray said the protocol is important because it formalizes a partnership that already exists. “It ensures that we have a protocol in place and we know what to do when an emergency arises. We need to be sure to react quickly and we need to make sure that we can identify the proper partner at the table to provide the information we need to resolve that situation and imminent threat to the community.”



Frank Flegel

THREAT ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL — Signatories to the Human Services Partnership Community Threat and Assessment Protocol signed April 10 in Regina include, from left: Trevor Ewart of the Regina Police Service, Donna Ziegler of Regina Catholic Schools, and Catherine Gagne of Regina Public Schools.

The protocol recognizes that often the individual threatening violence is troubled.

Bray said the protocol would also provide wrap-around support to ensure that the individual who

caused the threat is supported to get healthy again. “We would see if there is something we can do in community health and safety to provide overall wellness for that individual and the individual’s family.”

Superintendent of Education

Services — Facilities for the Catholic School Division Rodd Hoffart said quick action is the key to the protocol: “It is to give signed members of the partnership access to critical information on the potential threat in the most immediate fashion.”

Parish marks St. Kateri’s feast day

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A procession of prayer and song in the heart of Saskatoon was held April 17 to mark St. Kateri Tekakwitha’s feast day.

Organized by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, the procession with the statue of St. Kateri Tekakwitha started at Guadalupe House on Avenue J, continued to St. Mary’s Parish on 20th Street, and returned past St. George’s Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral on Avenue M before ending at Guadalupe House, where a soup and bannock supper concluded the celebration.

Parish life director Debbie Ledoux, Deacon Paul Labelle, Rev. Graham Hill, CSsR, and elder Gayle Weenie were among those leading the procession. Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon was also in attendance.

“Loving God, we celebrate St. Kateri Tekakwitha, ‘Lily of the

Mohawks,’ as one of your son’s most faithful followers,” prayed Hill. “Help us to turn away all evil and walk in her footsteps, sharing our love and concern with others.”

St. Kateri was born in 1656 in what is now upstate New York, to a Mohawk chief father and an Algonquin Christian mother. Orphaned in a smallpox epidemic that left her scarred and



Kiply Yaworski

ST. KATERI FEAST DAY — Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Saskatoon held a procession with the statue of St. Kateri Tekakwitha April 17 to mark the Canadian feast day of “The Lily of the Mohawks.”

nearly blind at the age of four, Kateri grew up with a strong desire to follow Jesus. Jesuit missionaries baptized her in 1676, in spite of opposition and persecution.

The young First Nations woman eventually travelled hundreds of kilometres to settle at a Jesuit mission near what is now Montreal, in order to practise her faith and serve God. She died on April 17, 1680, at the age of 24, recognized for her holiness, devotion and deep spirituality.

Beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1980, Kateri Tekakwitha’s intercession was recognized by the church in the miraculous healing of a young boy in Washington state in 2006, which finally led to her canonization by Pope Benedict XVI as a saint of the church on Oct. 21, 2012.

She is the first indigenous woman in North America to be named a saint. Her feast day is celebrated April 17 in Canada, and July 14 in the United States. She is the patron of ecology and the environment, people living in exile, and Native Americans.

Ottawa evangelization summit to be live-streamed

SASKATOON — For the third consecutive year a New Evangelization Summit live-streamed host site will be available in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

The 2017 host site is St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission in Bruno, Sask., some 90 km east of Saskatoon, running from 7 p.m. May 12 until 4:30 p.m. May 13, with an option to attend Saturday only.

The New Evangelization Summit is a conference hosted in Ottawa and live-streamed to some 40 host sites across North America, making available some of the most dynamic, inspirational speakers in the Catholic Church today.

Guest speakers this year include Bishop Robert Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire Ministries (which produced the popular Catholicism television/video series); Sister Miriam James Heidland, SOLT,

missionary with the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity and author of *Loved As I Am*; and Peter Herbeck, director of missions for Renewal Ministries and television and radio host — and many others.

The vision of the New Evangelization Summit is that the whole church would be united in the mission of evangelization, and trained to be able to fully live out their identity as “missionary disciples,” in the words of Pope Francis.

The summit offers inspiration to all the baptized, but will be of particular interest to anyone involved in pastoral work, outreach, catechesis, teaching, or ministry; to priests and parish life directors; and to members of Parish Pastoral Councils.

To register online, go to www.NewEvangelization.ca. To book overnight accommodations at St. Therese Institute call (306) 269-2555.

‘Islam teaches us peace’

Continued from page 3

paigner for religious freedom and against religious bigotry. He has become convinced that Islamophobia is a real stumbling block on the road to a just and equal society. The Mosaic Institute runs programs largely geared to educating young Canadians about each other’s faiths and traditions.

For Farber, religious freedom is not a gift to be selectively bestowed, but a human right because faith is part of being human.

“There has to be an intentional process,” said Farber. “And it’s a piece of the puzzle that we’re missing here in Canada. We call ourself a pluralistic, multicultural, multi-faith society — which we are. But it’s not really reflected that way. Where should it best be reflected? Obviously in the education system.”

The problem, says Farber, is that in the process of taking the Christian bias out of Ontario’s public schools (where school days used to begin with the Lord’s

Prayer) we somehow lost our sense of the value of religion.

“There’s such a fear that if you introduce even the study of religion into the school system that all of a sudden it becomes indoctrination. No,” Farber said. “We have to have proper course curriculum in understanding the faiths of the world, so they become less foreign to us.”

Desai and her husband, Yunis, live within an easy walk of their mosque. They keep an immaculate garden, are active in the neighbourhood association and their children, from three-year-old Mohammed on up, are liked and admired up and down the street. She wishes more Canadians would take the time to understand her faith.

“They gotta understand that Muslims are not bad. Islam teaches us peace. Because of the way we dress, you cannot treat us any differently. This is part of our religion and we wish to follow it. . . . It gives us comfort. It makes us feel stronger Muslims.”

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South By Southwest brings exciting work to big screen

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Recently I reviewed the SXSW opening and closing headliners *Song to Song* and *Life*. They were far from the only high-profile dramas playing to sold-out houses. Unfortunately I didn't get in to see what appeared to have been the fest's biggest hits: Edgar Wright's *Baby Driver*, which earned applause for its soundtrack as well as action sequences, and James Franco's *The Disaster Artist*, presented as a work in progress. I did see David Leitch's *Atomic Blonde* (and got the "Austin Goes Atomic" T-shirt), which also showed just once on the crowded opening weekend.

The blonde in question is the impressive Charlize Theron, who owns this spy thriller that harks back to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, drawing on the graphic novel series *The Coldest City*. She plays an MI6 agent sent to Berlin to expose a traitorous double agent and secure dangerous Russian intelligence that could extend the Cold War for decades. Besides the Russians, she has to deal with the wacky Berlin bureau chief played by James McAvoy (who was so creepy in *Split*), a French intelligence femme fatale, and questioning by

time Uber driver in Chicago and aspiring stand-up comedian hoping for a break. Emily, played by Zoe Kazan, is a recently divorced grad student with parental issues of her own. They create winning screen chemistry even as their relationship is severely tested. Dramatic comedy doesn't get any better than this.

Most Beautiful Island

The title of this U.S./Spain co-production, awarded the grand jury prize in the narrative competition, is ironic to say the least. Contemporary Manhattan is the setting for a disturbing story that Spanish writer-director-actress Ana Asensio has sourced from her own experience. She plays Luciana, a struggling young undocumented immigrant taking odd jobs to get by. Tempted by a large promised payoff, Luciana is unknowingly drawn into a deadly situation by another immigrant named Olga, whom she considers a friend. The tension builds as the desperate circumstances of these women are exploited, subjecting them to terrifying risks for the gratification of others. Hint: not recommended for anyone with arachnophobia.



skeptical bosses. The tangle of murderous espionage and intrigue features some wild fight scenes, escapes, and jaw-dropping twists, set to a propulsive musical score. Theron is terrific as the kickass lethal weapon who outsmarts the rest. The movie, scheduled for a July release, quotes Machiavelli: "It's a double pleasure to deceive the deceiver." Mission accomplished.

Here are my picks for other SXSW dramatic selections that merit attention.

The Big Sick

Although I skipped it at Sundance, this audience favourite, also due for a July release, is among the year's best movies. Don't be put off by the title, which refers to the real-life medical crisis suffered by Emily Gordon, who co-wrote the sharp comedic script with her husband, Kumail Nanjiani (best known as the Pakistani guy on the hit HBO series *Silicon Valley*). The movie, directed by Michael Showalter, tells the story of how they became a couple despite the hostility of Kumail's family determined that he marry a Pakistani woman. Kumail plays himself as a some-

Dara Ju

This film by first-time director and screenwriter Anthony Onah also draws deeply on personal immigrant experience. The protagonist, Seyi Ogunde (Aml Ameen), is an upwardly mobile young Nigerian immigrant, a Harvard grad with a rich white girlfriend, an outsider trying to fit in and make it as a Wall Street financial analyst while living in New Jersey with his traditional mom, sister and resented father who is disabled by a stroke. Things fall apart as Seyi gets drawn into a lifestyle of party drugs and unethical financial scheming for which he takes the fall. He's the suspicious black man in another arresting scene. But as the title, which means "better," suggests, there is a road back that involves both forgiveness and a coming to terms with his roots.

The Light of the Moon

Writer-director Jessica Thompson's feature debut, which earned an audience award, stars Stephanie Beatriz as Bonnie, a successful young architect living in Brooklyn with boyfriend Matt (Michael Stahl-David). One night after having drinks with co-work-



Gerald Schmitz

FILM PREMIERE — Director David Leitch (left), Charlize Theron, producer Beth Kono, and James McAvoy, answer questions after the Atomic Blonde premiere March 12 at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas.

ers in a bar, she is brutally sexually assaulted. She staggers home before going to a hospital where she cannot conceal the traumatic truth from Matt and evidence is collected in a rape kit. But the shaken Bonnie has great difficulty confiding in others — dissembling to family, friends, and fellow workers. She doesn't cope well with the consequences, personal or legal, so even her most supportive relationships suffer. The all-too-real complications of that agonized aftermath are what make this film so unsettling.

The Most Hated Woman in America

I confess to being fascinated by this incredible true story directed by Tommy O'Haver, available on Netflix since March 24. Veteran actress Melissa Leo commands the screen in the role of militant atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair. The scourge of conservative Christian hypocrites, she wore the "most hated" epithet as a badge of honour. As a single mom in Pittsburgh, she and son Bill gained notoriety in a case that resulted in the 1963 U.S. Supreme Court decision ending prayer in public schools. The blunt-spoken iconoclast would go on to found a national American Atheist movement with headquarters in Austin, accumulating significant undeclared offshore wealth. Her fatal mistake was to employ ex-con David Waters (Josh Lucas) leading to a 1995 kidnapping and grisly murder not properly investigated for years. The movie jumps around too much to be fully satisfying, but Leo — who gives a terrifying portrayal as a strict Catholic nun in the Sundance drama *Novitiate* — makes it one to watch.

Mr. Roosevelt

Noël Wells is a delight as writer-director and lead actress in this offbeat film about an expired cat and mixed-up relationships. It was a popular recipient of the SXSW Louis Black "Lone Star" award. Wells plays the impetuous Emily who has left Austin and

boyfriend Eric (Nick Thune) for L.A. where she has a drudge editing job while struggling to make it as a comedian. Her sudden return is prompted by the passing of her beloved kitty cared for by Eric and new perfectly successful girlfriend Celeste (Britt Lower). The fur flies as sad-hilarious situations escalate and the possibility hovers of Emily and Eric getting their groove back.

Flesh and Blood

Mark Webber is the writer, director and central character in this amazing hybrid of documentary and drama drawn from his actual life and family situation in Philadelphia. Mark faces a challenging readjustment after returning from a prison sentence to live with his real mom, Cheri Honkala, and geeky half-brother Guillermo Santos, a bullied 13-year-old diagnosed with Asperger's. Having survived a tough environment of abusive failed relationships, addictions and homelessness, Cheri shows uncommon strength as a prominent social and political activist (she was the Green party's 2012 vice-presidential candidate). The raw realism is especially powerful in the estranged father-son encounters between Guillermo and actual dad, "Big G," and Mark, and the violent alcoholic father he literally had not seen since the age of five.

The Ballad of Lefty Brown

Veteran actor Bill Pullman, terrific as the aging grizzled cowboy Lefty, also appears in the festival favourite from Sundance, *Walking Out*; both framed by Montana's rugged expansive vistas. Helmed by Jared Moshé, this historical saga tells of rough frontier justice as the interests behind the coming of the railroad clash with defenders of the open range. When Lefty's longtime patron, Eddie Johnson (Peter Fonda), elected senator from the state, is murdered, he's left in charge of Johnson's ranch along with the widow Laura (Kathy Baker). Even as Lefty seeks the killer, he is framed for the crime. Treachery

is afoot leading up to the office of Jimmy Bierce (Jim Caviezel), an erstwhile friend and fellow rider who is now the governor with bigger ideas. The evidence of this tall-in-the-saddle morality play shows a western genre that is alive and kicking.

Small Town Crime

In this noirish tale from writer-directors Ian and Eshom Nelms, John Hawkes sinks his teeth into the role of washed-up alcoholic ex-cop Mike Kendall who seeks a measure of redemption by investigating the murder of a young woman who had fallen into drug addiction and prostitution. Ignoring police warnings and pretending to be a private investigator, Mike gets himself hired by the girl's wealthy grandfather (Robert Forster) and teams up with a pimp named "Mood" (Clifton Collins Jr.), while putting at risk his adopted African-American sister Kelly (Octavia Spencer) and her husband. Serial homicide, blackmail and shootouts ensue to a satisfying conclusion midway through the closing credits.

Small Crimes

Evan Katz directs another noirish crime story co-written with Macon Blair from a novel by David Zeltserman. The central character is another outcast ex-cop, Joe Denton (the excellent Nikolaj Coster-Waldau from *Game of Thrones*), who's served a six-year sentence for attempted murder. Returning to his parents' home he increasingly clashes with a disapproving religious mom (Jacki Weaver), though it's his dad (Robert Forster, also in *Small Town Crime*) who will deliver the coup de grace. Joe is spurned by his estranged ex-wife and two daughters while getting entangled in more deadly scenarios involving a corrupt lawman (Gary Cole), a nurse turned co-conspirator love interest (Canadian Molly Parker), and an ex-army buddy (Blair) primed for a shooting rampage. Watch for it coming to Netflix.

— SXSW, page 21

Few appreciate difficult, undervalued work of serving

Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



I know a woman from Nepal who is named Durga, after the Hindu warrior goddess who battles evil and demonic forces. I know a Lithuanian woman named Juste (pronounced Yusta). I know a Québécoise named Véronique, and an Iraqi woman named Kaleeda. Chazia is from Pakistan. Claudia is from Peru. Yasmin is from Trinidad.

What do these women have in common, aside from their exotic names?

For one thing, they're all immigrants — except for Véronique, whose family is from Quebec (and there are sovereigntists who would argue the point).

For another thing, they are all fluent in at least two languages. Véronique speaks four, and Yasmin is studying Chinese.

They are all highly accomplished in their individual ways.

Aside from being multilingual, Véronique holds three university degrees.

Chazia is a track and field athlete — the only female member of Pakistan's Olympic team at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. A Catholic, she was hampered in her training by the strictures against women appearing in public in less than traditional Muslim attire, and

would run after dark with her brother keeping pace beside her on a bicycle. When she ran in qualifying races in the daytime, crowds would gather to throw stones and vegetables. Eventually, fearing for her safety, she came to Canada, where she competed in the 2011 Knights of Columbus Indoor Games in Saskatoon.

Kaleeda, a Chaldean Catholic, told me that she wept when she learned Saddam Hussein had been executed. She recognized that Saddam was a brutal dictator, but at least under his regime it was safe to walk the streets of Baghdad. When the U.S.-led coalition invaded in 2003 — in an action dubbed "Operation Iraqi Freedom" — the city became a perilous place for a woman to be alone, even in the daytime, and Kaleeda's family fled to Canada.

These women have one more thing in common: they are all servers at local restaurants in Saskatoon and Humboldt.

It would be a mistake to assume that waiting on tables was the only job they could get. "I'm not 'just a server,'" Véronique says. "I do it because I love the work." She likes meeting people, and she gets satisfaction from serving them.

Few people appreciate how difficult and exacting a job it can be. First of all, you have to be pleasant all the time, and no one else I know can manage that. Not all servers can, either, of course — a few I have met have been breathtakingly rude — but they pay the penalty in lost tips and eventually a lost job.

They always have to be presentable; frequently they are better dressed than the people they serve.

They must also have good memories. I have seen servers take orders from a table of five without writing anything down, and then unerringly placing the right dish

before the right person when their orders were ready.

They must be in good shape, for the job is intensely physical. A typical server will cumulatively walk several miles between the kitchen and their tables during a shift, often carrying heavy dishes piled high with food.

They must have an almost preternatural sense of balance. You see them walking among the tables and booths with sometimes four or five plates in their hands and on their arms.

They also seem to have a high tolerance for pain. More than once I have taken a plate from a server

and nearly dropped it because it was too hot to handle.

Another thing these women have in common is that they are all paid minimum wage. If an enlightened government happens to raise it, then servers' pay will go up — otherwise, as one woman told me the other day, "I haven't had a raise in nine years." She relies on tips to keep herself and her daughter above the poverty line.

Servers in our society tend to be undervalued, and the really good ones rarely get the recognition they deserve. Simple justice would dictate that they be paid a living wage.



Gideon

TAXING WORK — Few people appreciate how difficult and exacting it is to work as a server.

Even though not alike, great friends can become family members

By Caitlin Ward

It was this past Triduum that one of my best friends realized just how different we are from one another. She had planned a launch for her first book of poetry, and it fell on Holy Thursday. The night before, I told her that at the very least I would be quite late.

"I think I'm playing Peter in the Gospel story," I told her. "So I won't be there until after eight."

Back to the Family

By Jetho Tull

She wasn't sure what that meant, but she took it in stride. It was later in the evening, when she told us some funny stories about her experiences being a keynote speaker at a sex conference, that she turned to me and said, "We live very different lives."

She and I have been friends since our first year of university. She had signed up to work on our college's newspaper, and I asked if she would be interested in co-editing it with me.

Actually, we became more

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

than friends. She had moved far away from her family up north to come to university. She felt isolated by being in the south, isolated from her culture, and alienated by a rural, predominantly white community that didn't understand her experience or her struggles. She became a regular fixture at my family home over the course of the next two years. Our friendship extended to include my parents, and then my sister, who lived an hour away in Saskatoon at the time.

We drank tea and ate oranges every Thursday night for a whole school year — she and another friend would show up unannounced at the door after they finished their shifts in the computer lab and the library. They'd often stay until after midnight.

She and I moved away and came back to Saskatchewan at different times as we pursued school and aspirations and hare-brained schemes. Over the course of the years, regardless of where we were in the world or how often we talked, she was always one of my best friends. When my mother went into the hospital with a hemorrhagic stroke almost nine years ago, she came to the hospital and waited with us during my mom's surgery. At that time of night only family is allowed so she told the guard she was our cousin. The guard, who hap-

pened to be a friend of our family, said he could see how she looked like me. I'm still not sure if he was fooled, or if he was giving us a pass because she wanted to be there and we needed her to be there. When her marriage broke up a few years later, I was at her house almost every day for a month.

On Good Friday of this year she and I spent most of the evening together. She told me about her book launch, about how fun it had been but also how it felt like a lot of pressure. Was this the direction her life was supposed to take? She was hilariously concerned that things wouldn't be open because it was Good Friday. I think it's the first time she ever noticed that the Triduum was a thing. She was supposed to go up north to be with her family for Easter, but a snowstorm north of Prince Albert kept her in Saskatoon.

I invited her to my parents' house for supper on Sunday. She came over, tried to like the vegan icing on the cupcakes I made until I told her I didn't think it was very good, either. She asked how many hours I had been in church the past three days. I told her it had only been six or seven hours, which I thought sounded reasonable but apparently isn't. We drank wine and chatted. She showed my parents the dedication in her book, a litany of women

who had meant a lot to her and what she admired about them, and second from the bottom was my name: "speak like Caitlin."

At supper she told my parents, possibly for the first time, how much their friendship had meant to her when we first met. The fact that our house had always been open to her was something that got her through some difficult years.

I think this past Triduum was the first time we both realized just how very different we are from one another. While I was at Holy Thursday service she was launching a funny, edgy book of poetry about sex. But in certain ways we've been a lot alike: we're both ambitious, determined, and close to our families. We both write, albeit in different ways and about different things. We both do our best to balance our personal ambition with the needs of our families. And now she calls my parents auntie and uncle. I am cousin to her, and auntie to her six-year-old daughter.

But I suppose that's the thing about family. You don't have to be alike at all to mean this much to one another.

My telephone wakes me in the morning
Have to get up to answer the call.
So I think I'll go back to the family
Where no one can ring me at all.

Living this life has its problems
So I think that I'll give it a break.
Oh, I'm going back to the family
'Cause I've had about all I can take.

Master's in the counting house
Counting all his money.
Sister's sitting by the mirror
She thinks her hair looks funny.

And here am I thinking to myself
Just wondering what things to do.

I think I enjoyed all my problems
Where didn't I get nothing for free.
Oh, I'm going back to the family
Doing nothing is bothering me.

I'll get a train back to the city
That soft life is getting me down.
There's more fun away from the family
Get some action when I pull into town.

Everything I do is wrong,
What the hell was I thinking?
Phone keeps ringing all day long
I got no time for thinking.

And every day has the same old way
Of giving me too much to do.

Keep our ears tuned to the voice of the Lord



Liturgy and Life

Deacon Bob Williston

My mother was a non-licensed real estate dealer when I was growing up. We moved on an average of once every 10 months, as she bought a fixer-upper and with some paint and a few improvements would sell it for a little more than what she paid for it. Since this was in Vancouver in the 1950s and '60s, I can't imagine the money she could have made if she were wheeling and dealing in today's market!

There was always one remark she would make when looking at a potential house to buy that seemed undesirable to her. "It's so UNINTERESTING!" she would say. I can just hear her voice, as clear as if it were yesterday.

Rev. David Cottingham was my partner on the Redemptorist Mission Team for almost 30 years. As summer ended and the fall schedule of missions came closer, David would say: "I'm starting to paw at the ground," anxious to get on the road and start a new year of travel. I can hear his voice as if it were yesterday.

My Uncle Mark from Toronto came to our wedding in Sarnia. When asked to get up and say a few words, my uncle said: "Well, Sarnia isn't the end of the world . . . but

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

you can see it from there!" That was 40 years ago and I can still hear him complete with all the comedic timing and delivery of a Jack Benny.

What are the voices you hear in your head and heart? Is it the voice of a spouse, parent, a teacher, a sibling? What are the ones that have stuck with you over the years and do you recall the events surrounding the voices?

Most especially, the voices in our heads that put us down, belittle us, or make us feel less than valuable are voices that create great difficulties when it comes to building self-confidence, self-esteem and courage to take risks. Rev. Henry Nouwen calls this putting ourselves "under the curse." The negative things that are repeated over and over seem to affirm or confirm something we feel is negative or bad about us. We seem to hear these negative voices more loudly than the positive ones.

Henry Nouwen suggests we ought to strengthen the positive voices that come our way. He calls this "putting ourselves under the blessing." Peter, in today's second reading, has a tender way of addressing us. He calls us

Fourth Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:14a-36b-41
	Psalm 23
May 7, 2017	1 Peter 2:20b-25
	John 10:1-10

"Beloved." He reminds us that Jesus has borne our sins in his body. Though we have strayed, we have been called back by Jesus, the Good Shepherd. He reminds us that Jesus will be the "guardian of our souls."

So, planting the voice of Jesus in our hearts and minds will mean we can put our very selves under the protection of his blessing. He will guard over us. We can trust in him.

Jesus would often say he heard the voice of his Father. "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." Even in the depths of his suffering, Jesus would cry out for the voice of his Father. "My God, my God, why

have you abandoned me?"

I'm sure it was a sunny pastoral scene that came to mind when Jesus said to his disciples: "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." Where and when have you heard the voice of Jesus calling your name? How do you distinguish between his voice and your own inner voice? What events in your life have led you to realize it was really his voice and not your own?

Sometimes it takes moments of silence, listening to his word, some prayer, some good spiritual direction and some deeper reflection into the mystery of his presence in and around us to better have an ear tuned to the voice of the Lord. But it almost always is a voice attached to some event. It could be a tragic one, like someone's death or illness. It could be a positive thing, like the birth of a newborn or getting a new job.

Jesus reminds us today in the Gospel that his voice is one that will lead and guide us. His voice will console, challenge and prod us into new pastures, new possibilities and new ways of approaching life. His resurrection is our assurance of final victory over sin and death. Cling to his voice. Listen to his calling and mission and he will lead you.

In honour of my Uncle Mark's life, I wrote a song for his funeral that fits with the Shepherd's voice in today's Gospel:

"We'll hear your voice in the times when we gather.
We'll hear your voice in the stories we tell.
We'll hear your voice in the sunshine and laughter.
We'll hear your voice, telling us all is well."

Come to think of it, wasn't this the way the Gospel message of Jesus first got told? The disciples began by describing his actions and his message. In that way, they could keep in their memories the voice of Jesus and what he said in different places. May the voice of the risen Lord be in your heart always!

Happy and blessed Easter Season, Beloved!

Good friends are separated by 500 years of misunderstanding

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



The heart has its reasons, says Pascal, and sometimes those reasons have a long history.

Recently I signed a card for a friend, a devout Baptist, who was raised to have a suspicion of Roman Catholics. It's something he still struggles with, but, don't we all! History eventually infects our DNA. Who of us is entirely free from suspicion of what's religiously different from us? And

what's the cure? Personal contact, friendship, and theological dialogue with those of other denominations and other faiths does help open our minds and hearts, but the fruit of centuries of bitter misunderstanding doesn't disappear so easily, especially when it's institutionally entrenched and nurtured as a prophetic protection of God and truth. And so, in regards to Christians of other denomina-

tions, there remains in most of us an emotional "dis-ease," an inability to see the other fully as one of our own.

And so in signing this card for my separated Christian friend, I wrote: "To a fellow Christian, a brother in the Body of Christ, a good friend, from whom I'm separated by 500 years of misunderstanding."

Five hundred years of misunderstanding, of separation, of suspicion, of defensiveness — not something that's easily overcome, especially when at its core there sit issues about God, truth, and religion. Granted, there has been much positive progress made in the past 50 years and many of the original, more blatant misunderstandings have been overcome. But the effects of the historical break with Christianity and the reaction to it are present today and are still seen everywhere, from high church offices, to debates within the academy of theology, to suspicions inside the popular mind.

Sad how we've focused so much on our differences, when at the centre, at the heart, we share the same essential faith, the same essential beliefs, the same basic moral codes, the same Scriptures, the same belief in afterlife, and the same fundamental tenet that intimacy with Jesus Christ is the aim of our faith. As well, not

insignificantly, today we also share the same prejudices and biases against us, whether these come from fundamentalists within other religions or whether these come from over-zealous, over-secularized post-Christians within our own society.

To someone looking at us from the outside, we, all the different Christian denominations, look like a monolith, one faith, one church, a single religion, our differences far overshadowed by our commonality. Sadly we tend not to see ourselves like this from within, where our differences, more often than not based upon a misunderstanding, are seen to dwarf our common discipleship.

Yet the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us that, as Christians, we share *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all of us*. At its most essential level, that's true of all of us as Christians, despite our denominational differences. We are one at our core.

Granted, there are some real differences among us, mostly though in terms of how we understand certain aspects of the church and certain issues within morality, rather than on how we understand the deeper truths about the nature of God, the divinity of Christ, the gift of God's Word, the gift of the eucharist, and the inalienable dignity and destiny of all human beings. Within the hierarchy of truth this essential core is what's most important, and on this essential core we essentially agree. That's the real basis of our common discipleship.

Ecclesially, the issues that divide us focus mostly on church authority, on ordination to min-

istry, on whether to emphasize word or sacrament, on how to understand the presence of Christ in the eucharist, on the number of sacraments, on the place of sacramentals and devotions within discipleship, and on how Scripture and tradition interplay with each other. In terms of moral issues, the issues that divide us are also the "red button" issues within our society as a whole: abortion, gay marriage, birth control, and the place of social justice within discipleship. But, even on these, there's more commonality than difference among the churches.

Moreover, today the differences on how we understand many of the ecclesial and moral issues that divide us are more *temperamental than denominational*, that is, they tend to be more a question of one's theology than of one's denominational affiliation. Granted, classical denominational theology still plays in, but the divisions today regarding how we see certain ecclesial and moral issues, be that ordination, gay marriage, abortion, or social justice, are less a tension between Roman Catholics and Protestants (and Evangelicals) than they are between those who lean temperamentally and theologically in one direction rather than the other. It's perhaps too simplistic to draw this up in terms of liberal versus conservative, but this much at least is true, the fault line on these issues today is becoming less and less denominational.

The earliest Christian Creed had but a single line: *Jesus is Lord!* All Christians still agree on that and so we remain brothers and sisters, separated only by 500 years of misunderstanding.

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Discernment House offers unique faith experience

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — At Discernment House, the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary offer a unique housing and faith experience to young women seeking a place to live while studying or working in Saskatoon.

"The living, eating, praying, working, playing together is a mutually enriching experience," says Sister Cindy Lewans, PM. "This is all within a home, a house of hospitality."

Sister Lucie Hamel, PM, adds: "Sharing our home and our lives with young women is a huge blessing for us. Each year the young women bring a newness to our community life and as we live and pray together, we challenge each other to ever fresher ways of responding to the challenges of living the gospel values."

Located near the University of Saskatchewan, Discernment House becomes home every fall for a new group of young women who are seeking affordable rent, an experience of community, a homey atmosphere, and opportunities for faith growth through prayer, reflection, spiritual direction and service.

"Discernment House is first of all a community, companions on the journey of faith in Christ," stresses Lewans.

"Weekday mornings begin with lauds and mass, shared not only with those who live within the house but also people from the city. We are nourished by the eucharist and the community which gathers, and a bond has grown over the years. Weekly community meetings give us the chance to pray with the Word, to build community, and offer a chance to help each other, (and) to laugh," she says.

Ongoing spiritual direction is also offered to the young women who come to live at Discernment House, notes Hamel. This is "an opportunity to savour one's experience of God's love in a unique way. It is a privileged space for reflection, for growing in awareness of one's deeper identity." She describes spiritual direction as a "path to greater peace and freedom" that helps to "carry one's experience of grace, of the divine, into all of life."

Tram Nguyen, an international student from Vietnam who is working on her masters in educational administration, said she appreciates the spiritual benefits of living with the sisters at



Sister Lucie Hamel, PM

DISCERNMENT HOUSE — Established in Saskatoon in 1986, Discernment House provides an experience of community, prayer and spiritual growth to young women who come to live with the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary.

Discernment House.

"On my journey with God, which is by far reinforced by the Sisters of The Presentation of Mary, I find myself listening to God more," says Tram, who is in her second year at Discernment House. "Now I know how to pray with the scriptures. I am starting to have my favourite gospels, as I feel like Scripture speaks directly to me. This is my very new experience that I never thought I would have."

Community life at Discernment House has also made a big difference to Tram. "As an international student living far away from home, the Discernment House is truly my warm shelter, where I have a community living experience. We share our thoughts and concerns, enjoy tasty homemade meals all together, exchange gifts at Christmas, celebrate Thanksgiving and Easter, tell jokes, have fun, discuss the Gospels, share our living experience with God, and pray for people and for one another."

She adds: "Many of my external and internal challenges are overcome thanks to my strong spirit fostered by prayer life in this house."

Another student from Vietnam, Nhi Nguyen, is living at Discernment House while she studies English. "I came in September and I'm so happy and comfortable living here at Discernment house. We share our lives and work together every day," says Nhi.

"When I have some troubles in my life, I can share with them. Especially, one of the sisters helps me to study English so much. She is always willing to help me whenever I ask. The food here is so good — I really like the cookies and cakes, which the sisters bake. Sometimes we have parties and play games together," she says. "For me, the highlights are that sisters always pray — they care about me and my family."

— **PROGRAMS, page 15**

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It's never too late to answer God's call to religious life

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

It is never too late to answer God's call to religious life.

Sister Christine Carbotte took her first vows with the Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada last October at 53 years old. She hasn't looked back since.

"One of the really cool things about our spirituality is the looking for more," said Carbotte. "When I look back, I see that I am getting more and more satisfied in this life and this is really where I'm called to be."

Carbotte had thought about religious life as a teenager, but it wasn't until she was 48 that she really examined how she wanted to find fulfilment.

Many men and women discover their call to religious vocation at a later stage in life. In fact, Rev. Thomas Scott, executive director of the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), said it is becoming increasingly common in North America.

"For many years there was a distinction between vocations and late vocations, but I think this has broken down both in the case of priesthood and religious life," he told The Catholic Register in an email.

"In the case of contemplative and monastic communities, it is often the case that candidates enter somewhat later in life."

Although CRC does not have access to data specific to Canadian vocations, Scott said CRC members have been seeing the American trend play out here for years.

Scott said many factors can contribute to later vocations. One issue prevalent in the United States is that religious communities are postponing the formation program for men and women with significant student debt.

"I know in the United States, the average age for ordination to the priesthood is about 35, which indicates that candidates began seminary studies at 28 or 29," he said.

Redemptorist Father Graham Hill was ordained last June at the age of 54. He said he had always felt the pull to priesthood, but it wasn't until he was 45 that he was really able to listen to God's call.

"Yes, I'm a newly ordained priest, but I do have all of that experience in industry and in life, and I think that equips me really well for ministry," said Hill, who is now working as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Saskatoon.

"Many problems that people are facing in their daily life were problems I faced. . . . This notion of late vocations is actually important and a great gift to the church because we bring so many different skills to the table."

Brother Denis Claivaz said in his five years as vocations director for the Presentation Brothers in Toronto, he has worked with two young men and 11 in middle age.

Claivaz said there are two norms that exist for his congregation — one in the developing world and one in the developed world.

"The vast majority who are joining our congregation are in Africa. That tradition is holding on, that people are coming in at the end of their education in their mid-20s," said Claivaz. "In the developed world, very few young people are joining religious life. Those who are showing any interest are those who are in their 40s and 50s."

Claivaz said these middle-aged noviciates bring "a whole new spectrum to religious life" because they have a list of qual-



NEVER TOO LATE — Sister Christine Carbotte (right) took her first vows with the Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada last October at 53 years old. She hasn't looked back since.

ifications from their first life call.

Although older candidates may not be able to offer their community with as many years of service, they make up for it in the skills and experience. The biggest challenge in accepting older candidates is helping them shift from their individualistic living habits to that of community life.

"I found myself thinking what do I do with these invest-

ments? I'm used to having my own personal bank account. But when I stepped back I realized, I always had what I need," said Sister Michelle Gurlinski, 46, who took her first vows with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in Winnipeg last year.

"Everything is a gift and it's not like when we enter religious life, our needs aren't taken care of. We always have what we need."

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Church needs religious orders' courage, witness: pope

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Catholic religious orders must have the courage to start new forms of outreach, knowing that the only people who “never make mistakes are those who never do anything,” Pope Francis said.

“We will get things wrong sometimes, yes, but there is always the mercy of God on our side,” Pope Francis told 140 superiors general of men’s religious orders.

A transcript of questions and answers from the pope’s three-hour meeting with members of the Union of Superiors General last November was published Feb. 9 by the Jesuit-run journal, *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

Running through Pope Francis’ responses to the questions on youth ministry, religious life, his personal approach to the papacy

and evangelization was an emphasis on prayer, courage and, especially, discernment.

A lack of expertise in discernment, he said, “is one of the greatest problems that we have in priestly formation,” which focuses too much on “black and white” answers rather than on “the grey areas of life.”

“You look for the will of God following the true doctrine of the Gospel and not in the fixations of an abstract doctrine,” the pope told the superiors.

By choosing “Young people, faith and vocational discernment” as the theme for the synod of bishops in 2018, the pope said he hopes to draw universal attention to the importance of helping young people discover God’s call.

The decreasing number of priests and religious in the West, he said, is worrying, but some of

the newer religious communities that are attracting many youth are also a concern.

Some small, new religious orders “are really good and do things seriously,” usually with close support and guidance from a bishop, he said. “But there are others that are born not from a charism of the Holy Spirit, but human charisma, from charismatic people who attract others by their alluring human skills.

“Some are, I could say, ‘restorationists’: they seem to provide safety and instead they offer only rigidity,” the pope continued. “When I am told that there is a congregation that attracts many vocations, I confess, I am worried. The Spirit does not work with the logic of human success.”

In the end, the life of the community members will prove whether or not it is the Lord at

work, he said.

One of the tasks of religious orders in the church, he said, is to provide the charismatic and prophetic impulse that can keep the church, a diocese or parish from being totally absorbed with worldly concerns and keep its ministers from thinking they are “little princes.”

“You don’t need to become a cardinal to think of yourself as a prince,” Pope Francis said.

Clericalism is a danger to the church, as is the gulf sometimes existing between religious orders in a diocese and the local bishop and clergy, he said. “From a position of isolation, you cannot help one another.”

The task of the church is not to shore up its institutions, but to set out to help those who are materially or spiritually poor, the pope said.

One of the superiors present asked Pope Francis why he chose a series of Marian themes for the local celebrations of World Youth Day in 2017 and 2018, as well as for the international gathering in Panama in 2019.

“I did not choose them,” he said; the bishops of Latin

America did, “and it seemed a very good thing.”

The focus, the pope said, will be on the Mary of Catholic faith, “not the postmistress who sends out a letter every day saying, ‘My child, do this and then the next day do that.’”

The true Mary “is the one who generates Jesus in our hearts,” he said. “The trend of the Madonna superstar, who puts herself at the centre as a protagonist, is not Catholic.”

When he opened the session to questions, Pope Francis told the superiors they even could offer criticisms because “misunderstandings and tensions are part of life. And when they are criticisms that make us grow, I accept them, I respond.”

Asked later about how he maintains his serenity, the pope assured the superiors, “I do not take tranquilizers.” He said the Italians may be on the right track when they suggest that to be at peace, “you need a healthy dose” of “couldn’t care less.”

From the moment he was elected pope in March 2013, he said, he has had an experience of peace “and it has not left me.”



Paul Paproski, OSB

RELIGIOUS ORDERS — Some Benedictine monks are seen on tour at the Vatican. Catholic religious orders must have the courage to start new forms of outreach, knowing that the only people who “never make mistakes are those who never do anything,” says Pope Francis.

Prison ministry a rewarding experience

By Keri Kotyk

“... it causes me to tremble, tremble, ...” These words from the well-known hymn for Good Friday could also be used to describe the experience of spending the Easter Triduum with the inmates at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre (SCC). Once again this year it was a moving experience to spend time with the gentlemen at SCC.

Holy Thursday brought out 19 inmates for the mass of the Lord’s Supper, 12 of whom had their feet washed by Rev. Mark Blom. These men were humbled by the mere fact that a priest would kneel down and wash their feet in such an act of service. Six of the men were due to have their yard time, which is limited and therefore precious to them, on Thursday evening, but they chose to stay in the chapel for mass instead of going outside for their yard time.

On Good Friday, despite the

Kotyk is a member of St. Anne’s Parish in Saskatoon.

driving rain and chilling wind, 16 of the men and about 20 volunteers journeyed the way of the cross through the yard at SCC, with the inmates taking a turn reading a reflection for each station. With the different backgrounds and histories, and reasons for being incarcerated, the one thing all these men have in common is their love for Christ.

Each volunteer was asked to pair up with an inmate and journey together through the yard. Because we had more volunteers than inmates, I was the happy wanderer, milling around with everyone, which enabled me to observe. What I saw was touching: one gentleman kept holding open his jacket over his volunteer to help protect him from the wind and rain; another stepped aside from under the protection of an umbrella and invited another volunteer to take shelter there instead of him.

I wish all people could see the humanity within these inmates, instead of judging them by their actions, their mistakes. The Good Friday afternoon service with Rev. Mark Blom was an emotional

experience, especially the veneration of the cross. The humility, respect and awe evident in their eyes, posture and attitude was overwhelming. I was reminded of the words of St. Anne’s pastor, Rev. Matthew Ramsay, who said, “... if you look with love, you will see someone worthy of love ...” The key is to look with love, not judgment.

Easter morning brought 12 volunteers out to SCC to deliver a chocolate Easter bunny to each inmate. This is a wonderful opportunity to go out to all the units and greet each one individually. At 1 p.m. on Easter Sunday Rev. Graham Hill celebrated mass with 28 inmates and several volunteers. It was, once again, a meaningful celebration, with several inmates involved with the readings and intentions.

This will be my last year spending the Easter Triduum at SCC because of a move to Regina this summer, and I will miss this wonderful experience. If you have a compassionate heart and a love of people, I encourage you to get involved in this amazing ministry.

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Culture alone cannot be blamed for drop in vocations

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While there is a need to evangelize a culture that tells young people money equals success and commitments aren't forever, stopping the "hemorrhage" of people leaving religious orders also requires changes from the orders themselves, Pope Francis said.

"Alongside much holiness — there is much holiness in consecrated life — there also are situations of counter-witness that make fidelity difficult," the pope said during a meeting with members of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and representatives of religious orders.

The congregation held a plenary meeting in January which focused on "fidelity and abandonment," examining the factors that contribute to a lifelong commitment to religious vows or to leaving consecrated life.

According to the Vatican's Central Statistics Office, from the end of 2004 to the end of 2014, the number of religious-order priests in the world declined by more than 2,500 to just under 135,000; the number of religious brothers dropped by 471 to just over 54,500; and the number of women religious fell by almost 85,000 — 11 per cent — to about 683,000 religious.

Pope Francis, himself a Jesuit, said that in some cases it becomes clear over time that a person never truly had a vocation to religious life and it is right for that person to follow God's call elsewhere. But many other factors can influence a decision to leave, he said, including situations within an order or community.

"Such situations are, among others: routine, tiredness, the burden of running institutions, internal divisions, the search for power — 'climbers' — a worldly way of governing the institute, a service of authority that sometimes becomes either authoritarianism or a 'live and let live' attitude."

Pope Francis told the group that obviously it is more difficult for young people to make a lifelong commitment to a vocation when they are living in a culture where everything is provisional or



CNS/Paul Haring

HOPE-FILLED MESSAGE — Pope Francis greets the crowd after delivering his Easter message and blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican April 16. Pope Francis frequently encourages the People of God to "show the beauty of following Christ and radiate hope and joy."

temporary, where people are encouraged to pursue their dreams but leave a "door open" in case it does not work out and where "self-realization" is measured by money and power, not by fidelity to the Gospel and Gospel values.

Still, he said, the world of young people is "rich and challenging — not negative, but complex."

"We are not lacking young people who are very generous, who act in solidarity and are involved on a religious and social level, young people who seek a real spiritual life, young people who hunger for something different than what the world offers," he said. "There are marvellous young people and there are many."

But the young also include "many victims of the logic of worldliness, which can be summarized this way: searching for success at any cost, for easy money and easy pleasure," Pope Francis said.

The response of the church must be to reach out and "to infect them with the joy of the Gospel and of belonging to Christ."

The only way to attract young people to religious life and to help members stay, he said, is to "show the beauty of following Christ and radiate hope and joy."

"When hope diminishes and there is no joy," he said, "it's an ugly thing."

The community life of religious orders is essential, he said, and it must be nourished with community prayer, celebration of the mass, reception of the sacra-

ment of reconciliation, sincere dialogue among members, "fraternal correction, mercy toward the brother or sister who sins," and shared responsibility.

Perseverance in religious life, as with any vocation, requires the encouragement and support of others, the pope said, "because when a brother or sister does not find support within the community, he or she will seek it elsewhere."

"Many times great infidelities begin with little deviations or distractions," he said. "In this case, it is important to make St. Paul's exhortation our own: 'Awake, o sleeper!'"

If a vocation is a "treasure," Pope Francis said, then it must be handled with care, cultivated with prayer and strengthened with "a good theological and spiritual formation that defends it from the culture of the ephemeral and

allows it to progress solid in the faith."

Religious orders must make a commitment to training at least some of their members in the art of "accompaniment" and spiritual direction, he said.

"We can never insist enough on this need," he said. "It is difficult to remain faithful walking alone or walking with the guidance of brothers and sisters who are not capable of attentive and patient listening or who have not had adequate experience in religious life."

"All of us who are consecrated, whether young or not so young, need help appropriate to the human, spiritual and vocational moment we are living," he said.

A spiritual director or guide "must not create dependency," control or treat the other as a child, he said, but must help the person "discover the will of God and seek in everything to do that which is most pleasing to the Lord."

Discernment, he said, "does not only mean choosing between good and evil, but between good and better, between what is good and what leads to identification with Christ."

Permanent diaconate formation underway

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

The next steps for the formation of permanent deacons are now underway in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

With the decision to begin calling, forming and ordaining permanent deacons, the Diocese of Saskatoon joins many other Catholic dioceses across the world in restoring this ancient practice.

"The permanent diaconate, restored by the Second Vatican Council, in complete continuity with ancient tradition and the specific decision of the Council of Trent, has flourished in these last decades in many parts of the church — with promising results, especially for the urgent missionary work of new evangelization," states a 1998 Vatican declaration about the Formation of Deacons.

Several men are presently discerning a call to the permanent diaconate in the Saskatoon diocese.

Four men presently journeying through this year's diocesan Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation program have expressed interest in the permanent diaconate, says Diocesan Administrator Rev. Kevin McGee.

The JOY program has been identified as a prerequisite for those discerning the diaconate in our diocese, McGee explains. A diaconate formation committee is now determining next steps for these potential candidates in the year ahead.

It is presently envisioned that formation for deacons in the Diocese of Saskatoon will be undertaken on an individual basis, tailored to the education and experience of each candidate, says McGee. As with other holy orders, the discernment process involves both the candidate and the faith community.

The permanent diaconate is

open to married men over 35 years of age, and single men over 25 years of age — but details about how permanent deacons are formed and how they function varies from diocese to diocese.

Having the JOY program as a prerequisite year reflects a strong diocesan focus on service and outreach when it comes to forming permanent deacons, McGee notes.

In 2015, when Saskatoon's bishop announced plans to move forward with both the JOY program and the permanent diaconate in the diocese, he explained how both answer a profound need for outreach and service.

"We situated our discussion in the context of God's call and our response," said Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen (now Archbishop of Regina).

"We looked at different models of the diaconate, and eventually experienced a coming together of minds and hearts, as we were increasingly drawn toward a vision of the diaconate that would have as its primary focus a ministry of outreach which summoned the whole church to reach out in service and compassion to places of great need," said Bolen in 2015.

Running from September to June, JOY offers once-a-month

practical formation and engagement in justice and outreach, grounded in Catholic social teaching. Fifteen participants — men and women, lay and religious — are presently taking the inaugural year of the JOY program.

Applications are now underway for next year's JOY program.



Kip Yaworski

PERMANENT DIACONATE — Permanent Deacon Paul Labelle, who moved to Saskatoon from Ontario with his wife, Linda, several years ago, is presently serving the community of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in the Saskatoon diocese. Several men have come forward to discern the possibility of being ordained to the permanent diaconate in Saskatoon. (The photo was taken at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish St. Kateri procession/bannock and soup supper.)

To apply, or for more information, see the JOY website: www.joyformationprogram.com or contact Kate O'Gorman at (306) 659-5847 or email joy@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Those interested in discerning a call to the permanent diaconate in the diocese are invited to contact Diocesan Administrator Rev. Kevin McGee at (306) 659-5824 or email bishopoffice@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Other programs offered

Continued from page 12

Discernment House is also the location for other programs and retreats, including Advent and lenten retreats for groups such as Time Out For Moms and for Presentation of Mary associates, says Hamel. "These days offer precious moments away from busy active lives to pray, to share with each other, to be energized on our spiritual journeys."

Weekend discernment retreats are also regularly offered "to young men and women who are searching to grow in their awareness of God's action in their lives," adds Sister Vivianne Gareau, PM. For example, "one retreat gives time and guided reflection on one's personal sto-

ries, and how God is calling us to move forward."

Testimonies from weekend participants illustrate the impact of the discernment retreats. One writes that it was "an energizing experience of faith and community," while another says "the retreat showed me where I am at and gave me a direction forward." Another states: "I experienced healing and peace."

The Sisters of the Presentation of Mary are now taking applications to the Discernment House live-in program for the fall of 2017. For more information contact: Sister Lucie Hamel, PM, at (306) 244-0726 or email her at sk.dhouse@gmail.com or see the website at www.presentationofmary.ca

Two brothers find common ground in vocation

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

You might think two brothers who ended up studying for the priesthood in the same seminary at the same time would have a lot in common.

Not the Alemão brothers, Favin and Ryan.

“It’s not that we hate each other or anything,” said Deacon Favin, the youngest of the family of four at 29. “It is just that we are two radically different people. Our interests are very different, our taste in friends is very different, what we choose to do in our free time is very different; I don’t even know what he does in his free time.”

Next month the brothers will be ordained together into the priesthood to serve the Archdiocese of Toronto. The last time two brothers were ordained on the same day in Toronto was 1992.

Born of Indian parents in the Muslim-dominated United Arab Emirates, Favin and Ryan immigrated to Canada in 2001 with their parents and two older sisters. Growing up, Favin favoured the arts, passing time with music, literature and video games while his brother, Deacon Ryan, 33, opted for athletics and academics.

“We didn’t do too many things together,” said Ryan, who earned a bachelor’s degree in plant molecular biology from the University of Toronto. “We have a four-year age gap (and) when you’re younger that makes a difference. When I was in Grade 8 for example, he’d be in Grade 4 or 5 and I

wasn’t going to hang out with my younger brother.”

Even as the Alemão boys matured into men, their brotherly bond never fully blossomed as they continued to devote their lives to different pursuits. That was until both men found themselves at Serra House in Toronto for priesthood discernment in 2009 and pre-theology formation.

“This was probably the first thing that we ever really did together,” said Ryan, unable to pass up the opportunity to poke fun at his younger brother. “They should have sent me to a different place.”

Favin, laughing, said that would have been fine with him.

“I kind of wish he did” go to a different seminary, he said.

Favin, who began his priestly formation one year before Ryan in 2008, explained how the two were almost sent to separate seminaries.

“(They) didn’t want there to be conflict with there being two brothers there (at St. Augustine’s Seminary),” he said.

Ryan, who was able to carry over a year’s worth of philosophy credits from his bachelor’s degree program, also considered the consequences of having his brother

in the same seminary.

“I remember when I was going to Serra House that I had to be careful because my brother was there,” he said. “But to be honest it wasn’t the biggest concern on my mind. The bigger concern was whether or not I wanted to actually do this.”

Those concerns are in the past, as Ryan now looks toward May 13 when he and Favin, along with three others, will be ordained. And while the two followed very different paths prior to pursuing the priesthood, as priests they hope to accomplish the same thing: to instil a deeper social

aspect into parish life similar to that in which they were raised in the Middle East.

“I see the role of the priest as helping in developing the social side,” Favin said. “The priest can be something like a matchmaker or good host. That aspect of being a good host is essential.”

Favin added that a good priest will get to know each of his parishioners so that “when you talk to someone you find a connection with someone else.”

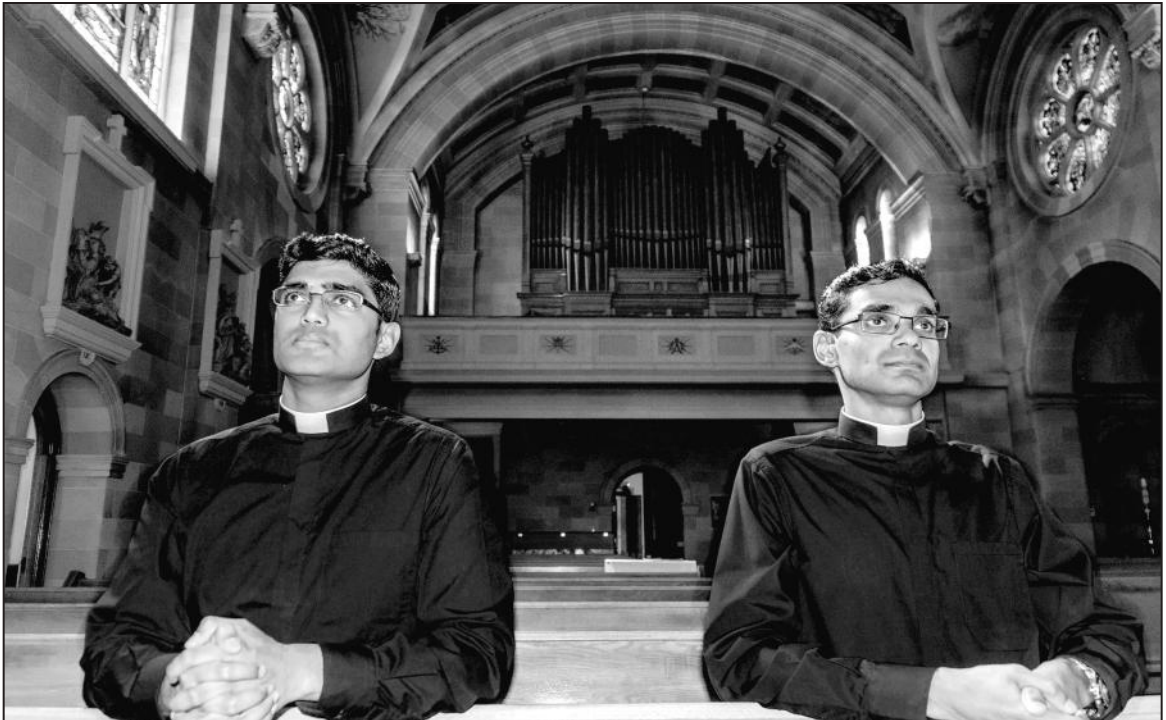
“You try to build little communities within your community,” he said. “People in Canada, they may have many connections but they don’t have very deep connections.”

Building upon this idea, Ryan recommends priests stand by the parish’s main entrance and briefly speak with parishioners, both prior to and after mass.

“That takes time to build those kind of relationships,” he said. “Some of the parishes in Toronto are so large that you can barely know anybody.”

Ryan discovered first-hand the importance of relationships after immigrating from Abu Dhabi at 17 with his father, a part-time security guard still living in Ajax, Ont., and mother, who passed away in 2015.

“The practice of our faith was very strong over there,” he said. “I wouldn’t say it (faith) was oppressed but we didn’t have the freedom that we have here. It would have strengthened my faith in a sense to have been able to



COMMON GROUND — Alemão brothers Favin, left, and Ryan, are separated by four years, but will be ordained together in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Catholic Register/Evan Boudreau

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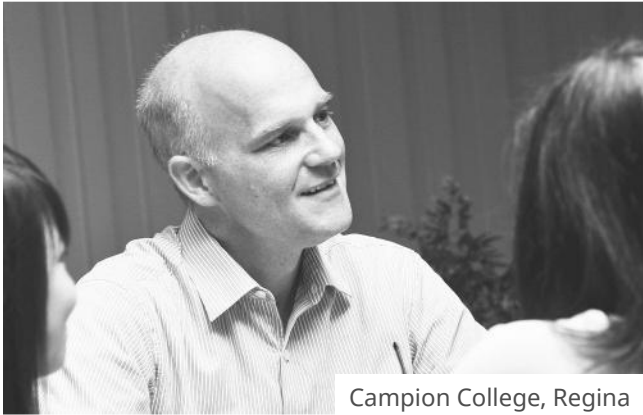
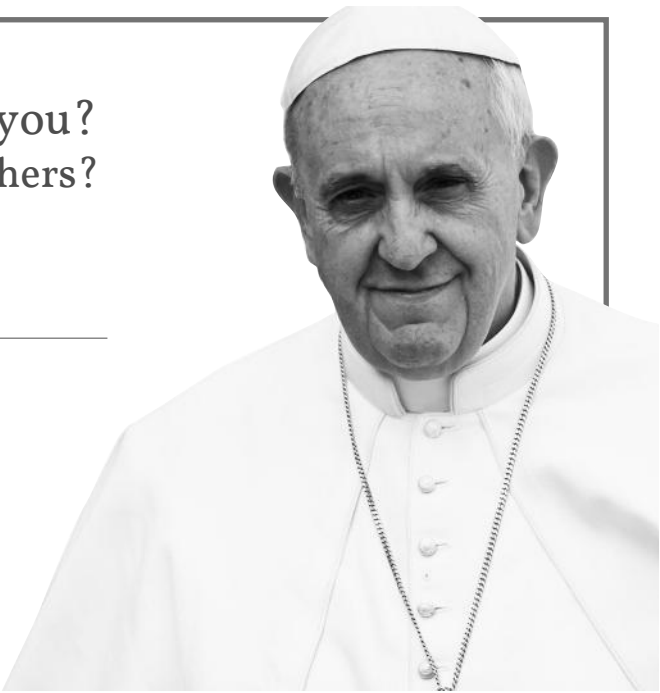
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Call to religious life leads to Sisters of Providence

By Rezebeth Noceja

“No matter what your plans are, if it is not what God wants for you, it will not happen.” I have wondered what God wants of me: “What if God wants me to

if you’re the first-born. However, the question about religious life haunted me. It was a constant push-and-pull because I had difficulty admitting that I was attracted to religious life.

I joined the Singles for Christ community who encouraged me to “heed the call.” I was already involved in the ministries, but I wanted something more. During a retreat a friend from the community suggested I put my discernment into action. Later another friend told me to visit convents to see the way of life and to know their charism. She suggested the Sisters of Providence in Edmonton as it is the nearest convent to Fort McMurray where I lived.

Although I tried to contact other congregations, it was the Sisters of Providence that I consciously tried to contact and in September 2015 I went for a week’s visit and retreat. During the visit I recalled my story from childhood in the Philippines to adulthood spent away from home, to Dubai and eventually to Canada. A Sister of Providence helped me to see that the bits and pieces of my past that led to my discernment of religious life. She highlighted the moments in my life where God was strongly present, even when I thought I was so far from God.

Where I grew up, the concept of religious life is usually that of contemplative life. I never knew

about apostolic communities until I met the Sisters of Providence. An important factor in my discernment was how I could be of practical help to society. When I learned that the Sisters of Providence go to the missions and are very much involved in society, I felt this to be a good match.

During my stay with them in

Edmonton I went to Anawim, a food bank in inner-city Edmonton, to help with ministering to the poor and I also went to a hospital to be with a sister who takes communion to the sick. As my stay finished I was happy, yet scared. Happy because I was beginning to feel at home, and scared because I knew what it meant. To me it felt like the missing piece of the puzzle

was found, and it could not be ignored.

When I finally started my application to enter as a candidate, I began to live with the Sisters of Providence. I was welcomed with love, and I know I am in the right community. I know too that God has plans for me as I continue to discern the call to religious life.



Sisters of Providence

Rezebeth Noceja

live a religious life?” It seemed a silly idea and for a few years I tried to avoid it. After all, it was never discussed in the family and it was out of the ordinary.

Filipino expectation dictates that after studies you work on your career and settle down with a spouse so you can give your parents grandchildren, especially

Rezebeth Noceja was received as a candidate to the Sisters of Providence on Dec. 18, 2016. She is now living in Calgary and in ministry with the Sisters of Providence.

Sisters answer urgent cry of migrants

By Sister Dolores Lavoie

A group of 10 sisters from eight different congregations and countries are responding to the urgent call of migrants in three different locations in Sicily. Vicky, one of our Congolese sisters, is working in Agrigento together with a Polish sister, and one from Eritrea, in a centre that welcomes more than 300 women and children.

With new arrivals constantly coming from the sea, the number can reach as many as 700 people. The sisters try to speak with the migrants in their native tongue, listening to them as they share their experiences of poverty, anger and suffering, and praying with those who ask the sisters to do so. They also prepare areas in the centre where the women and children can play and work.

The sisters also help in the Diocesan Caritas Centre, where meals are distributed. In addition, they go out on the different city streets, taking time to meet the immigrants individually. They also help build a positive relationship between the local people and the immigrants.

In another Sicilian village a group of four sisters works in a Welcoming Centre for young people. They also visit the sick in

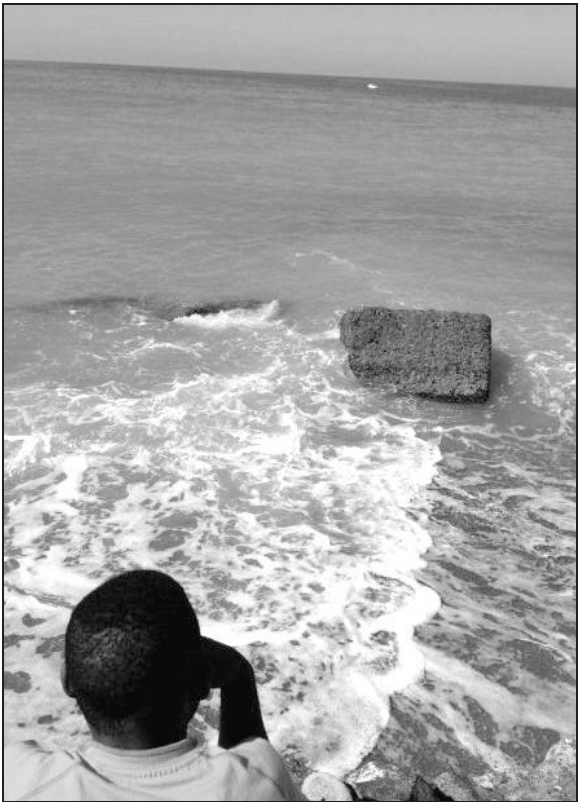
hospital, and in collaboration with the JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) they also visit people who are in prison. The sisters also visit those people who live on the street or under the bridges of the highway.

After contact with the sisters, a group of women involved in prostitution have started following religion classes! A spirit of dialogue and listening in a simple and humble way are the two main tools of contact. The different languages which are useful for communication with the migrants are: English, French, Arabic, and Swahili.

One of the hopes and plans of the sisters for the future is to promote new inter-congregational projects in the world.

P o p e

Francis asks us to create areas where evangelical values such as fraternity, welcoming of diversity, and reciprocal love may thrive. He has reminded us that Jesus’ last words were, “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation” (Mk 16, 15). This is what the sisters are trying to do.



PERILOUS JOURNEY — An African migrant gazes out at the Mediterranean Sea in Agrigento, Sicily, in April 2016. Sister Maria Gaczol of the Society of Sacred Heart says the boy was reflecting on his two friends who died at sea on their journey.

Newman Centre involvement turning point

Continued from page 16

actually dialogue . . . because when we were over in the Middle East we wouldn’t have had (those conversations freely).”

A turning point in Ryan’s life came when he stumbled upon the Newman Centre, a Catholic youth chaplaincy outreach at the University of Toronto. There, he experienced open dialogue about faith, which led him into his priestly vocation.

“For me the biggest thing was

going to a place like the Newman Centre,” Ryan said. “There is no such thing as a Catholic chaplaincy in the Middle East.”

Catholic chaplaincy heavily influenced his brother’s decision to become a priest as well.

“I wasn’t doing very well in my studies and I thought that the one thing that I have going for me is my faith,” he said, reflecting on his days as a secondary school student in Ajax. “So I told my high school chaplain that I was

interested in the priesthood and even though I don’t think I really was — I just sort of said that. I don’t know why I said that, partly it was because I wanted to win the chaplaincy award in my school and I won it . . . so it was a happy ending.”

After a couple more years and a number of retreats, Favin’s lukewarm attitude about the priesthood turned into a genuine desire.

“I wasn’t sure if this was what God was calling me to,” said Favin. “Finally I came to a come-and-see weekend here and I thought I might as well apply. I always thought that maybe I’ll be in turmoil if I’m called or not called, but that year was sort of it.”

And although their lives differ, the priesthood has bonded them together.

“I was like one sibling when a younger one comes along,” said Ryan. “I was like who is this guy coming in to ruin my life. It is only when you get to adulthood that that . . . disappears.”

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Married priests no magic remedy to clergy shortage



Everyday Theology

Louise McEwan

Pope Francis is open to the possibility of ordaining married men as priests, but don't get too excited. The Catholic Church moves at a glacial pace and a cadre of married priests won't be joining the clerical ranks anytime soon.

My initial reaction to the news was cynical. Ordaining married men seemed akin to inviting guys from the wrong side of the tracks into an old boys club that needs new members; it seemed like a convenient way to shut women out. But, upon reflection, I decided that was unfair. I believe married priests would be good for Roman Catholicism.

When Francis made the comment to the German weekly *Die Zeit*, he was referring to *virī probati*. The term refers to married Catholic men of strong faith and proven virtue, and who, if ordained, would likely be financially self-sufficient. He wasn't offering to remove the discipline of celibacy for seminarians, or suggesting that celibate priests could marry.

There are already a small number of married priests in North America and Europe, although these men are not from the ranks of *virī probati*. In 1980, then Pope John Paul II created a provision that allowed Protestant ministers who converted to Catholicism to receive holy orders. While the provision is now close to four decades old, married priests are still an exception, and their ordination represents a seismic shift in a church that is resistant to change.

Even with the provision, there is no automatic fast track into the priesthood for former Protestant clergymen. Requests go through a bishop to the pope, and are decid-

ed on a case-by-case basis. In addition to spiritual and doctrinal considerations, matters of reputation and economics are part of the equation.

Rev. Dean Henderson of the Diocese of Victoria is a former Anglican priest. He came to Catholicism with his wife and five children. Henderson describes the journey toward the Catholic priesthood as lengthy and arduous. It was also a time of extraordinary scrutiny for him and his family.

Henderson has a staggering amount of responsibility. He is chaplain at the University of Victoria; an assistant priest at the cathedral; director of the vocations awareness team; oversees the marriage preparation program; is a member of the Permanent Diaconal formation team; and is in charge of the council for promoting marriage and family life.

Men like Henderson are a boon to a church suffering from a lack of clerical vocations. Married priests are filling in gaps in an institution that is struggling, quite literally, with a lack of manpower. However, married clergymen present some unique challenges for a church with a celibate hierarchy.

A married priest, with a wife and family, costs more than a celibate priest. As congregations and Sunday collections dwindle, the church could shy away from ordaining married priests in the name of frugality.

It's clear from Henderson's responsibilities that the demands on a priest's time are significant. Priestly ministry is not a nine-to-five job. The time away from family can have a negative impact on married and family life. One wonders how a church that prohibits divorce would handle a marriage breakup amongst one of its priests.

Consideration must also be given to the priest's wife, who deserves to share in some way in her husband's relationship with the diocesan presbyterate. In Henderson's case the local pres-

byterate gradually welcomed his wife, Linda, inviting her to events that included mostly priests but also some other women.

"The nature of presbyterial fellowship is increasing to including women where it never used to," said Henderson.

In my view, the ordination of married men can foster inclusion of women in a patriarchal church. While not intentional, the wives of married priests may be playing an important role in bringing the perspective of women to the authority structures of the church. And while some may fear it, their presence could open the door for more meaningful involvement of women in all sorts of ministry, including positions of authority. (Of note, some dioceses, such as Victoria, already have women in key positions. In Victoria, women hold the positions of chancellor and financial officer.)

Any discussion on the subject of married priests must include a word on celibacy. In a culture that is focused on individual autonomy, self-gratification, and which is sexually permissive, a celibate priesthood seems archaic.

In Henderson's opinion, optional celibacy would increase attraction to the Catholic priesthood. Celibacy adds another dimension to the process of discernment; it is difficult "to figure out if you can give yourself in celibate love for the rest of your life to serve in the church."

As a married priest, Henderson believes he can help others understand and affirm the value of celibacy. "Theologically, celibacy is a different way of looking upon Christ's love for the church with the emphasis on heaven, whereas the married state is the love of Christ grounded in reality on the earth. It is the complementary flip side of the love of God for his people."

While married priests are part of the solution to the shortage of priests, they are no magic remedy. The shortage of celibate priestly vocations is a symptom of a larger problem. Society has changed



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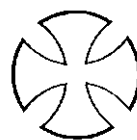
THE POSSIBILITY OF MARRIED PRIESTS — Married priests are filling gaps in an institution that is struggling with a lack of vocations, writes Louise McEwan. However, married clergymen present some unique challenges for a church with a celibate hierarchy, among them how to juggle family responsibilities with a demanding schedule.

dramatically in the last half-century and the faithful are dwindling in numbers. "In every way, we've got to make significant

changes in the way we do church," says Henderson.

Hopefully that change comes before the glaciers melt.

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Trail, B.C., resident Louise McEwan is a freelance writer, religion columnist and catechist. She has degrees in English and theology and is a former teacher. She blogs at www.faihtcolouredglasses.blogspot.ca. Reach her at louisemcewan@telus.net

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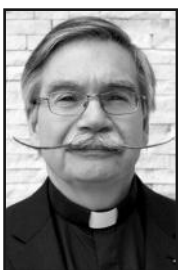
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Which of Jesus’ words are open to interpretation?

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By Thomas Reese, SJ

Much of the negative discussion around the pope’s apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* has focused on his opening the possibility of divorced and remarried Catholics receiving communion. His critics are quick to cite the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:

“Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate. . . . whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) and marries another commits adultery.”

Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

These statements are clear and definitive and end the discussion in the minds of the critics of Pope Francis. “Jesus said it. Case closed.” But is it?

I will not attempt here to do a scholarly analysis of the biblical issues involved in divorce and remarriage, but I think it is worth raising some questions about whether these quotes should end the discussion.

There are at least three reasons that these words from Jesus do not prove that Pope Francis is

wrong in opening up the possibility of some divorced and remarried Catholics receiving communion.

First, Jesus said a lot of things that we do not observe literally without exception.

In fact, in the Sermon on the Mount, right before Jesus’ words on divorce, he says, “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.”

And right after his words about divorce, he says, “Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.”

No one literally follows the teaching of Jesus on gouging out an eye or cutting off a hand. And only an infinitesimally small group of Christians refuse to take oaths in court because of the teaching of Jesus.

How do we determine which words of Jesus are to be treated as absolutes and which are open to interpretation?

Immediately following Jesus’ words on oaths, he says, “Offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on



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OPEN TO INTERPRETATION — Jesus said a lot of things that we do not observe literally without exception, writes Thomas Reese, SJ. “Today we live in a different world. . . . How can we be so certain that Jesus would respond in the same way to divorce today? . . . Divorce is not something to be shrugged off, but once it has happened and a marriage is dead, can there be a possibility for healing and life in the future?”

(your) right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.”

If Christians believed and practised this on a literal level, we would all have to be pacifists.

There are lots of other quotes from Matthew that we do not take literally, or at least don’t observe rigorously:

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal.”

“No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear.”

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

Then Peter approaching asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.”

“Amen, I say to you, it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel

to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

“Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven.”

If you observe all of these on a literal level, I will send your name to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Since we don’t, my question is, why do we insist on enforcing the words of Jesus on divorce literally without any exception, when we find all sorts of wiggle room in many of his other sayings?

Second, Jesus does not list any punishment for divorce and remarriage. He does not say such persons will be consigned to hellfire. He does not say they should be excluded from the Christian community. He does not even say they cannot go to communion. He does not say they cannot be forgiven.

Yet, he does list punishment for other sins. In Matthew 25, for example, he says:

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Any reading of the text would lead a neutral observer to conclude that Jesus was much more upset by people who ignored the needy than he was by divorced and remarried couples, yet the church has made a much bigger deal over divorce than our care of the poor. Why is that?

Elsewhere in Matthew, Jesus says, “Whoever will not receive you or listen to your words — go outside that house or town and shake the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of

Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”

And in another place, Jesus says, “whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna.”

When Jesus wants to threaten someone with hellfire, he knows how to do it! But even here, do you really take him literally?

The third point I would make is that it is important to ask why Jesus is making a big deal about divorce. Here the historical context is important. Note that Matthew only speaks of men divorcing women. In Matthew 19, he is responding to a question from the Pharisees, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?”

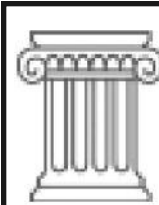
Where Jesus lived and taught, divorce was only available to men. (Mark, whose gospel was used in Rome, made the teaching of Jesus gender neutral because in Rome upper-class wives could divorce their husbands.)

I look upon Jesus’ teaching on divorce as the first feminist legislation, because a divorced woman was kicked out on the street with no assets or alimony. Her father would not take her back because she was a failure. No man would marry her. She had no education and few marketable skills. She would have to beg on the streets or prostitute herself.

It was not until the 19th century that divorced women began to get some protection from the civil law. As a result, divorce was clearly a devastating injustice to women for most of human history. Jesus quite rightly condemned it since practically all divorces were done by powerful men to powerless women.

Today we live in a different world. How can we be so certain that Jesus would respond in the same way to divorce today? True, most divorces involve sin, moral failure and great pain. True, in most divorces women get the short end of the stick. Divorce is not something to be shrugged off, but once it has happened and a marriage is dead, can there be a possibility for healing and life in the future?

Francis thinks so. So do I.



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How culture of resistance hinders child protection

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When a child-protection advocate resigned from a papal advisory board in early March, she did so because of growing frustration with persistent resistance and a “toxic” sense of superiority from some in the Roman Curia.

A number of church leaders on the front lines promoting child protection policies have also long noted the biggest challenge they face is a cultural one — an aversion to the unknown, playing it safe rather than speaking up, and denial

and defensiveness to protect an institution over a possible victim.

Despite four years of Pope Francis’ calls to break down walls erected out of fear and ivory towers built on arrogance, Marie Collins said a kind of enclave mentality could still be found in some corners of the Curia.

While there are many people who are “open and more willing to listen and learn,” the Curia and the Vatican tend to be “very much a closed-in system where people are talking to others with the same views and not being challenged at all, and so things appear normal

that are not actually normal,” said Collins, an Irish survivor of clerical sex abuse, who had served on the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors since its inception in 2014.

So when anything from the outside challenges the way things have traditionally been done, “it is almost an instinct to resist it, and that is what’s so difficult,” she told Catholic News Service after her resignation.

Attitudes that avoid or squelch open, respectful dialogue are pervasive in the wider church as well, she said, and they have “to be challenged right from the seminary on up.” Priests and religious who “know how damaging this clericalism is to the church” need to start “speaking up in their own ranks” and working to eradicate it.

One priest working from within is Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, a psychologist and academic vice rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is also a member of the papal commission for safeguarding; his work there focuses on what is needed in priestly and religious formation — specifically in selecting and fostering well-balanced, mature, responsible servants of Christ who truly seek to “live out what they promised to do.”

“From my understanding, this is the key to everything,” the priest told CNS.

There are many clear guidelines for proper formation, particularly from St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, he said, but “I don’t

think that many church leaders understand or at least they don’t show many signs that they follow all the papal instructions on this.”

Many problems that emerge after formation are because of “a growing gap between the human side and the spiritual side. People may still say mass and prayers, but they don’t feel connected to what they’re doing anymore. At a certain point it becomes unbearable and they act out or drop out,” he said.

“If you train people so they don’t show their real face and are threatened if they bring out the real issues” because they fear they will be shamed, ostracized or even dismissed from pursuing a vocation, then it is obvious people will not want to bring “the real stuff” out into the open, he added.

Seminaries and religious life, Zollner said, need to foster the trust that “it’s safe” to explore problems and tensions, and no one will be “dismissed, judged, shouted at or dealt with in a cold way when they show their real face.”

“I believe that many of the young men don’t feel invited to talk about normal things, things that are normal for young people, so they bury that,” which, according to St. Ignatius, he said, lets problems that could have been dealt with earlier “grow bigger and become like monsters.”

However, he said, seminarians must be responsible for their own formation, even if their formators are weak.

Understanding and being re-



CNS/Carol Glatz

CULTURE OF RESISTANCE — Marie Collins, an Irish survivor of clerical sex abuse, who had served on the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors since its inception in 2014, said a kind of enclave mentality could still be found in some corners of the Curia.



CNS/Paul Haring

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN — Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, and Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, attend a seminar on safeguarding children at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome March 23.

There’s a time for complaining and feeling defeated

Barefoot and Preaching

Leah Perrault



Over the last couple of weeks I have had several interesting conversations about complaining. One friend gave up complaining for Lent. (It did not go very well, in her opinion.) Someone else was telling me about how hard they are finding things at the moment and then said, “But I chose this and others have it so much worse, so I shouldn’t complain.” In the last several weeks my own grief has included a fair share of arguing with God about how things could have been. While I resonate with ditching bad habits and growing toward God, I want to know how, exactly, we are defining complaining.

Here’s the thing. For years leading up to my own journey into and through depression, I did not complain very much or very often. When things were hard, frustrating, terrifying, or awful, I kept a positive attitude, tried to see things differently, or compared my situation to something worse. When I was overwhelmed,

I worked harder and committed more. And eventually I found myself depressed and drowning in the hard stuff I had refused to let out. I have read many articles about ditching the complaining, and how bad it is for us, but what if there is time for complaining and feeling defeated?

I think pain has a higher density than ease and joy. Packed into small places, pain is pressurized. Just like my body braces a bit when I open a bottle, I am hesitant to open the containers holding my pain. It might pop in ways I cannot control. I do not like feeling out of control so I pretend until something or someone outside me pokes a hole in my denial, my pretending, my having it all together. That poke releases pressurized pain like a volcano, erupting with molten frustration that burns the people I love, and leaves ash in the air of my relationships. Then I beat myself up for failing and add more pain, and more resolve to keep the explosions from happening.

From the cross, which my church has recently spent contemplating, Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you for-

saken me?” (Mt 27:46). I went to graduate school to learn that this is the first line of Psalm 22, and that the Jewish practice was to refer to the Psalms by first line rather than by number. This psalm is a lament. It ends with trust that God will deliver the sufferer, but not before it says all the things we feel when we suffer. Alone. Despised. Misunderstood. Wrong. Ashamed. Afraid.

We are going to feel these things. Jesus felt them, and I dare say that it is even a gift of our existence that we have the capacity to feel them. Talking about them is not a sin, but clinging to them is. Whining about the challenges of my life with no desire to be loved, challenged, or grown makes me a victim and my loved ones weighted down and burdened; in the same way, denying my pain, stuffing it into the corners of my soul, and refusing to breathe it through my lips leaves me isolated and believing that this pain makes me unlovable or burdensome.

Jesus asks his friends to stay with him, to pray with him (Matthew 26:40). He begs God for another way and he sweats (Luke 22:42-44). In the midst of pain, Jesus releases the pain, draws himself into his — imperfect — community, and cries out to God. We get to cry out. We get to ask for help, to wish for another way, to give ourselves time to accept what cannot be avoided. But there is a time for every season under heaven (Ecclesiastes 3) and that means there is a time to complain and feel defeated.

Of course we need to stop the complaining that needlessly and endlessly dumps our pain on others so we can drag them down with us. And we need to stop the martyrdom that denies our pain. Pain needs a release valve, though. Some people, places, and spaces are not safe for my pain. Releasing in these places causes more harm — for me and for others.

And yet I need places in my life where it is possible to be in the middle of a messy road to somewhere yet unknown. There are beautiful spaces where it is safe to simply say what feels unjust, irritating, or wrong. Spoken aloud, these things lose some of their power and pressure. My people keep showing me that they can handle me defeated. They love me when I have nothing left. Many assure me they have felt that way themselves. God can also handle my pain and turn it into something beautiful.

I need to whisper into the light all the things I fear. My pain is lessened when it is shared with another who can help me to carry it, even though they cannot take it away. I have found that my perspective usually changes when someone else gives me permission to laugh at my own restricted vision.

The only way through to resurrection is the cross. My negative feelings and thoughts can become the ground out of which new life grows, if I neither cling to them nor hide them away. I do not need fixing when I am angry, hurting, lonely, and exhausted. I just need a rest, and a friend.

sponsible for one’s own emotional, spiritual and human growth are key for creating accountable, responsible leaders, who will someday be in charge of a parish or a diocese and its staff and community, said Jesuit Father Stefan Dartmann, rector of the *Pontificium Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum* in Rome — a German-speaking seminary serving dioceses in northern and central Europe.

Run by the Jesuits, the college puts unique emphasis on strengthening the seminarian’s sense of discernment and “co-responsibility” in his formation, and students are allowed to be part of the college leadership team.

The aim is to create men who can ask, “What has to be done,” not just for themselves, but for the whole community, he told CNS. This is critical because “we’ve had bishops who we know never asked” about protection training and protocols “because they felt very uncomfortable, so they waited,” he said.

There is “no reason to avoid going into the problems — it’s the other way around,” you are obliged to foresee and act, said Dartmann, who was at the tail end of his term as Jesuit provincial in Germany when the abuse crisis in the church, including in Jesuit schools, exploded in 2010.

That experience, he said, was “a Copernican revolution” for them because it put the point of view of the victims — not the church — at the centre of concern. “I remember that ‘The truth will set you free,’ was very important for me” in learning to listen to, accept and be transformed by so much scandal.

If people let themselves be affected on a deeper level by what abuse did and does to children, then protection policies can become a real “apostolic priority,” he said.

Instead, if it is only seen as just another “obligation” or yet another burden to add to an already heavy curriculum or ministry, “then it has no effect and it doesn’t make me trustworthy,” Dartmann said.

Perrault is a wife and mom, a grateful employee of Emmanuel Care, and a speaker, writer and consultant at www.leahperrault.com

Why provide only a half-welcome to refugees?

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



Do you think Canada has done what it should to assist refugees? “Definitely not yet,” seems to be the reply of people directly involved in the private sponsorship of refugees across this country.

A review of the perspectives of Sponsorship Agreement Holders, or SAHs, was carried out by Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) and released in mid-April. (SAHs are groups that have a signed agreement with the federal government to receive and resettle refugees. Eighteen of these groups are Roman Catholic dioceses.) CPJ obtained data from SAHs across Canada, by means of surveys and direct interviews. As such, the views expressed emanate from persons who have direct hands-on experience with refugee reception and settlement in our communities.

CPJ’s study “A Half Welcome: Delays, Limits and Inequities in Canadian Private Sponsorship” points to at least four major shortfalls in the design and operation of the private sponsorship system in Canada ([https://cpj.ca/sites/default/files/docs/files/A per cent20Half per cent20Welcome.pdf](https://cpj.ca/sites/default/files/docs/files/A%20Half%20per%20cent%20Welcome.pdf)).

In the first place, 97 per cent of SAHs are either concerned, or very concerned, with long wait times from when an application is filed with government and the eventual arrival of the sponsored refugees. Refugees face logistical challenges in supplying application information in arduous situations or conflict zones (such as the woman who was asked to provide expensive DNA testing for her children in an African refugee camp, in order to prove she was their mother.) But delays can also occur at processing centres overseas, often due to scarce resources at visa posts, or even at the Centralized Processing Office in Winnipeg. A community group willing to sponsor refugees cannot be kept waiting for years, or interest will wane and other uses will attract competing uses for the collected funds.

A related concern was expressed by 94 per cent of SAH respondents who despair of the long wait times for non-Syrian applications. Patti Fitzmaurice, a lawyer and the co-ordinator of social justice ministry at the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, has noted, for example, that they have been waiting for over six years to receive a refugee family from Ethiopia. The government provides processing times for refugee claims on its website, broken down by country. Imagine: an application from Ethiopia takes 74 months, Afghanistan takes 63 months and Haiti takes 54 months. When priority was given by the Liberal government to the quick processing of Syrian applications, it proved that expedited processing was possible. But it causes distress when urgent needs from other parts of the world are not being treated equitably.

Over 87 per cent of respondents were also concerned that requests for refugees eligible for sponsorship exceeds the government-imposed allocation limits. Sponsors request better communication from government, as well as advance planning (perhaps providing numbers over three years) so that communities know what allocations government may allow in the various sponsorship categories. The fourth concern has to do

with Canada’s policy to offer refugees loans to cover transportation, medical exams, travel documents, etc. Refugees must start to repay these loans within 30 days of their arrival in Canada. However, when the Liberals promised to expedite Syrian arrivals, the travel loans were waived. Seventy-five per cent of SAHs noted that this policy is of concern, as it imposes an unfair burden on those coming, often with nothing, from other parts of the globe. Statistics Canada reports that 34 per cent of newcomers to Canada live in poverty — so why add this burden on newly arrived refugees?

Canadians can be proud that our country facilitated the entry of so many Syrian refugees in 2015 - 2016. Yet there is no reason to assume that the system is perfect, or perfectly fair. An engaged society and culture can continue to improve our capacity to assist vulnerable asylum-seekers. Globally, human migration is now at unheralded levels. It will only grow due to economic inequality, climate change and environmental destruction, and international conflict. As Patti Fitzmaurice says, “This CPJ report is a concise brief of the concerns of those who sponsor refugees across most of Canada. If implemented, the recommendations would enhance Canada’s excellent efforts.”

At their September 2015 plenary meeting, Canada’s Catholic bish-

ops adopted a resolution that every Catholic parish and religious community in Canada sponsor a refugee family. Many parishes did so; fewer contacted government concerning how to improve the system. The bishops went on to ask the government of Canada to “expand, accelerate, and facilitate the private sponsorship of refugees during this time of urgent need.” Bishop Douglas Crosby, CCCB president, reiterated his concern over the waiting times for Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in a letter to the minister on Oct. 6, 2016.

In order to sustain public interest in the program, and to ensure refugees have the best possible chance of success here, the federal government would do well to work with SAHs and churches to eliminate the policy hurdles that block effective private sponsorship.

If you think Canada has done what it should to assist refugees, please think again.



CNS/Zita Fletcher

LONG WAIT TIMES — A Muslim refugee woman waits for a train April 11 in Heidelberg, Germany. In Canada, a review of the perspectives of Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) reveals 97 per cent of SAHs are either concerned, or very concerned, with long wait times from when an application is filed with the government and the eventual arrival of the sponsored refugees

Queen's House

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Rick McCorrister

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More SXSW film selections to watch for

Continued from page 9

Other SXSW selections deserving mention:

Fits and Starts — Laura Terruso helms a witty and sharply observed story about what befalls the hapless writer husband of a successful author when their road trip to an arch artistic gathering goes bizarrely awry.

The Strange Ones — Lauren Wolkstein and Christopher Radcliff direct this journey into darkness taken by two brothers, widely separated in age, leading to an old cabin in the woods and a terrible truth. James Freedson-Jackson earned special jury recognition in the role of the kid brother.

The Transfiguration — Michael O'Shea helms this strange tale that premiered at last

year's Cannes festival. Milo (Eric Ruffin) is an African-American teenager whose obsession with vampires draws blood and whose friendship with a deprived older girl leads to a fateful choice.

Infinity Baby — Continuing in the bizarre mode is this black-and-white comic piece directed by Bob Byington in which a serial womanizer (Kieran Culkin) — Noël Wells (Mr. Roosevelt) plays his first discarded girlfriend — works for an uncle whose futuristic firm sells babies that don't age. Crazy? Yes, and funny too.

Inflame — One of a small number of international films, for which Turkish director Ceylan Özgün Özçelik received a jury “gamechanger” award, the subject is the increasing psychological dread closing in on an Istanbul documentary editor when her questioning of the story of her

parents' accidental death unravels a much more sinister reality.

Lucky — Never count out 90-year-old Harry Dean Stanton who plays a remarkably fit non-age-narian, a lifelong smoker and non-believer known to everyone as Lucky, in this wry tale from director John Carroll Lynch. Another director Lynch, David, has a role as a barroom acquaintance whose beloved tortoise, “President Roosevelt,” has gone missing (though be sure not to miss the last scene as Lucky strides through the desert). SXSW also showed the documentary *David Lynch — The Art of Life*, about the career of one of cinema's true mavericks, best known for the Montana-based series *Twin Peaks* that's returning to television later this year. Stanton has a role in it wouldn't you know. Lucky indeed.

The call to holiness

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is designated across the global church as a World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

It is a special day of prayer for priestly, diaconal and religious vocations. This issue of the *Prairie Messenger* features stories highlighting these ministries in the church.

The question of vocations always reminds us that all Christians are called to different vocations. It is clear church teaching that all are called to serve God and neighbour, regardless of their state of life.

We no longer feel the strong impact the Second Vatican Council had with its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) when it emphasized in Chapter 5 that all Christians are called to holiness of life.

It proclaimed: “All in the church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness, according to the apostle’s saying: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification’” (No. 39).

The council, and spiritual writers, emphasize that holiness is built on solid human virtues, not on entitled practices of human effort.

The council emphasized that holiness is expressed in love of neighbour and care for the earth. It teaches “by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society” (No. 40).

In his message to the church as we entered the third millennium, Pope John Paul II outlined seven pastoral initiatives for the church. His first priority was holiness of life. He wrote, “First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness” (*Entering into the new millennium*, 30).

Christian author Matthew Kelly, in his book *A Call to Joy*, notes that the idea of holiness is often misunderstood.

“The world portrays a saint as someone who is a social misfit, as someone who never smiles and who does not know how to enjoy himself or herself,” he writes.

People believe that holiness “is about running away and leaving the world. Some think that to be

holy one must be constantly on one’s knees praying.”

These are all “unnatural and unattractive images” we have seen portraying the vocation to holiness.

This point is also brought out in a story about a woman who longed to find out what heaven is like. She prayed constantly, “God, grant me in this life a vision of paradise.”

One night she had a dream. An angel came and led her to heaven. They walked down a street in paradise until they came to an ordinary-looking house. The angel, pointing toward the house, said, “Go and look inside.”

The woman walked in the house and found a person preparing supper, another reading the newspaper, and children playing with their toys. Naturally, she was disappointed and returned to the angel on the street. “Is this all there is to heaven?” she asked.

The angel replied, “Those people you saw in that house are not in paradise, paradise is in them!”

This pretty well sums up what holiness is all about.

‘Sacramental imagination’ helps us appreciate the world we live in

Building a Culture of Life

Mary Deutscher



I learned a new phrase recently and, since it’s not a phrase I can casually drop into conversation at the dog park to let everyone know how smart I am, I’ve decided to write an article about it instead. The phrase is “sacramental imagination” and it refers to our ability to see signs of God’s grace in the created world.

Most readers of this column are likely aware that the seven sacraments are “efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the church, by which

divine life is dispensed to us.” This doesn’t mean these seven are the only way grace can come to us; it just means they are particularly good at getting the job done. They open our hearts to receive what God is pouring out in abundance all around us.

Which brings us to the sacramental imagination. This phrase draws attention to the human capacity to grow in our understanding of our infinite God through an appreciation of the finite world we live in, or, as St. Ignatius put it, “to seek God our Lord in all things.” Although we are all able to do this, it seems to me the creative members of our community are particularly good at it. Whether they are world renowned or just hanging their work on the refrigerator, our

visual artists, authors, musicians, architects and (hopefully) our liturgists open our eyes to see God in creation.

And this is where my real motivation lies for writing this article. When I first started exploring the sacramental imagination, I suddenly realized that just knowing this phrase changed the way I think about art. Well, OK, maybe it didn’t change the way I think about it,

but it gave me a whole new way of expressing my thoughts.

Unfortunately, the best way of explaining this is to focus on some negative things first. I have found I have a difficult time expressing why I despise certain “works of art.” It’s not just that these works don’t move me. Rather, I actually feel they are overrated and should never have been created (or at the very least they should have stayed locked

away somewhere).

For example, consider HBO’s epic adventure *Game of Thrones*. Now, you’d think a sci-fi and fantasy geek such as myself could get behind a series about swords and dragons, but after watching the first season and reading the first three books, I never want to touch the series again. I could handle the sloppy storytelling, but

— NEGATIVE, page 23

Religious support Standing Rock Tribe

By Sister Cecilia Hudec, Halifax

For much of the last year, unprecedented media, political and economic attention has been directed to a conflict simmering in a remote corner of North Dakota between an indigenous community and major pipeline developers. This situation may seem distantly removed from our own lives, but as Canadians, as people of faith,

Hudec is canonical treasurer of the Sisters of Charity.

and as investors we are more intertwined than we think.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota is deeply worried about the impact of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) on its sacred sites, burial grounds and, in the event of a spill or leak, its drinking water source. The tribe and U.S. federal agencies raised alarms about inadequate indigenous consultation and environmental review.

For months, indigenous peoples and supporters from across North America congregated at Standing Rock in peaceful protest to support the tribe. While the project was delayed many months, ultimately it was approved by the new U.S. administration and completed with Standing Rock’s concerns left on the table, unaddressed.

Nations Declaration on the Rights of indigenous peoples (UNDRIP), including the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples for activities or decisions that would affect them or their territories and resources.

For Canadians, UNDRIP is also at the heart of the calls to action put out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In particular, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls on Canadian businesses to apply the principles, norms, and standards in UNDRIP to corporate policies and activities involving indigenous peoples, their lands and resources.

This call to action is not only relevant to businesses, but to anyone who holds investments in a Canadian company. As religious communities and institutions we hold shares in Canadian companies through our pensions, trusts and foundations. With our shares comes the power and responsibility to influence how these companies operate in society, including ensuring they operate in a way that respects the rights of indigenous peoples.

It would be easy to disregard this situation as just another example of the ideological division between industry and environmentalists. However, this reading misses the more fundamental significance of DAPL as a bell weather for the state of indigenous rights in North America.

The DAPL protest in North Dakota was the largest gathering of Native Americans in over 100 years. It was also an important event for indigenous peoples across the continent. First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples from Canada travelled to North Dakota to support the Standing Rock Sioux or organized events in their home communities focused on water protection and indigenous land rights.

Ultimately what they seek is for business and government to respect their rights set out in the United

One way that the Sisters of Charity is taking up this responsibility is through shareholder engagement. When we learned that Enbridge was buying into the DAPL project in the midst of the indigenous rights conflict, we worked with the Shareholder Association for Research and Education to reach out to the company to ask about the decision.

We then filed a shareholder resolution that asks Enbridge to re-

— AMERICANS, page 23



CNS/Omar Sanadiki, Reuters

SYRIANS CELEBRATE EASTER — Armenian Christian Scouts play music as they celebrate Easter April 16 in Damascus, Syria.

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‘Sister Listeners’ help Rwandans move past genocide

By Melanie Lidman

KIGALI, Rwanda (CNS) — The Benebikira Sisters, the oldest indigenous congregation in Rwanda, have sisters who are teachers, nurses, pharmacists, formators and administrators. But they also have religious with a unique title: Sister Listeners.

“The genocide created many problems; some people don’t want to live because of what happened,” said Sister Marie Venantie Nyirabaganwa, superior of the southern province of the Benebikira Sisters and the women’s head of the *Association des Supérieurs Majeurs du Rwanda*, the national umbrella group for women and men religious.

The 1994 Rwandan genocide, when up to a million people were killed during 100 days of fighting and in the chaos before and afterward, lurks under the surface of every interaction, even though 23 years have passed since the killers laid down their machetes.

The country has successfully emerged from some of the physical devastation after the genocide, and the economy is growing at impressive rates. But the country is perched in a delicate balance, as the people try to honour the memory of those killed while firmly looking toward the future.

This balancing act comes into focus each year April 7, the anniversary of the day the genocide started. It marks the beginning of a three-month period when the country turns inward to remember.

“There are many problems in Rwanda, and many people have mental problems because of the genocide,” Nyirabaganwa said. “Those who killed have their own problems, and those who lost people due to the genocide have their own problems.”

“Especially mothers who lost all of their children and husbands, or the young ones who lost all the members of their family,” Nyirabaganwa added. “Many people just need someone to listen. Some have HIV,” because rape by HIV-positive men was one of the tools used to brutalize during the genocide.

Six Benebikira Sisters are dedicated to listening full time. Some

of the sisters run group therapy sessions, others do individual counselling as needed. They have different backgrounds, including pastoral work or counselling, and go for continuing education on a regular basis, Nyirabaganwa said.

The role of listener is less formal than therapist but fits better with Rwandan culture, she said. “The sisters in charge of listening are helping them spiritually. We help them to resolve and get answers to their problems.”

Other congregations, including the St. Boniface Sisters, adopted the model of listeners, finding ways to blend psychological support with Rwanda’s unique needs and culture. The role of these listeners is especially important in the springtime.

“In April, the country shuts down in memoriam for about two weeks. It’s a period of remembrance,” said Nicole Sparbanie, a Peace Corps volunteer from Chicago who works with the Bernardine Sisters in the village of Kamonyi, 40 kilometres outside of Kigali. Each village or district has its own memorial, usually a tomb and a mini-museum. Additionally, each district observes the anniversaries of major events that happened locally during the 100-day genocide.

“All the school kids walk together, and they read the names of people who died in that area. They tell the stories of the victims, and there is also art and music,” Sparbanie said.

Because every local anniversary is marked annually during this 100-day period, newspaper headlines and radio shows keep the focus on the country’s difficult past even as people try to move on.

Although the government severely limits free speech inside Rwanda, some activists and international organizations quietly question whether the government is using the memorials to limit opposition and maintain its authority. Official government memorials, including the Kigali Genocide Memorial, call it “the Genocide against the Tutsi,” which erases any reference to the thousands of Hutus who were killed, sometimes while protecting Tutsis. The title also negates any

reference to crimes against the Hutus before the genocide or revenge killings that took place afterward. President Paul Kagame is Tutsi, although it is illegal to speak of ethnicity in Rwanda, as part of a government initiative called “*Ndi Umunyarwanda*” (“I am a Rwandan”).

Sisters find ways to work within the acceptable government framework of memorials to offer their counselling services to all of the victims, regardless of what roles they played in the genocide.

During the memorial period, the sisters lead discussions and prayers, providing spiritual support during the official events and outside counselling on a personal basis.

“We work together with the government,” said Sister Donatille Mukurabayaza, the local superior for the Bernardine Sisters in Kamonyi. Mukurabayaza trained in Capacitar, an international mindfulness training aimed at reconciliation in conflict zones. Capacitar emphasizes internal balance and peace more than external sharing that the Benebikira “Listening Sisters” provide. Both programs allow the sisters to offer counselling and spiritual support



CNS/Melanie Lidman, Global Sisters

RWANDA SISTERS — Benebikira Sisters greet each other under the shade of an avocado tree at their motherhouse in Save, Rwanda. The Benebikira Sisters, the oldest indigenous congregation in Rwanda, have sisters who are teachers, nurses, pharmacists, formators, administrators — and listeners.

to groups and individuals privately, and also to take a leading role during the memorial period in April.

Decision will greatly affect students, parents

Continued from page 1

Layh recognized his ruling will have repercussions, which is why he gave the province until June 30, 2018, to adapt to the changes.

The Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association (SCSBA) was to meet April 24 with its legal team to review the ruling and determine a course of action. In the interim, the SCSBA released the following statement from Tom Fortosky, a lawyer and former SCSBA chair, on behalf of the SCSBA:

“We are obviously disappointed with Justice Layh’s decision. This greatly affects students and parents in Christ the Teacher School Division in particular, and families throughout the province. We’ll take some time to go over the 230-page decision, consult with our lawyers and process

what this means for the division, for Catholic education in Saskatchewan, and for all of the families who choose Catholic education. This has already been a 12-year journey, instigated by the public boards, and we don’t have much of an appetite to spend more on legal defence. However, we have an obligation to stand up for the constitutional rights of separate school divisions, so we are giving serious consideration to an appeal. In the event of an appeal, a final decision would be a long way down the road.”

Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen expressed his disappointment in the ruling. “I am deeply disheartened to hear of the decision. I understand representatives from the SCSBA are taking time to better understand the lengthy written decision. I offer my full support, and that of the archdiocese, to Christ the Teacher School Division and the SCSBA as they continue to defend the constitutional rights of separate school divisions in the province.”

This case began in 2003 when the school board decided declining enrolments at the Theodore Public School warranted its closure and students would be bussed to Springside. Theodore is a community of about 340 (2006 Census), 30 kilometres northwest of Yorkton on the Yellowhead highway.

Parents did not want the school closed. However, non-Catholic parents could not be part of any petition to the government. The minority Catholic community, which included Catholic parents of children in the school, petitioned the government to form a Catholic

school division. When that petition was granted, the new division purchased the Theodore school and renamed it St. Theodore. The public board did not want to sell the school to the new Catholic division and the government had to intervene to make the sale take place. It was shortly after that the lawsuit was launched by the Theodore Public School Board and included the Government of Saskatchewan and Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division as defendants.

The SCSBA and its member boards, recognizing a threat to their constitutional right to a minority faith-based school system, came to the defence of Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division. Since then, millions of dollars from the public and Catholic school divisions and the Government of Saskatchewan have been spent on the case.

It isn’t known exactly how many non-Catholic students attend Catholic schools, but some estimates are in the range of about one-third of the population in some divisions. Withdrawing funds for non-Catholic students could result in teacher layoffs in Catholic schools, school closures, and remove from non-Catholic parents their choice of what school they wish their children to attend.

A quick check Friday afternoon by the *Prairie Messenger* with several Catholic school boards revealed some concerned parents are already calling to determine what impact the ruling will have on their children’s education. As of the afternoon of April 21, the Ministry of Education had not issued a statement.



Gerald Schmitz

EARTH DAY — The sun sets at the Elephant Camp in Victoria Falls National Park in Zimbabwe. Earth Day, observed April 22 every year, marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.

Our listening creates a sanctuary for the homeless parts within another person.

— Rachel Naomi Remen