

One more issue . . .

The last issue of the *Prairie Messenger* will be dated May 9. This week's issue features more tributes to the *PM* and St. Peter's Press. See pages 3, 5, 9, 11 - 21.

Hope for change

After private meetings with Pope Francis, three survivors of clergy sexual abuse from Chile said they felt they had been heard and were hopeful for changes in the way the Catholic Church handles accusations of abuse.

— page 2

Art project

Jenaya Johns of Holy Cross High School in Saskatoon

took first prize with her pencil and crayon rendering of a child wear-



ing a hijab, titled "One of Many Children," at the Saskatchewan Youth Visual Art Project. The project was established in 2011 by Multi-Faith Saskatchewan.

— page 6

K of C convention

The 96th annual state council meeting of the Knights of Columbus of Saskatchewan was a call for Knights to hold fast to the principles around upon which the order was founded: charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism.

— page 7

Listening needed

Bishop Jon Hansen, CSsR, says the "Letter to Indigenous Peoples in Canada" from the Canadian bishops "is now being slowly digested. My worry is that the aftertaste will be lasting and bitter."

— page 22

Challenging Catholics

The pope is not changing church teaching, but "is challenging Catholics to undertake a 'radical embrace of a church for the poor' in calling for a 'return to the values of the Gospel, the values of mercy, justice, love and care for God's creation,'" said a speaker at a recent Villanova University conference.

— page 24

Gathering bids farewell to *Prairie Messenger*

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

MUENSTER — The St. Peter's Press building at the Benedictine abbey in Muenster, Sask., opened its doors for a farewell reception April 28, welcoming friends, contributors, former staff and longtime readers who came to bid farewell to the *Prairie Messenger*.

The production, printing and office spaces of the press building at St. Peter's Abbey were filled to the brim with visitors touring the plant, viewing photos and past issues, sharing memories, and mourning the loss of the weekly Catholic newspaper that will cease production May 9, 2018, after 114 years.

Some of the conversations throughout the afternoon reception touched on the *Prairie Messenger's* impact, while others recalled former staff, reflected on the reasons for closure or wrestled with communication trends — but most of those present were simply highlighting the blessings of the beloved publication.

When Adele and Jim Longstaff were married some 50 years ago, a subscription to the *Prairie Messenger* was a gift from Adele's cousin the late Rev. Maurice Weber, OSB, who



Allison Weber

D&P PRESENTATION — Development and Peace — Caritas Canada honoured the *Prairie Messenger* at a farewell celebration for the *Prairie Messenger* and St. Peter's Press on April 28. Part of the citation reads: "Development and Peace — Caritas Canada is honoured to formally recognize the *Prairie Messenger* . . . for the solidarity you have shown for the marginalized and oppressed and for your work in helping to strengthen our movement." From left: Miriam Spenrath, OSU, presenting on behalf of D&P, associate editor Maureen Weber, editor-in-chief Peter Novocosky, OSB, and associate editor Don Ward.

presided at their wedding. The Saskatoon couple has received the publication ever since, said Adele, describing how the publi-

cation enriched and nurtured their faith.

A contributing columnist, Rev. Marie-Louise Ternier, rector of

All Saints Anglican Parish and Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

— GRATITUDE, page 5

Medical experts say faith promotes health and healing

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Religions provide hope, meaning and models of behaviour that have been proven to promote health, healing and long life, said speakers at a Vatican meeting.

The fourth Unite to Cure Conference, co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Culture, brought hundreds of physicians, researchers and health care executives to the Vatican April 26 - 28 for a discussion about new medical technology, the

future of medicine and practical steps to promote health and health care treatment around the world.

Dr. Mehmet Oz, the U.S. tele-

vision host and professor of surgery, moderated a panel discussion on "The Culture of Life

— PRAY, page 23

Dominican priest bids farewell to Saskatoon

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The parish communities of St. Michael and St. Peter the Apostle are preparing to bid farewell to their pastor, Rev. Iheanyi Enwerem, OP. After 10 years in the Diocese of Saskatoon, and 23 years away from home, the Dominican scholar has asked his superiors to recall him to Nigeria.

Enwerem came to Toronto in 1982 for graduate studies in theology. While there, he got to know London, Ont., Bishop Michael Sherlock, who asked him to serve as chaplain of Kings College, University of Western Ontario. Enwerem combined the role with a teaching position in the department of history and political science.

He returned to Nigeria in 1993 to serve as president of a new Dominican Institute of Philosophy and Theology at Ibadan, where he spent six years as the founding administrator. He then became a senior lecturer in the department of

political science at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria's premier university.

In 2000, the Nigerian bishops approached Enwerem to lead a new department they had created, Church and Society, to liaise between the bishops' conference and the government. The country had been under military rule for decades, and this was the beginning of a new civilian administration.

The experience was an eye-opener. "I saw the Catholic Church in Nigeria in its very raw nature, the good and the bad," Enwerem recalls. "The church is supposed to be the voice of the voiceless, to stand on the path of truth and justice. It was not sufficiently playing that role."

Enwerem chronicled the corruption and collusion involving church officials and organizations in *Crossing the Rubicon: A Socio-Political Analysis of Political*

— ENWEREM, page 4



CNS/Paul Haring

CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND HEALTH — Dr. Dale G. Renlund, an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Dr. Edward Reichman, a rabbi and professor at Yeshiva University in New York, Jesuit Father Kevin T. FitzGerald, a geneticist and professor of ethics at Georgetown University in Washington, and Dr. Mehmet C. Oz, a television host and professor of surgery, attend the United to Cure Conference at the Vatican April 25. Hundreds of physicians, researchers and health care executives attended the conference to talk about medical advances and steps to promote health care around the world.

Abuse survivors grateful after meeting with pope

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — After private meetings with Pope Francis, three survivors of clergy sexual abuse from Chile said they felt they had been heard and were hopeful for changes in the way the Catholic Church handles accusations of abuse.

“I spoke for more than two and a half hours alone with Pope Francis. He listened to me with

great respect, affection and closeness, like a father. We talked about many subjects. Today, I have more hope in the future of our church. Even though the task is enormous,” Juan Carlos Cruz tweeted April 29 after meeting with the pope.

Pope Francis had invited Cruz, James Hamilton and José Andres Murillo to stay at the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, the Vatican residence where he lives, and to

meet with him individually April 27-29. The three met with the pope again as a group April 30.

Although the three survivors tweeted after their private meetings, Greg Burke, director of the Vatican press office, said Pope Francis “expressly wished” that no official statements would be released by the Vatican regarding his discussions with the survivors.

“His priority is to listen to the victims, ask their forgiveness and respect the confidentiality of these talks,” Burke said in a statement April 27. “In this climate of trust and reparation for suffering, the desire of Pope Francis is to allow his guests to speak as long as necessary, in a way that there is no set timetable or pre-established content.”

In a tweet sent after his April 27 meeting, Murillo said he spoke with Pope Francis for two hours and that “in a respectful and frank way, I expressed the importance of understanding abuse as an abuse of power, of the need to assume responsibility, of care and not just forgiveness.”

Hamilton sent two tweets April 28 short-

ly after his meeting with the pope, saying that it lasted a “little over two hours” and that it was “sincere, welcoming and enormously constructive.”

I am “very happy and satisfied,” he said.

The Chilean survivors have alleged that Bishop Juan Barros of Osorno — then a priest — had witnessed their abuse by his mentor, Rev. Fernando Karadima. In 2011, Karadima was sentenced to a life of prayer and penance by the Vatican after he was found guilty of sexually abusing boys.

Although he initially defended his 2015 appointment of Barros as head of the Diocese of Osorno, Pope Francis apologized after receiving a 2,300-page report from a trusted investigator he sent to Chile to listen to people with information about the bishop.

The investigator, Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta, is president of a board of review within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; the board handles appeals filed by clergy accused of abuse or other serious crimes. The archbishop also had 10 years of experience as the Vatican’s chief prosecutor of clerical sex abuse cases at the doctrinal congregation.

After a “careful reading” of the testimonies, “I believe I can affirm that all the testimonies collected speak in a brutal way, without additives or sweeteners, of many crucified lives and, I confess, it has caused me pain and shame,” the pope said April 11 in a letter to the bishops of Chile.

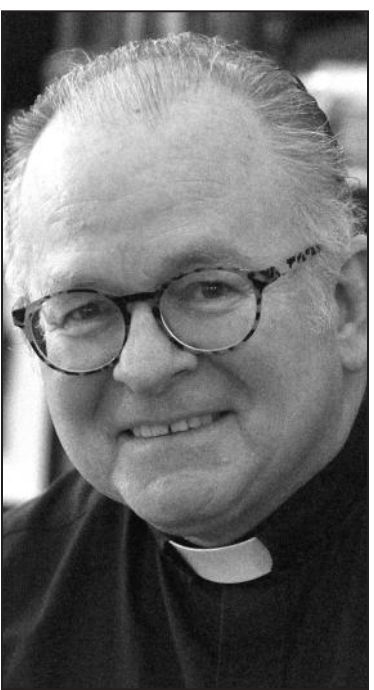
The pope also said he was convening a meeting in Rome with the Chilean bishops to discuss the findings of the investiga-

tions and his own conclusions “without prejudices nor preconceived ideas, with the single objective of making the truth shine in our lives.”

The three survivors, who have been outspoken about the church’s handling of abuse cases, welcomed Pope Francis’ letter and accepted his invitation to meet so he could ask “forgiveness of all those I have offended.”



POPE MEETS VICTIMS FROM CHILE — James Hamilton and Juan Carlos Cruz are seen on a terrace over St. Peter’s Square April 29. They met with Pope Francis privately at the Vatican.



CNS/Rhina Guidos

U.S. HOUSE CHAPLAIN — The forced resignation of Jesuit Father Patrick J. Conroy, the chaplain who tends to the spiritual needs of the U.S. House of Representatives and is Catholic, has drawn fire against the Speaker of the House, who also is Catholic. House Speaker Paul Ryan, a Republican from Wisconsin, reportedly asked for his resignation, after he prayed for the poor during discussion on tax reform.

Council of Cardinals discuss new draft

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis and his international Council of Cardinals have reviewed a complete draft of the apostolic constitution that would govern the Roman Curia, the Vatican spokesperson said.

The cardinals still need some time to finalize the draft, approve it and present it formally to the

pope for “further consultation and final approval,” said Greg Burke, director of the Vatican press office.

Even the title of the document has not been finalized, he said April 25, although the entire project revolves around the idea of a “church that goes out.”

Much of the Council of Cardinals’ work April 23 - 25 was dedicated to “rereading the draft of the new apostolic constitution

on the Roman Curia,” Burke said.

The draft document emphasizes four points, he said: the Roman Curia is at the service of the pope and the local churches throughout the world; the work of the Curia must have a pastoral character; particulars on the role and functioning of the new section in the Vatican Secretariat of State to oversee the training, assigning and ministry of Vatican nuncios and diplomats around the world; and the proclamation of the Gospel and a missionary spirit must characterize the activity of the Curia.

Burke told reporters there was no discussion of changing the membership of the council, which Pope Francis established just one month after his election in 2013. The cardinals, who come from around the world, were to advise him on church governance and “to study a project to revise the apostolic constitution ‘*Pastor Bonus*’ on the Roman Curia.”

The meeting in April was the 24th gathering of the council with the pope. Australian Cardinal George Pell has not been participating since returning to Australia for a series of court hearings to determine if he should stand trial on decades-old charges of child sexual abuse.

Pell’s absence and the fact that Cardinal Francisco Errazuriz Ossa, the retired archbishop of Santiago, Chile, is 84 years old led some observers to believe the council would discuss changing at least some members.



CNS/Jorge Cabrera, Reuters

UNREST IN NICARAGUA — People in Managua, Nicaragua, are seen April 23 at a makeshift memorial for demonstrators killed during protests against a reform to pension plans. The bishops’ conference of Nicaragua has accepted an invitation to mediate talks aimed at calming the Central American country.

Pope: In baptism, Holy Spirit, not magic, protects people

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The sacrament of baptism isn’t a good luck charm but a gift from God that enables Christians to overcome evil, Pope Francis said.

Those who receive the sacrament are given the strength to overcome “the temptation to separate from God, from his will, from communion with him (and) fall into the snares of worldly seductions,” the pope said April 25 during his weekly general audience.

“Baptism is not a magic spell but a gift of the Holy Spirit that allows those who receive it to fight against the spirit of evil, believing that God sent his son into the world to destroy the power of Satan and bring men and women from the darkness to his kingdom of infinite light,” he said.

Thousands of pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the general audience despite the day being a national holiday commemorating Italy’s liberation from Nazi occupation.

Pope Francis, however, chose to reflect on the spiritual liberation from evil offered to men and women who receive the sacrament of baptism.

Continuing his series of Easter-

season talks on baptism, the pope said that the litany of the saints and the prayers of exorcism that are part of the baptismal rite are gestures meant to reassure catechumens “that the prayer of the church assists them in the fight against evil and accompanies them on the path of good.”

“At the baptismal font, no one ever goes alone, but is accompanied by the prayer of the whole church,” the pope said.

Another important and symbolic gesture, he explained, is anointing with oil the chest of the person about to be baptized.

Like the ancient gladiators who used oil to tone their muscles and slip through the clutches of their adversary, Christians are anointed as a sign of Christ’s power “that strengthens us to fight against evil and overcome it,” the pope said.

Although the fight against evil is a “lifelong struggle,” he said, Christians can rest assured that the church “prays so that her children do not succumb to the snares of evil.”

“Strengthened by the risen Christ, who conquered the prince of this world, we too can say with faith like St. Paul: ‘I can do all things through him who gives me strength,’ ” the pope said.

Debate on papal apology motion hears no dissent

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A House of Commons debate on a revised motion to invite Pope Francis to apologize for Indian residential schools heard no dissenting voices April 26.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Charlie Angus

The motion by NDP MP Charlie Angus of the Timmins-James Bay, Ont., riding will be voted on May 1 and is expected to pass, if not unanimously, by an overwhelming majority.

MPs from both sides of the aisle voiced their desire for a papal apology as called for in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action #58.

Absent from the fray was Conservative MP Garnett Genuis, of the Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, Alta., riding, who had refused unanimous consent on a similar motion by Angus April 18 that had called on the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to invite the pope.

Genuis had objected to the previous motion out of concerns for the separation of church and state and for religious freedom in having Parliament instruct the

Catholic Church on how to carry out reconciliation efforts.

The new motion left out the CCCB and appealed directly to Pope Francis, inviting him to "participate" with Canadians in a journey of reconciliation by responding to the TRC Call to Action #58.

Angus described the debate as "a historic moment for the Parliament of Canada," noting Parliament had created the TRC to examine the evidence and the Commission found "the policies of the Government of Canada and the Catholic Church at the time constituted a genocide."

While the wording of the motion was softened, with help from the Liberal government, Angus continued to take aim at Canada's Catholic bishops, whom he has blamed for the pope's decision not to come to apologize.

"I want to say that I have been appalled by the line I heard from the Canadian bishops," he said. "They have tried to evade their role in working with us on reconciliation. We will talk today about the collusion of the federal government and the church. They have followed a pattern time and time again of defending, covering up, and hiding for each other. It all comes back to liability. It all comes back to money."

"Does anyone think the survivors are here for money?" he asked, insisting they were not.

Angus expressed confidence the pope "is capable of understanding the importance of this motion, because he has a vision of reconciliation and justice for all."

Minister for Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett welcomed Angus' motion and said she was "pleased to have worked co-operatively with him on some of the language."

"Our government also wants to take this opportunity to show

that reconciliation is not a partisan issue," she said.

"The residential school system was a systemic plan to remove indigenous children from their homes, families, and cultures, and to facilitate the stated policy of 'killing the Indian in the child,'" she said. "Students endured unconscionable physical and mental abuse, and generations of indigenous peoples were left emotionally scarred and culturally isolated."

An estimated 150,000 indigenous children attended residential schools over a period of about 100 years, and the TRC estimated 6,000 of them died, she said.

Bennett pointed out Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had already formally requested an apology. She said she had written to the CCCB offering to facilitate a

meeting with survivors so the bishops could "personally hear what an apology would mean to them and how crucial it is to reconciliation in Canada."

The Conservative critic for Indigenous Affairs, Cathy McLeod, said she would support the motion, though she noted the "need to respect the independence of religious organizations and their activities."

"Some people say that Parliament is asking for an apology and that apologies should come from the heart," she said. "Absolutely, apologies should come from the heart, and they can come often."

She pointed out the motion is "an expression of how Parliament feels," one she hopes the pope will hear when he makes his decision. She stressed the motion is

an invitation.

"An invitation is very different from a direction," she said.

McLeod also challenged the government's record in its promise to implement all 94 of the TRC's Calls to Action, of which 45 are under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

"If my colleague looks at the CBC tracker in terms of the job the Liberals are doing, he will see that there are many on which there has been no action, and the Liberals have had a number of years," McLeod said. "I would not want to see communities disappointed again by an enormous commitment but little on the delivery."

"I think Canada has made very little progress when it comes to

— COMMITTEE, page 6



Paul Paproski, OSB

BIDDING FAREWELL — The production, printing and office spaces of the press building at St. Peter's Abbey were filled to the brim with visitors touring the plant, viewing photos and past *Prairie Messenger* issues, sharing memories, and mourning the loss of the weekly Catholic newspaper that will cease production May 9, 2018, after 114 years.

Manitoba archdioceses to celebrate National Week for Life and Family

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The National Week for Life and the Family will be celebrated across Canada May 13 - 20 with the theme, "Love: Encountering the Other." In Manitoba that message has been expanded to include the modern challenges of "Connecting in a Media World."

The annual week of observation began in 2013 as an initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and since its inception the Archbishops of Winnipeg and St. Boniface, and the Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Winnipeg have joined in a united effort in planning for the week to reach the people of Manitoba.

Led by the archbishops, a committee meets throughout the year to discern how best to present events and materials that will raise awareness of issues related to life and the family, from euthanasia and assisted suicide to palliative care and the many challenges facing families of faith in an increasingly secular world. The group includes representation

from the clergy and laity, staffs of the archdiocesan offices, the Catholic Women's League and the Knights of Columbus.

Two events that are always a part of the National Week for Life and the Family in Manitoba are the March for Life, preceded by mass at St. Mary's Cathedral, and the Mass for Life, dedicated to the care of all human life, from conception to natural death.

The March for Life is held prior to the actual week, this year on May 10, coinciding with the National March for Life in Ottawa and marches that take place in cities across Canada on the same day. In Manitoba, the March for Life is preceded by mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in downtown Winnipeg, a short distance from the Manitoba Legislative Building where the March for Life begins.

The Mass for Life, on May 16, will be a Ukrainian Catholic Divine Liturgy preceded by praying the rosary at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church.

As the subtheme of "Connecting in a Media World" suggests, this year there is an emphasis on

the effects of technology on family and interpersonal relationships which the bishops and committee hope to address with the following events:



James Buchok

Clayton Imoo

May 9: *Screenagers* is a documentary film offering solutions on how youth can be empowered

to navigate the digital world and find a healthy balance. It is appropriate for adults and children ages 10 and up, 7 p.m. at Canadian Mennonite University.

May 15: "Social Media: Making it Work in our Church," for secretaries and parish web designers. Learn some practical tips to empower your church to become more visible online and learn how to launch your parish presence in the digital world, 7 p.m., St. Timothy Parish.

May 17: "Double Taps, Double Lives. Are you portraying your true self on the web?" An evening for young adults and youth ministers. Presented by Clayton Imoo, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Archdiocese of Vancouver, 7:30 p.m., St. Philip Minh Parish.

May 18: "Disconnecting Media and Reconnecting Family." Discover how to use media as positive tools for connecting families and maintaining a healthy balance with both social media and technology. Presenter is Clayton Imoo, 7:30 p.m., St. Boniface Cathedral Hall.

May 12: Campaign Life Coalition is holding its fundraising

banquet at the CanadInns on Pembina Highway in Winnipeg.

In Dauphin, four events are planned: a screening of the movie *Irreplaceable* on May 10 at St. Viator's Church; a bake sale May 11 at the Marketplace Mall; the "Life Hike," May 12, starting at the Knights on 11th Avenue Hall; and a Mother's Day brunch at the Knights on 11th Avenue hall.

Details of all these events can be found on the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website.

Over the years a number of videos have been created to share the National Week for Life and the Family in Manitoba with as wide an audience as possible. These include a 2015 event dubbed *Late Night with the Bishops*, held after the Mass for Life. Using a talk show format, the three bishops were given an opportunity to share what life and family means to them personally. There are also video messages from 2014 with each of the bishops discussing the meaning and importance of the National Week for Life and the Family. The videos can be found on YouTube by searching NWLF Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

St. Kateri a symbol of faith for St. Paul parishioners

By Andrew Ehrkamp
Grandin Media

ST. PAUL, Alta. (CCN) — For Terrence and Shirley Pruden, St. Kateri Tekakwitha is a reflection of their lives. In appearance. In lifestyle. And in faith.

The 17th-century saint looks like the Prudens, who were born and raised on the Goodfish Lake First Nation, about an hour's drive northwest of St. Paul, Alta. The Prudens, who enjoy gardening, can also relate to St. Kateri's upbringing and communion with nature. She has also become a big part of the Prudens' faith journey at their home parish, St. Paul Cathedral, which hosts a unique ceremony that reflects the life of St. Kateri.

"The fact that she's native, one of our own, makes her special to us," said Terrence. "Her lifestyle was something that we were familiar with. We didn't live that lifestyle, but we were familiar with it through our grandparents."

The Prudens also rely on St. Kateri personally. They ask for her intercession, and they have received it. They say they've found the strength to survive harrowing experiences including a shooting, the loss of a child, cancer, and other health issues.

"I can turn to her and ask her for intercession. I do that," Shirley added.

St. Kateri — known as the "Lily of the Mohawks" — was born in 1656 in upstate New York to a Catholic Algonquin mother and a Mohawk chief. After her baptism, she lived a faith-filled life until her death from tuberculosis in 1680. Miracles and answered prayers have been attributed to St. Kateri.

"Kateri is not only a saint, but



Grandin Media/Andrew Ehrkamp

SPECIAL SAINT — For Shirley and Terrence Pruden, St. Kateri Tekakwitha is a reflection of their lives.

she is a very great saint. She is not just any virtuous woman," said Bishop Paul Terrio.

Terrio began his ministry in the St. Paul diocese shortly after St. Kateri's canonization in 2012. Since then, the diocese has honoured her each year.

Nearly 100 people packed St. Paul Cathedral on April 20 to celebrate the life of St. Kateri, a secondary patron of the diocese, in a unique annual ceremony. It's an event that the Prudens as a family help organize — from the handmade wooden crosses, to an oral history of St. Kateri's life.

Seven girls and young women, dressed identically in a shawl and dress as St. Kateri might have worn, recite sections of a narrative of her life until her death at age 23. Among them are two of the Prudens' own grandchildren, seven-year-old Jasmine and 14-year-old Blossom.

"It means a lot to me to be a part of this, because it's our first native saint and she helped a lot of people and it's our culture, our

people," said Blossom, who is in Grade 8 at the junior high school opposite St. Paul's Cathedral.

During the St. Kateri ceremony, each of the young women places a lily in front of the image of St. Kateri, painted by the Prudens' son Todd.

At the end of mass, they distribute crosses that parishioners have handcrafted in a way that St. Kateri might have done. Each cross is made of two branches of red willow, native to the area around St. Paul. The longer branch is four inches — representing the four Gospels — and the shorter is three inches, representing the Holy Trinity.

The St. Kateri ceremony is short in time, but big in impact:

"It's liturgical. That it is enacted within liturgical action makes it even more profound," Terrio said, adding Catholics are called to holiness and "therefore following in one way or another, St. Kateri."

Terrio can recall as a child growing up near Montreal and his

family driving past the area where St. Kateri was born. "My mom told me the story of Kateri and that stayed with me."

That connection surfaced again years later, in 1994, while Terrio was on mission in Brazil.

"I heard about her in Portuguese from one of my students in the seminary who was doing ministry with street kids on the weekends," Terrio recalled. "He said 'You know, she was orphaned very young and yet she didn't lose her faith. Just like some of my street kids.'"

"St. Kateri was an orphan and we have, in a sense, many orphans. We have orphans in the physical sense, but we also have orphans socially and psychologically," Terrio explained. "And yet in her orphanhood, she only grew closer to Christ."

The St. Kateri ceremony is a powerful reflection of Terrence and Shirley Pruden's Catholic faith that began at Goodfish Lake and in the pews at St. Mathias Parish where they were baptized and married.

It's also a reminder of a powerful plea that the Prudens vividly recall after four decades.

Terrence and Shirley visited his grandparents, sharing tea and bannock on a Saturday in January 1975. Just before they left, his grandmother asked them to promise to be at mass and on time.

"The next morning we went to church. We made it on time, but not for a few minutes, as she had requested," Terrence recalled. "We sat down. My grandmother was kneeling saying her rosary. After we got in, after five minutes . . . she keeled over. Died of a heart attack. By her example, we know that there's more to life than what we were living. We needed to be in church."

The Prudens' wish is that more First Nations people would feel that need.

"A lot of the Aboriginal people have turned about the churches because of residential schools," said Shirley, who attended Blue Quills residential school for Grades 7 and 8 and had a "good" experience.

Terrence said many First Nations people have been raised Catholic, but after the residential

schools experience, they have fallen away from the church.

"The second generation was brought up basically without any form of religion. If they don't have the faith, how can they pass on something they don't have?" Terrence said. "If people would attend the celebration, they would get to know more about her and word would spread."

Shirley Pruden said it has been their faith — and in the later years the intercession of St. Kateri specifically — that helped them survive harrowing experiences during their nearly 50-year marriage.

"We were almost killed. We were shot. We lost a child. We've had a lot of ups and downs, a lot of trials, things we went through together," Shirley



Grandin Media/Andrew Ehrkamp

HONOURING A NATIVE SAINT — The Pruden's grandchildren, seven-year-old Jasmine, and 14-year-old Blossom Pruden, were part of a group of girls and young women who dressed identically in a shawl and dress as St. Kateri might have worn, and recited sections of a narrative of her life until her death at age 23.

said. "It was always falling back on the faith and trusting in God that he would get us through our trials."

Shirley hopes more young people will learn about St. Kateri, and First Nations history, in schools.

And she prays that First Nations people will find their own connection, and fill the pews at St. Paul Cathedral. "We're surrounded by reserves here . . . if a few people came from each community, that church would be full."

Enwerem looks forward to returning home

Continued from page 1

Catholicism in Nigeria, published in 2010.

Enwerem returned to Canada in 2004 in response to an invitation from the Diocese of London, where he worked in parish ministry and took a teaching position at St. Peter's Seminary. It was there he met Rev. Gerard Dewan, a priest from Saskatoon who introduced him, in turn, to the late Msgr. Len Morand and then-Bishop Albert LeGatt, who regularly visited Saskatoon seminarians studying there.

Enwerem put LeGatt in touch with the provincial superior of the Dominican order in Nigeria. In the summer of 2007, they asked him to go to Saskatoon "to have a look at the place" and report back.

Enwerem toured rural and urban parishes with the late Rev. Paul Donlevy, who was serving as chancellor of the diocese. The Dominican wrote his report, and in due course a contract was drawn up between the Order of Preachers and the Diocese of Saskatoon. To his surprise, Enwerem was asked to join his confrères who would be serving here.

His mother was not well, and

he wanted to go home. Asked to serve one year, he ended up serving 10.

For a time he taught at St. Thomas More College, but his service in the diocese has primarily been in parish ministry, which he has thoroughly enjoyed, establishing relationships throughout the diocese, most recently at St. Peter the Apostle and St. Michael the Archangel churches in Saskatoon. "I have had a wonderful staff here, with whom I have really bonded."

As a social scientist, he was able to navigate the differences in culture, and continues to stress the importance of the laity in the life of a parish: "The priest comes and goes, but the community remains. I would say to the parish, 'Take your community in your hands. The pastor is only here to help you navigate.'"

One disappointment of his time in Saskatoon is that the Dominicans assigned to the diocese have not had the opportunity to live in community as they serve their different parishes.

Reflecting on his time in Canada, Enwerem strongly advocates that priests "return to the schools" and build relationships among children and youth. "We can never

abandon the young people," he emphasizes. "They are starved for faith, starved for relationship. The future of the church of Canada is in the schools."

Enwerem suggests that the diocese invite missionary orders of sisters — not just priests — to teach in the schools or provide youth ministry. He would like to see more outreach to the growing African-Canadian community. He and others have taken to offering a monthly African mass, but this is not reaching everyone. "We don't know what is happening with our immigrant families," he says. "How do we nurture them?"

Enwerem is looking forward to returning home, to being close to family, and his return to university teaching. "I will never regret being in parish work, but I am a scholar."

A farewell celebration, which will also mark the 40th anniversary of Enwerem's priestly ordination, will be held July 8 at St. Michael the Archangel Parish, followed by a program and reception at St. Peter the Apostle. Those wishing to attend are asked to obtain a free ticket at www.picatic.com or call 306-384-3270 to register before May 31.

*The family of
Ted Fortosky
invite you to attend
a funeral mass
celebrating his life
11 a.m., Thursday, May 10
St. Mary's Catholic Church
211 Avenue O South, Saskatoon*

Many express gratitude to PM

Continued from page 1

in Watrous, reflected on the newspaper's commitment to ecumenism and Christian unity. "They are one of the papers that always made room for perspectives from other denominations. It probably was ahead of its time in many instances. . . . Not only in theory, but also in practice. That is so important in helping our people to embrace a vision for church that is universal," said Ternier.

Sister Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, reflected on the impact of the publication in her life. Kambeitz recalled reading the newspaper's children's section as a child, and turning to it for formation and opinions as an adult.

"Today is a day to be hugely grateful. I say it with tears, and with a heavy heart, but I also really mean it. This paper has been such a soul-nurturing source for me . . . the *Prairie Messenger* has always been a friend," Kambeitz said. "It has been such a great gift."

During a short program, editor-in-chief Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, expressed the paradox of gathering for a party on a beauti-



Paul Paproski, OSB

Marian Noll, OSU, shared memories of her 15 years as associate editor of the *PM*.

describing how the monks of St. Peter's Abbey began publishing a Catholic paper in 1904, just nine months after arriving as pioneers in Saskatchewan.

First called *St. Peter's Bote* (which means Messenger), the newspaper was published in both German and English, and then in English only — eventually becoming known as the *Prairie Messenger*. Through the years, the award-winning weekly kept the Catholic community informed, connected, and, often challenged.

Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, spoke on behalf of the Benedictines, recalling how members of the community produced the newspaper for many years without the help of paid staff. "It was unheard of that we would have a hired editor, and certainly not a paid proofreader."

He noted that those who took on the role of editor learned on the job, educating themselves and growing in awareness about justice issues in the process. "It was in doing the job that they learned how."

"One of the guys I really admire was Andrew (Britz), because he had a hard time with language, and he wrote some of the best editorials that we can put our fingers on," noted DeMong, listing a number of past editors and contributors, and some of their sacrifices. "These wonderful

people put out so much, it was unbelievable. I say bravo, and hats off to all you have worked for the *Prairie Messenger*."

Marian Noll, OSU, who worked at the *Prairie Messenger* for some 15 years beginning in 1983, shared her memories. "It was a good experience here. I got well taught . . . and I am most grateful."

Miriam Spenrath, OSU, on behalf of Development and Peace, presented a certificate from national president Jean-Denis Lampron recognizing the *Prairie Messenger* "for your exceptional commitment to the cause of social justice and your efforts to improve living conditions for the poorest of the poor in the Global South" and expressing gratitude "for the solidarity that you have shown with the marginalized and oppressed and for your work in helping to strengthen our movement."

On behalf of former Development and Peace animator Michael Murphy, Spenrath also presented the final Leo Kurtenbach Peace Pen Award — given annually for a letter published in the *Prairie Messenger* — to Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB.

National editor Maureen Weber noted the far-reaching and lasting impact of the "little" newspaper.

"The longer I worked here, the more I became surprised at how the *Prairie Messenger* could ignite passion for a cause, could enrage, confuse, comfort and challenge," she said. "Daily surprises have become a way of life here and even the negative ones are welcome because it means that people are awake and engaged — and I think that the readers of the *Prairie Messenger* are more awake and engaged than most people."

Weber offered a litany of thanks, beginning with the monks of St. Peter's Abbey and her colleagues, including Abbot Peter Novecosky and fellow editor Don Ward for their trust and support.

"You could say we have been the Holy Trinity of the *Prairie Messenger* — Peter is like the Holy Ghost, you know? The work gets done, but you never see him.

She also acknowledged St. Peter's Press manager Kelly Wittke, production assistant Kevin Reiter, graphic artist and accounts manager Karen Kolkman, and printer "par excellence" Randy Weber.

Weber extended her particular appreciation to circulation and advertising manager and proofreader Gail Kleefeld, and layout artist Lucille Stewart. "These two special people are the ones with whom I worked most closely . . . they were on the front line of my mistakes on a weekly basis," she said with a smile. She thanked them for their "kindness, understanding and compassion," and "for being patient with my tears. You



Kiply Yaworski

FORMER EDITOR — Former *PM* editor Michael Pomedli holds a Canadian Church Press Award for journalism that he received in the 1970s. Pomedli, here with Abbot Peter Novecosky, was at the farewell open house for the *Prairie Messenger* and St. Peter's Press.

have been grace beyond measure."

Weber also acknowledged the support of her family and mentors, including her parents and brothers, her husband and her four children, her granddaughter Anissa, as well as Rev. Andrew Britz, OSB, the person who brought her to the *Prairie Messenger*.

Weber recalled a Nov. 1, 2000, editorial in which Britz recognized the importance of everyday saints. "I was reminded of that editorial again, when on April 9, Pope Francis released his latest apostolic letter, 'Rejoice and Be Glad,'" she said. "Pope Francis could have been quoting Andrew when he wrote about the 'saints next door' — saying he likes 'to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly who never lose their smile.'"

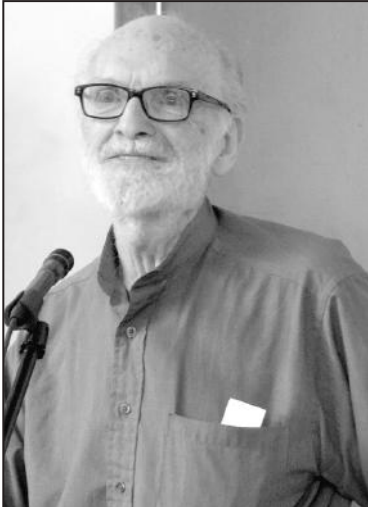
She concluded: "To all you holy people, I give thanks — you are saints in our midst, and you work miracles in our lives every day."

The abbot ended the program with final words of thanks — to faithful readers, to donors whose generosity prolonged the life of the *Prairie Messenger* for several years, as well as to diocesan correspondents and staff, past and present.

"Lastly I want to thank the Benedictine community. Without your support, this would not have happened over the years," said Weber.

Novecosky.

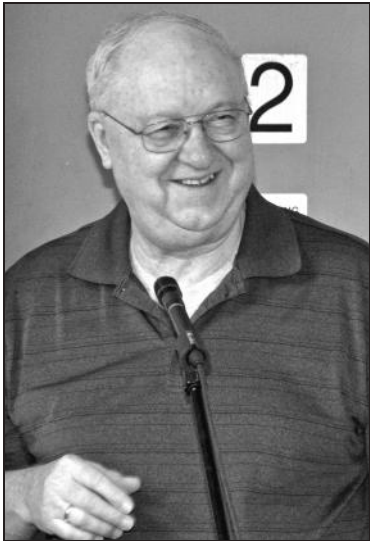
Winding up the program, Novecosky read appropriate words from a recently arrived letter from a subscriber in New Brunswick: "How to say thank you and goodbye? Words are small when feelings are deep. For more than a decade now, the *Prairie Messenger* has been a faithful companion and a trusted mentor on my journey with the Lord. Truly, I have never felt such



Kiply Yaworski

Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, spoke on behalf of the Benedictines, recalling how members of the community produced the newspaper for many years without the help of paid staff.

a connection with any other subscription. I feel this loss very deeply, yet I know that everything has its time. I trust and respect the decision you have made. Thank you sincerely for all your years of delivering the Good News."



Paul Paproski, OSB

Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, ended the program with final words of thanks — to faithful readers, to donors whose generosity prolonged the life of the *Prairie Messenger* for several years, as well as to diocesan correspondents and staff, past and present.

ful spring day to mark a sad event.

"We have come to the end of a tradition of 114 years . . . 114 years of publishing a Catholic newspaper every week," he said,



Kiply Yaworski

PM/PRESS STAFF — Current and former staff at the *Prairie Messenger* and St. Peter's Press at the open house. From left, Gail Kleefeld, circulation and advertising manager, and proofreader; Kevin Reiter (press staff), associate editor Don Ward, layout artist Lucille Stewart, and Tiffany Banow (former press staff member).



Kiply Yaworski

LOOKING BACK — Laura Deibert, a longtime *Prairie Messenger* subscriber, looks at one of the many photo displays at St. Peter's Press during the farewell open house April 28.

‘My soul still dances’ writes Parkinson’s sufferer

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — “Please, God, help the Parkinson’s people to keep faith and go on. I accept, Lord. Give me the strength to go on.”

So wrote Sister Adelaide Fortowsky, OSU, in her diary in 2009.

An Ursuline nun of Prelate, Sask., for 65 years, Fortowsky

drew on her decades of teaching, clowning, worship, and life experiences to bolster her hopeful perspective on living with Parkinson’s disease before her death in July 2016 at the age of 86.

Her reflections and day-to-day experiences with this debilitating disease have been published in a book entitled *My Soul Still Dances: Living with Parkinson’s*. The book, produced with assistance from her

longtime friend, Sister Rosetta Reiniger, OSU, consists of excerpts from Fortowsky’s diary entries.,

“Sister Adelaide and I were friends for 60 years. I was her caregiver for the many years she lived with Parkinson’s disease,” says Reiniger.

“Her creativity helped her cope with her deteriorating health, but it was her faith in God that kept her living with vitality through the

most difficult times, focusing on service to others with her ‘little acts of magic’ and to bring joy to others,” she summarizes.

“She developed a dream that what she called her ‘Parkinson’s Story’ would be printed to assist families and caregivers in grasping what is happening to their loved ones suffering from the disease and to help in finding positive ways of living with Parkinson’s,”

says Reiniger in the foreword.

Fortowsky’s diary entries cover a wide range of emotions, including times of struggle with the disabling effects of the disease. Reiniger notes the prayer: “May the Lord dance with me through it all — at least do a slow waltz.”

Born Bertha Fortowsky, she entered the Ursulines of Prelate in 1951, and became known as Sister Adelaide, making her temporary vows in 1953 and her perpetual vows in 1956. She attended teacher’s college in Saskatoon and taught elementary grades for 29 years in the towns of Barthel, Prelate, Richmond, Macklin, and Quinton, joining the staff at St. Angela’s Academy in Prelate in 1985, and teaching there until 2003.

It was in her persona of Allelu, the clown, that she “stayed young at heart,” creating a prayerful, joyful spirit at the academy and beyond. “She further ministered through her gifts of poetry and creativity by posting notes on her ‘Sunshine Board’ with affirmations to the academy girls and staff, and later to the parishioners in Prelate. She continued these ‘sunshine notes’ when she lived at St. Angela Merici Residence” in Saskatoon, where she spent the last six years of her life, wrote Reiniger.

My Soul Still Dances can be purchased from Reiniger at (306) 361-8034.

Art project developed by Multi-Faith Saskatchewan

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Students from Saskatoon’s Holy Cross High School captured the top three art

awards out of 15 finalists at the 8th annual Saskatchewan Visual Art Awards held in Regina April 21 at the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

Grade 11 student Jenaya Johns took the first prize of \$125, plus a medallion and an art book for her pencil and crayon rendering of a child wearing a hijab, titled “One of Many Children.”

Grade 11 student Louis Oliver won the second prize of \$100 for “Baby Blue,” the face of a child in a blue universe depicting the unity of humanity, and Grade 12 student Dor Li won third prize of \$75 for “Mother and Daughter,” a representation of a mother and child with the explanation, “one small

family in the whole of creation.”

The Saskatchewan Youth Visual Art Project was established in 2011 by Multi-Faith Saskatchewan to encourage students in Grades 9 - 12 to express their view of peace, unity and care of the earth. The 15 artworks were curated by visual artist Madhu Kumar and displayed in one of the Mackenzie’s upper galleries. The collection will be displayed at various locations around Saskatchewan.

Krishan Kapila, who was involved in getting the art project up and running, said the combination of “art, faith and spirituality is such a beautiful combination.” He encouraged the audience to take the time after the ceremony to view and appreciate what the

artworks represented.

Guest speaker Roger Petry, professor of philosophy and co-ordinator for the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development at Luther College, University of Regina, said, “Living sustainably calls us to develop new ways of doing and being in the world that respects the earth, champions the earth, and gives back to the earth.”

Organizers of the project told the gathering that they had received more than 400 entries for the competition. A selection committee whittled that down to 15 award recipients who were each awarded a monetary prize, a medallion, a certificate and a book on art.



Frank Flegel
“One of Many Children” by Jenaya Johns

“Peasant Land Struggles. Mothers Confront Military Dictatorships. Ending Apartheid. Indigenous Rights take Root. Building Back Better after the Earthquake. Water is a Human Right. Calling for Mining Justice. Together for Peace. ”

Over the past 50 years Development and Peace focused on these issues and many more. Through the *Prairie Messenger*, a vehicle of communication, these thrusts for a better world have been conveyed through articles and advertisements, and no doubt impacted the readers. For the solidarity of the *Prairie Messenger* in sharing this Gospel message with us, we are deeply grateful.

— Bernice Daratha, Saskatoon diocesan chair for Development and Peace

Committee examining TRC’s call to implement UNDRIP

Continued from page 3

reconciliation,” said NDP MP Georgina Jolibois, a Dene who represents the northern Saskatchewan riding of Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River. “We see evidence of that in the justice system. Families continue to be hurt. Funding is cut to First Nations. The two per cent cap the prime minister promised to cut is still in place.”

“In reserves across Canada, infrastructure for drinking water is still an issue,” she said. “There are issues around housing for First Nations, employment, and youth opportunities, and the list goes on.”

Liberal MP Dan Vandal, a

Métis representing the Saint Boniface-Saint Vital riding in Manitoba, and a member of the Indigenous and Northern Affairs committee, disputed McLeod’s position, saying the government is “fully committed to implementing all of them.”

He noted the committee is examining the TRC’s call to implement to United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

“We have to take the time to do it properly,” Vandal said. “It would be impossible to do all 94 calls to action within the first mandate, so this is a process that is going to continue well into the second mandate.”

Ursuline residence transitions to care home

By Sandra Kary

SASKATOON — St. Angela Merici Residence in Saskatoon has now been licensed as a personal care home. Home to the Ursulines of Prelate since 1986, the residence has now opened its doors to the public to enjoy the care and community that they have offered their own sisters for years.

“We have completed the modifications and renovations to our residence, not only meeting, but exceeding the requirements set out by the Ministry of Health,” says Theresa Winterhalt who, with Shannon Granger, serves as co-executive director of the facility. “The residence retains its Catholic identity, offering daily mass, holy hour and the rosary. However, people of all faiths (or no faith) are welcome.”

Many of the current residents are Ursuline Sisters, Winterhalt notes, “but we have welcomed our first new resident, and have room for more who need this level of personal care, men or women.”

Adding to a strong staff care team is a new activities director. Exercise programs, crafts, and seasonal activities such as gardening enhance the hospitable home that the residence has been for years. Home-cooked meals draw the community together, as well as the chapel and atrium spaces. Students from Bishop Mahoney School are engaged as volunteers and companions to the residents.

A particular benefit of the Merici Residence is its staffing structure. A full-time kitchen, laundry and housekeeping staff allows aides to be more focused

and interactive with the residents.

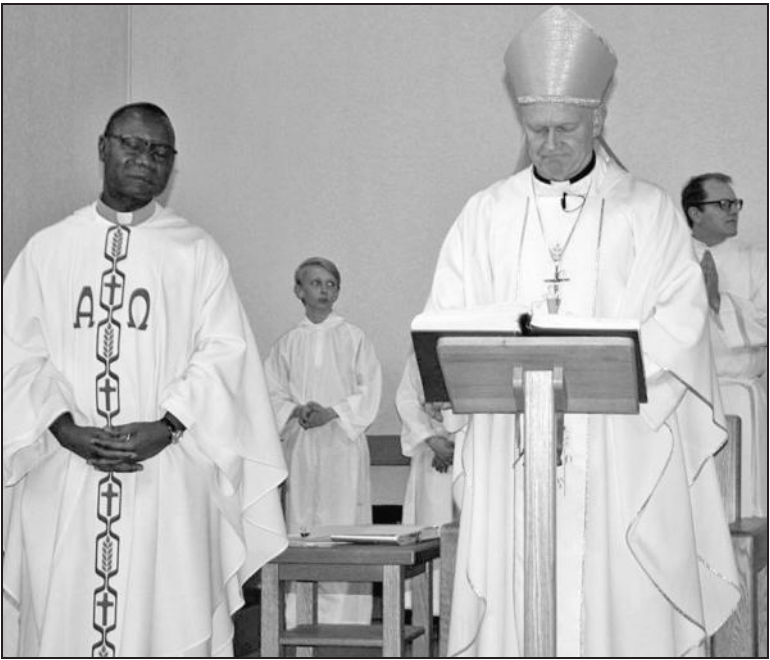
“We have a really dedicated staff,” says Winterhalt. “It’s more than just a job for them; they truly care for our residents.”

The care staff are also trained in the Gentle Persuasion Approach (GPA), which involves a higher level of education and skilled care than would be found in most personal care homes. Added to the staff complement is the services of a Registered Nurse for 24 hours a week, along with a physician who regularly comes on-site to tend to

the needs of residents.

The transition from private residence to licensed private care home has had its share of practical and bureaucratic challenges, but the end result is a warm home available to those who need that next step up in care. It is evident to all who enter the residence that the spirit of the Ursulines still prevails in this place.

For more information, contact Theresa or Shannon at 306-242-5566, ext. 5, or email stangmerici@sasktel.net



Heather Novecosky

HUMBOLDT PRAYERS — Bishop Mark Hagemoen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon presided at a celebration of the eucharist April 20 at St. Augustine Parish in Humboldt, held to pray for all those killed, injured or affected by the Humboldt Broncos bus crash. The bishop and St. Augustine pastor Rev. Joseph Salihu were joined by Revs. Daniel Muyres, OSB, Demetrius Wasyluniuk, OSB, and Paul Paproski, OSB. Since the April 6 tragedy, in which 16 have died and 13 were injured, the Humboldt community has been the focus of prayers and outreach from around the world.

Saskatchewan Knights hold annual convention

YORKTON, Sask. — The 96th annual state council meeting of the Knights of Columbus of Saskatchewan, held in Yorkton April 20 - 22, was a call for Knights to hold fast to the principles around which the order was founded 136 years ago. Under the theme “Domestic Church Inspiring Missionary Disciples,” State Deputy Brian Schatz, the state executive, and the delegates and their families from around the province celebrated the past year’s successes and deliberated on how better to serve the church and the community.

Delegates passed a resolution concerning the 2018 Student Summer Jobs Grant Program, in

which applicants are required to attest that both the job and the organization’s core mandate respect individual human rights in Canada, including “reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of . . . gender identity or expression.” Among other actions in support of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, delegates passed the following resolution:

“That the Saskatchewan State Council, on behalf of the membership, write a letter to the Government of Canada, expressing its objection to the required attestation of the 2018 Student Summer Jobs Program, with copies to the leaders of the various opposition parties

and all provincial councils.”

Delegates also adopted the following resolutions:

Attack on Religious Freedoms and Freedom of Speech in Canada: “That the Saskatchewan State Council develop an action plan to address the erosion of religious freedoms and freedom of speech, including the involvement of all state councils in Canada so as to formulate a national front in this matter.”

Support of Christians in the Middle East: “That all councils in Saskatchewan show their support for Christians in the Middle East through prayer, and that councils and individual Knights be encouraged to make donations to the

Knights of Columbus Christian Refugee Relief Fund.”

The state council elected the following executive, effective July 1: State Deputy — Chris Bencharski of Meadow Lake; State Secretary — Joe Riffel of Saskatoon; State Treasurer — Larry Packet of Davidson; State Advocate — Rene Gaudet of St. Louis; State Warden — Marte Nogot of Saskatoon. Brian Schatz of Regina will continue on the executive as Past State Deputy.

Newly elected State Deputy Chris Bencharski announced the following appointments: honorary State Chaplain — Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina; Associate State Chaplain — Rev. Edward Gibney; State Chaplain — Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Eparchy of Saskatoon.

From the opening mass celebrated by Bayda to the official adjournment by outgoing State Deputy Brian Schatz, the 96th an-

nual convention of the Knights of Columbus of Saskatchewan was a great success, holding firm to the principles of the order: charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. The delegates left Yorkton informed and inspired to go back to their communities and spread the message of the convention theme: “Domestic Church Inspiring Missionary Disciples.”



Kiply Yaworski

PASTORAL CARE APPRECIATION — An annual Pastoral Care Appreciation event was held April 25 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, honouring the volunteers who visit the sick, the dying, the elderly, and the homebound. The evening began with a prayer service led by Rev. Rhéal Bussière and a blessing of caregivers, followed by a reception and entertainment. Co-ordinator of hospital chaplaincy Jacqueline Saretsky expressed her appreciation on behalf of the diocese and provided an update on the situation facing denominational chaplains and pastoral care volunteers in the wake of government funding cuts to spiritual care support services.

Abandoned church deconsecrated

By Frank Flegel

ROWATT, Sask. — Our Lady of the Prairies Catholic Church has probably been seen by more people than most other churches in Saskatchewan. Located in the hamlet of Rowatt, a few kilometres directly south of Regina, the church is on the east edge of Highway 6. Thousands of people would pass by the unobtrusive church with the curious square steeple topped by a cross as they approached the city — the first landmark that Regina was just a few minutes away.

Our Lady of the Prairies Parish was established in 1932 when the community was settled by largely German immigrants. Early masses were held at Springdale School a few kilometres east of the village on a grid road. Local farmers, after a meeting with Archbishop Peter Joseph Monahan, built the church in 1939. The nearby city gradually absorbed the residents of Rowatt, however, and the church was abandoned in 1992 when Rev. Emmet Mooney celebrated the last mass there.

“We tried to keep it going for community events, dinners, meetings, baby showers and the occasional wedding, that sort of thing,” said longtime resident Tim Novak. “A small group of us kept it up, even put in a couple of furnaces, but it needs a new roof and siding that are going to cost thousands of dollars and we just couldn’t afford it anymore. So we held a vote last fall and decided to ask the archdiocese to take it over.”

The church interior appears well-kept and relatively new. The sanctuary was redone in the 1960s following Vatican II.

Archbishop Donald Bolen, in his homily on the afternoon of the deconsecration ceremony, talked about the connections that many of the people present had to the church, including his own grandfather, who settled in the area. It wasn’t until years later that his grandfather’s family moved to the Gravelbourg area where Bolen’s father was born and where he grew up.

Bolen related a story told by an 18th-century rabbi about his

grandfather that showed the power that stories have to transform. The grandfather was a cripple, but got up to dance and leap with joy as he told how the founder of Hassidic Judaism, Baal Shem Tov, danced when he was at prayers. The grandfather got so excited in retelling the story that he forgot he was crippled and danced and was cured.

“Stories tell us about God,” said Bolen, “and in the telling we encounter the presence of God.”

He referred to the day’s Scripture readings that told how Peter and John, on the way to pray at the temple, encountered a crippled beggar. Peter said they had no silver or gold to give but would give what they had, and in the name of Jesus of Nazareth told the beggar to get up and walk, and the cripple was instantly cured. Questioned later by the authorities, Peter told them there was no other name by which we can be saved. There is salvation in no one else.

“That was the Gospel story that was at the heart of this little parish, Our Lady of the Prairies,” said the archbishop.



Kiply Yaworski

AFRICAN-CANADIAN MASS — An African-Canadian Catholic Community choir provided music ministry for a culturally rich celebration of the eucharist with Bishop Mark Hagemoen April 15 at St. Michael Church in Saskatoon. Mass parts and hymns were in various dialects from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and South Sudan. Seven missionary priests from African countries were also on hand for the celebration, including Rev. Iheanyi Enwerem, OP, one of those who initiated a monthly mass for the African-Canadian community in Saskatoon some years ago. At an information meeting after mass, Anthony Olusola, the group’s president, said members are hoping for recognition of the community within the diocese, with an assigned chaplain, and approval to use St. Michael as the host parish for regular eucharistic celebrations.

First annual Bishop’s Cup played out in Regina

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — It was a hard-fought battle, but when it ended the clergy team beat the student all-star team 23 - 22 in the first annual Bishop’s Cup basketball tournament held April 17 at Miller Catholic High School in Regina.

“I think they gave us a few points,” said the sweating team captain, Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen, following the game.

The clergy team was made up of clergy from the archdiocese. Their opponents were selected from the student teams that were playing earlier in the evening tournament. The all-star team players were mostly students, with several who regularly play for their high school teams.

Students from Grade 8 and up were eligible to play in the tournament. This was the first time the tournament was held in Regina. “We started it in Saskatoon,” said Bolen, who served as bishop there prior to his appointment as Archbishop of Regina. “It was such a fun time for everyone, we thought to try it here.”

Cheryl Harvey’s Miller High School Catholic Studies 10 class took on the task of organizing the tournament as part of their Christian Action plan. Harvey said it began with a phone call from arch-

diocesan Youth Ministry co-ordinator Michelle Braden who told her about the tournaments held in Saskatoon and suggested the archbishop would like to do something similar for the kids in Regina. Harvey said her class did everything, designing and sending posters to churches and schools to recruit participants, organizing the teams, designing and making the trophies, scheduling the evening’s games, recruiting referees and score keepers.

The evening began with a pizza supper at 6:30, with the games starting at 7 p.m. Each team was assigned a letter and referred to the posted schedule to determine their opponent and when they played. The preliminary games were 15 minutes each and played on the half courts. The all-star team that played against the archbishop’s clergy team was selected from among those teams.

The Bishop’s Cup game was a half-hour and played on the full court. The clergy team was outfitted with white and blue-trimmed jerseys; the archbishop wore number 55 with “ARCH-DON” on the back. A few other clergy also wore their names on their jerseys.

Harvey and her class offered to do it again next year.

If you look at the end, you find out the good guys win



Liturgy and Life

Brenda Merk Hildebrand

Today’s readings are a call to action. The words offer clear instructions: go into all the world and be Christ’s witness, proclaiming the good news. Some will be tempted to rush out and plunge into the assignment. Others might be tempted to hide away from this imperative. After all, Jesus has disappeared into the clouds, and business as usual can resume. The wise will begin by pondering the words they have heard.

These words are ever ancient and ever new. Each Easter season, as we listen to the same words about the same events, something new catches our attention. While we might imagine how it felt to witness our Lord’s ascension, we also want to be attentive to the message that is offered amidst this spectacular event. Sometimes, one word can change everything.

In the first line of the first reading, we hear the word *Theophilus*. It means, at once, lover and beloved of God. Worthy of pondering, this greeting considers our relationship with God. It is easy, in the midst of the busyness of life, to forget that we are, first and foremost, in a deep, ongoing, loving relationship with our God. Wise was the writer who first noted that what matters most is not who we are, but *whose* we are.

Merk Hildebrand has a passion for education, spiritual and palliative care. She is a Benedictine Oblate of the House of Bread Monastery in Nanaimo, B.C. Contact Brenda through her website: www.thegentlejourney.ca or via email: thegentlejourney@gmail.com

Eager and energetic, before they really knew who they were, the disciples wanted action. They wanted to know when the kingdom would be restored; times and dates confirmed. It is tempting to want that assurance, and tempting to want to make things happen. Only the wise can wait.

We need to co-operate with the divine wisdom which guides the timing of our words and actions. Luke recounts the wisdom and hope Jesus offered, acknowledging that power would accompany the presence of the Holy Spirit. Mark’s Gospel makes clear that the disciples went out proclaiming the good news “while the Lord worked with them.”

Sometimes we chafe at the waiting. We know how we want things to turn out. We have legitimate longings, real hopes for the manifestation of good in our lives and in the lives of those we love. We know who needs a new job, who longs to carry a baby to term, who should join the church, and whose pain-filled struggles have been going on long enough. We long for personal, family, community and world peace, sometimes feeling captive by things that are beyond our power. It is easy to stand there, looking up to heaven, wishing we could have things our way.

Ascension of the Lord

May 13, 2018

Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47
Ephesians 1:17-23 or 4:1-13
Mark 16:15-20

Paul offers a wisdom through which we can remain hopeful. He reminds us that when Jesus ascended, “he made captivity itself a captive.” We are not imprisoned by the things we cannot control. We simply go about living a life worthy of our calling. Key words remind us how: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love. The reminder to live with one another in peace might be timely; we may have long forgotten the warmth of Christmas.

We are sent out to share the good news that came to birth in that season, and which came to fullness in the course of Jesus’ life. He taught in words and action, right up until the last moment of his life, and again until the last moment of

the new life he lived after his resurrection. Every moment worthy of pondering. Gratefully, I recall the wisdom of the one who invited me, in every falling down, to look for something in Jesus’ life that could guide me in mine. It is ongoing: the falling down, the dying, and the rising to new life.

Each time, however, life continues in a new way. We may become empowered to speak in tongues; perhaps not in the traditional gift of tongues, but in a manner no less effective. Harsh, sarcastic and cynical words transform into words that are encouraging and hope-filled. In the midst of a toxic situation, the unkind and rude words or actions of others are no longer poisonous. In a world that is still waiting to hear the good news, we come ever closer to living a true Christian life.

Paul reminds us that we can come “to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” He graciously and wisely prays that the spirit will be revealed to us, and the eyes of our hearts enlightened. He hopes we will hold fast to the riches of the glorious inheritance that has been given to us.

“Not on my shift.” I first heard these words while watching a movie in which the hero faced intense opposition. Some thought the price of virtue and noble character too high, and suggested taking the easy way out. The hero stood tall in the face of adversity, from both the “enemy” and from colleagues who saw no value in “taking the high road.” It required great wisdom and strength to face the challenge with courage and integrity.

“In the end, the good guys win.” During one Bible study session, our conversation considered all that seemed wrong and hopeless in our troubled world. One woman, eyes sparkling in delight, held up her Bible and pointed to it: “I peeked ahead. In the end, the good guys win!” Her words offered a reminder of the truth we had forgotten. We laughed light-heartedly as our sense of hope was restored.

There are many ways to share the Gospel, the good news of our lives. It is the hope to which we have been called, and the promise of the riches of the inheritance which awaits. May we each hear these words for ourselves: “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”

‘Digital immigrants’ struggle to learn the language of technology

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Information technology and social media aren’t my mother tongue. I’m a digital immigrant. I wasn’t born into the world of information technology, but migrated into it, piecemeal. I first lived in some foreign territories.

I was nine years old before I lived with electricity. I had seen it before; but neither our home, our school, nor our neighbours had electricity. Electricity, when I first saw it, was a huge revelation. And while I grew up with radio, I was 14 before our family got its first television set. Again, this was a revelation — and manna for my adolescent hunger for connection to the larger world. Electricity and television quickly became a mother tongue — one lit our home and other brought the big world into it. But the phone was still foreign. I was 17 when I left home and our family still didn’t have a phone.

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The phone wasn’t much to master, but it would be a goodly number of years before I mastered much in the brave new world of information technology: computers, the Internet, websites, mobile phones, smartphones, television and movie access through the Internet, cloud storage, social media, virtual assistants, and the world of myriad apps.

It’s been a journey! I was 38 when I first used a VCR, 42 before I first owned a computer, 50 before I first accessed the web and used email, 58 when I owned my first mobile phone, the same age when I first set up a website, 62 before I first texted, and 65 before I joined Facebook. With email, texting, and Facebook being all I can handle, I still do not have either an Instagram or Twitter account. I’m the only person in my immediate religious community who still prays the office of the church out of a book rather than off a mobile device.

I protest that paper has soul while digital devices do not. The responses I get are not particularly sympathetic. But it’s for reasons of soul that I much prefer to have a book in my hand than a Kindle device. I’m not against information technology; mainly it’s just

that I’m not very good at it. I struggle with the language. It’s hard to master a new language as an adult and I envy the young who can speak this language well.

What’s to be said about the revolution in information technology? Is it good or bad?

Obviously, it has many positives: It’s making us the most informed people in the history of this world. Information is power and the Internet and social media have levelled the playing field in terms of access to information and this is serving well the developing nations in the world. Moreover, it’s creating one global village out of the whole world. We now know all of our neighbours, not just those who live nearby. We’re the best-informed and best-connected people ever.

But all of this also has a pejorative underbelly: We talk to each other less than we text each other. We have many virtual friends but not always many real friends. We watch nature on a screen more than we ever physically touch it. We spend more time looking at a device in our hands than actually engaging others face to face.

I walk through an airport or any other public space and see the majority of people staring at their phones. Is this a good thing? Does it foster friendship and community? Or is it their substitute? It’s too early to tell.

The initial generations who lived through the industrial revolution did not have any way of knowing what the effects of this would be long-range. The technological revolution, I believe, is just

as radical as the industrial revolution and we are its initial generation. At this time we have no way of knowing where this will ultimately take us, for good or bad.

But one negative that seems already evident is that the revolution within information technology we are living through is destroying the few remaining remnants we still retain in terms of keeping “Sabbath” in our lives. The 13th century mystic Rumi once lamented: “*I have lived too long where I can be reached.*” That’s infinitely truer of us today than it was for those living in the 13th century. Thanks to the electronic devices we carry around with us we can be

reached all the time — and, too often, let ourselves be reached all the time. The result is that now we no longer have any time apart from what we regularly do.

Our family times, our recreational times, our vacation periods, and even our prayer times are constantly rendered regular time by our “being reached.” My fear is that while we are going to be the most informed people ever, we may well end up the least contemplative people ever.

But I’m an outsider on this, a digital immigrant. I need to bow to the judgments of those who speak this language as their mother tongue.



96th annual

Mount Carmel Pilgrimage

(two miles north of Carmel, Sask.)

Sunday, July 22

Program:

9:30 An hour with Mary
Marian hymns, rosary,
Sacrament of reconciliation

10:45 An hour with God's family
Sunday eucharist
Blessing of fields
Blessing of the sick

12:00 An hour with our diocesan family
Lunch & quiet time with the Blessed Sacrament

1:30 An hour with the Lord
Hymns
Stations of the Cross
Blessing with the Blessed Sacrament

Two traditions have much to offer each other

Both Lungs

Brent Kostyniuk



Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, was once quoted as saying, “Grief is the price you pay for loving.” While the sentiment is not original, it is, nevertheless, true. Thus, it is with mixed emotions this final Both Lungs for *Prairie Messenger* is being written. Sadness at the loss of a truly wonderful institution and joy to have been a part of it.

This column came into existence at the encouragement of Metropolitan Lawrence Hucaluk, OSBM, of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Winnipeg, who, like so many others, saw the need to share Eastern spirituality and theology with those whose faith stems from western traditions. Ukrainian Catholics, not well-versed in their own faith, might also find enlightenment.

Encouragement is one thing,

Brent Kostyniuk lives in Edmonton. He has a bachelor of theology from Newman and is a freelance writer. He and his wife, Bev, have been married for 40 years and have eight grandchildren. Find Brent’s Both Lungs columns at: <http://www.royal-doors.net/category/both-lungs/>

inspiration is another; not only inspiration, but focus. That focus came from the words of Saint John Paul II who said the church must learn to breathe through both lungs, East and West. Hence “Both Lungs.”

While breathing through both lungs comes naturally to most of us, it is a much different matter for the church. The vast majority of the 1.2 billion Catholics belong to the Latin, or Roman, church. The remaining 16 million Catholics (1.5 per cent) belong to one of 23 Eastern Catholic churches. They practise the traditions that follow one of five Eastern rites — Alexandrian, Armenian, Byzantine, Antiochian and Chaldean — named for the ancient centres of Christianity where they originated.

John Paul II felt so strongly about the church’s need to breathe through both lungs that on May 2, 1995, he promulgated the apostolic letter *Orientalis Lumen* — The Light of the East.

“The light of the East has illumined the universal church, from the moment when ‘a rising sun’ appeared above us (Luke 1:78): Jesus Christ, our Lord whom all Christians invoke as the Redeemer

of man and the hope of the world.” John Paul was also well aware of his own connection with the East. “A pope, son of a Slav people, is particularly moved by the call of those peoples to whom the two saintly brothers Cyril and Methodius went. They were a glorious example of apostles of unity who were able to proclaim Christ in their search for communion between East and West amid the difficulties which sometimes set the two worlds against one another.”

Moreover, John Paul said it was essential for Latin Catholics to appreciate and draw from the East. “Our Eastern Catholic brothers and sisters are very conscious of being the living bearers of this tradition, together with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. The members of the Catholic Church of the Latin tradition must also be fully acquainted with this treasure and thus feel, with the pope, a passionate longing that the full manifestation of the church’s catholicity be restored to the church and to the world, expressed not by a single tradition, and still less by one community in opposition to the other; and that we too may all be granted a full taste of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal church which is preserved and grows in the life of the churches of the East as in those of the West.”

While 16 million Eastern Catholics are in communion with Rome, a far greater number are members of a variety of Orthodox Churches. Like the faithful of numerous western churches, they are sign there is still division with Christianity.

However, as Orthodox theologian Bishop Kallistos Ware points out, there is cause for hope. “There are of course doctrinal and canonical issues which need to be clarified between Orthodoxy and Rome . . . yet, when full allowance has been made for all this, it remains true that there is a vast area of common ground that the two sides share. We both believe in God as Trinity, in Jesus Christ as God incarnate; we both accept the eucharist as the true Body and Blood of the Saviour; we have a

common devotion to the Mother of God and the saints, and we both pray for the faithful departed.”

During the divine liturgy a blessing is given to “ . . . all you Christians of the true faith.” Breathing through both lungs is about appreciating all our faith has given us. It is about walking together, hand in hand, realizing we have much to offer each other. The East retains Tradition and spirituality preciously preserved through the ages. It offers all a chance to breathe through Both Lungs.



Kostyniuk

GIFTS OF FAITH — “Breathing through both lungs is about appreciating all our faith has given us,” writes Brent Kostyniuk. “It is about walking together, hand in hand, realizing we have much to offer each other.” (Brent and Bev, in Canmore, Alta.)

God may not care about a basketball score, but God cares for the players

Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



There have been many ways throughout history that humans have attempted to describe their relationship with the Divine. In ancient worlds, mother/goddesses and father/warriors along with multiple minor gods populated the heavens and human beings both loved and feared them. Pantheons of Greek and Roman gods, ruling over heavenly realms, were variously benevolent or treacherous toward humans, often meddlesome, and always capricious. Men and women struggled to appease these gods through ritual worship and propitiatory sacrifices, navigating with difficulty the volatile human/divine relationship.

Later attempts to describe God in philosophical terms resulted in

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conceptual images where God was the “Unmoved Mover,” the “ontological Ground of Being” and even the anonymous clockwork maker in the sky. The philosopher’s god was distant, abstract and indifferent to the human plight.

Not so the Judaeo-Christian revelation where God is not one unpredictable figure amongst many, nor a remote sky-dweller. The God revealed in the Judaeo-Christian dispensation is one who draws near to humankind in a relationship of love, inviting each person into a personal encounter. It is a relationship characterized by intimacy and solicitude — both of which can be hard for us to believe.

That an infinite, powerful God might desire intimacy with us seems far-fetched. I recall a conversation with one of my nieces several years ago. She is a young woman who grew up without any faith tradition and was attending a Christian college where she had been recruited to play on the basketball team. She was bemused to discover that not only did each school day begin with prayer, so did each bas-

ketball practice and game. “They prayed,” she said with astonishment, “about everything!”

“I doubt if God, the Creator of everything, is really interested in the everyday details of our lives — and whether or not we win or lose a game!” she said.

People have often not encountered the God of the psalmists and the prophets. Their God is, after all, the God who knits us together in our mother’s womb, has carved us in the palm of God’s hand, and counted the hairs on our head. This is the God who, if we go as far as the east is from the west, descend to the deepest ocean or ascend highest mountain, will still be there, as lover, companion and saviour.

The God of Jesus Christ invites us into the same intimate relationship that he has with his “Abba.” Naming us as beloved sons and daughters of the one God, Jesus promises to be with us in everything, to the extent that he can say that the Father and he actually come to dwell within us.

And far from being capricious or malevolent, the God portrayed by Old Testament prophets and psalmists and incarnated in the figure of Jesus, is described by the words steadfast, compassionate and rich in mercy. “For God so loved the world,” John’s Gospel tells us, that we are given his only son for our salvation.

It is actually a stunning claim, that we are created in love, held in love and destined for the fullness

of love in union with the Divine. We could never have come up with it on our own. It is revelation — the pulling back of the veil between the sacred and the mundane — that shows us this. It is God’s own doing, revealing God’s very heart and God’s purposes for God’s creation.

Such newness begins with Israel’s experience of God and unfolds across generations. Israel’s understanding developed in contradistinction to the surrounding polytheistic cultures, which presented unclear and contradictory versions of warring gods where creation and humankind were unwanted children. Israel’s understanding, reflected in the “Shema,” “Hear O Israel,” proclaimed the sovereignty of God as the one Creator of heaven and earth in whom all power resided. Most significantly, there were no other gods and all that existed had its origin in this one God, who created out of love. One of Israel’s unique contributions was to affirm that God alone was the Creator and that God loves God’s creation.

Such a view also stands in contrast with later Greek philosophical thought. Aristotle affirms that human beings do seek to know and love God, but that God is an object of love, not a lover. The God of the Greek philosophers lacks nothing and is in itself complete, meaning that love will always and can only be a one-way street.

Gradually, Israel comes to understand more about this God who

invites them into a covenant relationship. Surprisingly, God desires to be their personal God: “I will be your God and you will be my people,” runs like a refrain through the Old Testament. Not only is God’s love elective, choosing Israel from among all other nations, it is characterized by passion and compassion. “*Hesed*,” wombish-compassion, is the chosen word of the prophets to describe God’s feelings toward Israel.

The beautiful Song of Songs is further given to Israel as a metaphor, a love song describing God’s relationship to humankind and ours to God. It invites us to mystical knowledge and experience, holding forth the promise that we can enter into union with God and it will be not a sinking into oblivion, but a unity of love whereby God and the person become one.

The revelation of God’s unbounded love culminates and becomes visible in Jesus. We need no further proof than this: the God-man becomes human to make us divine. In every word and every deed, in his living and dying, Jesus’ love is personal, intimate, tender and fierce. Furthermore, it is there for our taking.

“I doubt if the all-powerful God cares about a basketball game,” my niece said. Perhaps not so much about the score, I think, but about the players — I have no doubt. My entire faith rests upon it.

What did we ever do before we had cellphones?

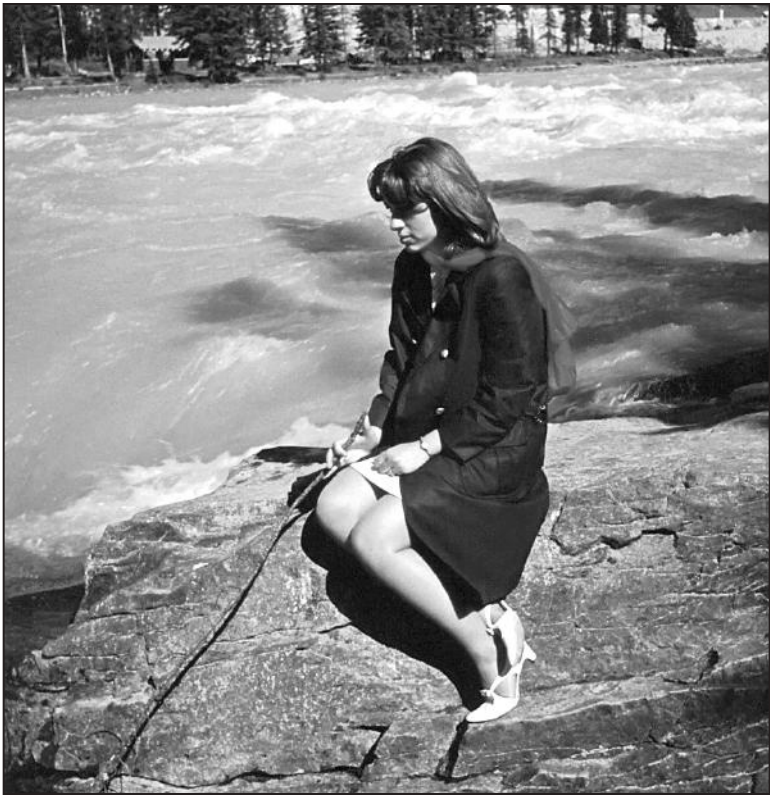
By Edna Froese

Well, to begin with, we kept our promises — or faced consequences. If I agreed to meet my husband in two hours in the Midtown Plaza, I then made it happen. No impulse errands, no dawdling in the library or forgetting to leave time to find a parking spot, because I had no way of letting him know I would be late. Few things irritate as much as not knowing how long one must wait or what caused the delay.

In other words, we made plans in the days before cellphones, but those plans were both looser (“fudge” time had to be allowed — and that didn’t mean chocolate!) and tighter (last-minute changes were not allowed). Since we agreed on arrangements face-to-face or in actual phone conversations, details were clarified from the beginning: if there was a subsequent query — “what do you mean you thought we were meeting at the Citizen’s Café? We agreed on Little Bird!” — that indicated a serious memory loss, not a missed text message.

Yes, there were screw-ups, some monumental ones. I’ll not forget the day my father forgot to leave money with my mother before they parted for the afternoon’s shopping in the big city of Saskatoon. The wasted hours and hurt feelings taught everyone in the

Froese taught English literature at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon for many years until her retirement. She currently works part time as academic editor while relishing the freedom to read and write for pleasure.



PRE-SELFIES — The author, near Athabasca Falls, Alta., back in a time when staring at the river was perfectly acceptable and required no device.

vicinity something about thinking ahead and about due consideration. For me, the lesson went beyond planning: learn to write cheques and always have money of my own — but that’s a digression.

Before we had cellphones, we paid better attention to the situation in which we had placed ourselves for however long it lasted. I’m not saying I never took a book with me to an appointment or some paper and pencils for doodling my way through boring committee meetings. However, neither book nor paper had been specifically engineered to push all our addiction buttons. If we had to

wait in line somewhere, we noticed other people in the lineup, and often as not, talked to the bloke in front of us or the garrulous grandma behind us. Admittedly, those of us with fewer sociability genes preferred private daydreams to public small-talk, but we were usually not oblivious to our surroundings. To quote Thich Nhat Hanh, we walked the dog to walk the dog, not to do business online or exchange photos with absent friends.

At the theatre, we were present to what was happening onstage — or at least refrained from distracting others. Funerals and

other ceremonial services had our attention, and none was interrupted by a ringing phone. The rare person who carried a pager (usually a physician, maybe the theatre’s house manager) might have to exit, but did so apologetically and silently.

It was true we sometimes returned home to discover that some emergency had presented itself, and we had not been there to respond. There were some missed final conversations. Without cellphones, we could not pay attention to anything and everything that might warrant our interventions. We could, however, focus on what was with us and around us — for much longer time spans.

Before we had cellphones, life was less controlled, more ambiguous, more subject to happenstance. We found out precisely when our guests would arrive only as we saw them on the driveway, not sooner. Since we couldn’t text home with a picture, we bought inappropriate items and had to take them back later. Of necessity, decisions were made sometimes without consultation, but we probably thought more carefully first, knowing we had sole responsibility.

If we had engine failure along a lonely road, it might be hours before someone passed by, or we walked to get help. When we travelled to more remote places, we packed emergency supplies. If conditions were too risky, we simply didn’t travel at all. Did we stay at home more? Perhaps not — there was no virtual reality to substitute for old-fashioned visiting. It’s hard now to remember what life was like. Whether or not there were more tragedies then is

impossible to say.

Most likely we lived with more trust, because we had to, not because it was easier, although it might have been. I remember one occasion when snow and stalled traffic delayed my return home on the city bus. I sat helplessly, fear churning in the pit of my stomach, with our two younger children, waiting, knowing that our oldest son, still too young for this, was surely on his way home from school to a locked and empty house. My over-active imagination pictured this bereft child, standing at our back door, cold and frightened. When I did arrive home — no footprints were visible in the heavy snow — my neighbour phoned immediately to tell me she had seen our son and had gone to fetch him back to her place, where she fed him lunch and kept him safe until I was home.

We couldn’t control our world; we couldn’t minimize all risk; we were often out of communication, dependent on strangers and our own wits. Yet we lived, as we all still do, in the midst of the quotidian things of life, the messiness of relationships, and the incomparable beauties and joys that life provides. Our dependencies are different now; our responsibilities play out differently as well. Despite all our technology, we still can’t control our world, still can’t minimize all risk, still screw up our communications.

So I believe, as firmly as ever, that whatever slick new technology will yet be invented, it will never negate the need to keep our promises, to show due consideration, to pay careful attention to those around us, and not to forget the grace of trust.

Poetry is a major vehicle for telling stories, yet many are still afraid of it

By Caitlin Ward

I maintain to this day that the most pretentious thing I’ve ever uttered is this: “I never liked Federico García Lorca’s poetry until I read it in the original Spanish.”

It was especially bad, I think, because I pronounced his name with a Castillian accent: Federico Gar-th-EE-ah Lorca.

The trouble is, it’s accurate: the sentiment, and the pronunciation. I knew many people who had read Lorca in translation, often because Leonard Cohen referred to his work so often, but I hadn’t met many who much liked his writing. I spent a few years in graduate school studying Cohen and his work, but I’d never devoted much time to thinking about his love for Lorca, because I just didn’t see the appeal.

It was after I started to grasp Spanish well enough to read it (with the help of a few dictionaries, of course) that my sister asked if Leonard Cohen’s “Take This

Waltz” made more sense in Spanish. The song’s lyrics are by Cohen, but modelled after Lorca’s poem *Pequeño Vals Vienés*.

It was the first time I’d tried to read Lorca in Spanish. And in doing so, I learned that no, the poem makes no more sense in Spanish than it does in English. But it’s much prettier. “Forest of desiccated (or stuffed) pigeons (or doves)” just doesn’t sound very good compared to “*un bosque de palomas disecadas*.” I’ll admit that I have no idea what he’s talking about in either language, but somehow it makes more sense in Spanish. Lorca’s writing is magical, and floral, and strange. In Spanish, it’s melodic and surreal. In English, it’s bizarre and clumsy.

As I’ve learned the Spanish language, I’ve also learned just how difficult it is to translate anything at all, let alone poetry. Languages come with embedded cultural assumptions, unique turns of phrase, and peculiar grammatical structures that don’t necessarily exist in your native tongue. There are words that encompass more meaning than a direct translation can supply. In Spanish, for example, there are different ways of saying “to be,” depending on what you mean by “being” in that

moment. There are different ways of saying “to know,” depending on what kind of knowledge you are referring to at the time. The language has at least a half-dozen more ways to conjugate verbs than English does. They grant the speaker and the listener levels of meaning and understanding that simply don’t exist in this language. Spanish is much more precise than is English. In a larger sense, the result is a different way of understanding one another and the larger world. In a more immediate sense, it means that Lorca’s poetry doesn’t do so well in English, especially when it’s translated closely.

The interesting thing about “Take This Waltz,” though, is that Cohen understands the poetry of Lorca’s work well enough that his version of *Pequeño Vals Vienés*, although not exactly a faithful rendering of the poem, gets at the feeling of it far better than more direct translations of it do. Cohen captures the otherworldly appeal of Lorca’s writing: the way it upsets your balance just a little bit; how it makes no literal sense, but somehow still speaks to you.

All of this has made me think a great deal about poetry as a whole. I’ve spent much of my

adult life teaching poetry and talking about song lyrics. I maintain that poetry and lyrics are not the same thing, but in many ways they serve a similar purpose. They give an impression, communicate a feeling, explain a personal version of reality.

The funny thing about this, for me at least, is how so often people respond to lyrics automatically and naturally, and yet approach poetry with trepidation, and sometimes even fear. Every year, the first time I put a poem up on the board in one of my classes, I feel the room temperature drop. There’s a snapping anxiety in the air. Oh God no. It’s a poem.

I’ve talked to others who teach poetry, and so far as I can tell that experience is nearly universal. I’ve learned that many students approach poems as a sort of cipher or secret code, like we’re all Indiana Jones. If we pull the wrong lever or select the wrong cup or misinterpret that one line, it’ll mean sudden and

certain death.

It makes me a little sad. Poetry has been *the* major vehicle for telling stories for much of human history. Novels weren’t invented until a few centuries ago. Literacy did not become widespread until 200 years ago, and even then only in certain places. Poems, recited or written, were a source of entertainment, how we learned about ourselves and our history, how we communicated ideas and values. They have been a fundamental part of who we are and what we know about ourselves for so long.

It’s a minor tragedy that we can be so afraid of them. I’m not exactly sure when or how that happened. I think it has a bit to do with how intentionally opaque Modernist poetry can be, and a lot to do with many high school English teachers (some of mine included) telling students that each poem has one (probably hidden) meaning, and if they don’t get it right, they’ll fail this essay.

It makes me wonder how a high school English teacher would deal with a Lorca poem, or by extension, a Cohen song. In English or in Spanish, I don’t think there’s a code to crack. Just a lot of desiccated doves. Or stuffed pigeons. In a forest.

Take This Waltz
Leonard Cohen
(after Lorca)

Ward is a Saskatoon-based freelance writer who spends her days (and most nights) working at a small Catholic college.

A time for looking back, and for looking ahead

Screenings, Readings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



It has been a privilege over the years to share thoughts with you in this space on the world cinema scene and, from time to time, on select readings that hopefully provide some illumination in these challenging times. In this second to last column I want first to thank my wonderful editor, Maureen Weber, for her positive feedback and encouragement, something every writer needs.

Maureen has also been instrumental in getting media accreditation for me to major film festivals where I've been able to seek out and bring you highlights from some of the best in new dramatic and documentary work.

I've just returned from New York's Tribeca Film Festival. Among the rewards of attending film festivals are serendipitous encounters and conversations. At Tribeca, purely by chance, I met Saskatoon-based Wally Start from the Western Canadian television and film production company Angel Entertainment.

One of the highlights at Tribeca was a first look at an important and timely docuseries, *Bobby Kennedy for President*, that began streaming on Netflix April 27. I'll wrap up with more best bets from that festival on May 9.

RFK died on my 16th birthday in 1968 while I was a student at St. Peter's College, and it was there that a passion for cinema was awakened by Bede Hubbard's

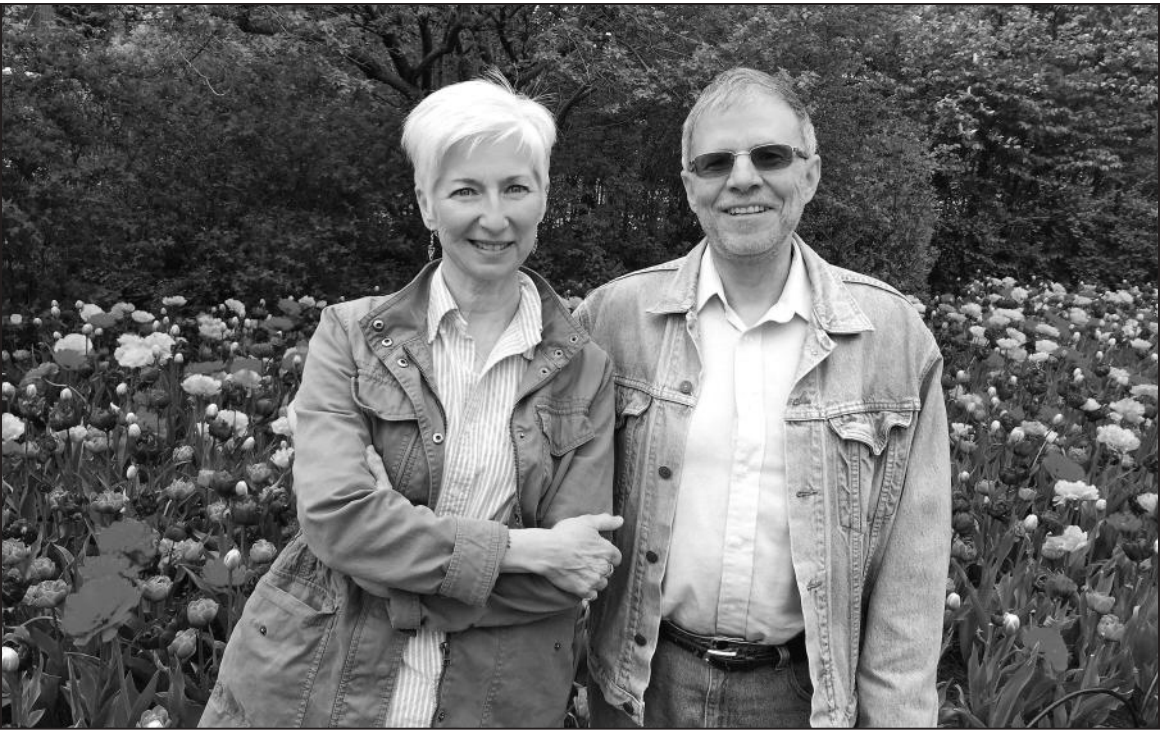
"Ciné Club." I was particularly moved by a showing of the 1968 film *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. My first writing for the *Prairie Messenger* goes back over 35 years to the early 1980s at the instigation of then editor Father Andrew Britz.

What can movies tell us about the "signs of the times"? In 1982, reflecting on this quintessential form of popular culture, I wrote the following:

"Film is a topic which can be written about extremely seriously, but which is usually taken very lightly. For many movie patrons it is something to go with hot buttered popcorn on a Friday night.

"The mass movie-going public is between the ages of 15 and 24, when people start having more disposable income without as yet too many responsibilities. The great majority of commercial films are targeted to this age group. This is also where the competition for the entertainment dollar is fiercest. So today movie producers are resorting to 'videotronic' tricks and recycling-for-television, among other things, in order to bring in the tens of millions of dollars in revenue needed for most big releases to break even."

Of course there will always be "art" films, "cult" films, and a hardcore of aficionados and critics with more than a passing interest in the hit parade of current offerings. But, let's face it,



Leigh Weber

FAITH AND FILM — Gerald Schmitz and Maureen Weber in Ottawa during tulip festival season last May. Gerry's book-length anthology currently in preparation — *The Best of Screenings & Meanings: A Journey through Film* — will include some new content as well as selected columns drawn from the years 1999 - 2018.

movies for the masses are, more than anything, disposable entertainment."

That critical assessment still seems mostly relevant today, though the sums involved are greater (hundreds of millions and billions of dollars), there is more and better production for television, and streaming services like Netflix have emerged as both major content creators, often of creditable quality, and viewing platforms with an expanding international reach.

With so much appearing on screens of all sizes, how to decide what to write about? The easiest, most accessible targets are the commercial products made for mass amusement, which are usually also the least interesting or

enlightening. And there is little point going to film festivals unless it is to seek out a richer international diversity of films.

Festivals like Sundance that promote edgy independent cinema and documentary excellence have provided impetus and inspiration to explore cinematic worlds beyond mainstream Hollywood. What is most exciting about the arrival of movie streaming via the Internet is that many more films will become available to broader audiences, including those outside major metropolitan centres, than through the route of traditional theatrical releases.

The big screen will still be the best way to see some films. But the home screen will continue to bring a wider range of dramas and documentaries to more people than ever before. On balance, that is a good thing.

The search for work that is worth watching has been a central motivation as my writings on film became a more regular weekly feature under the heading "Screenings & Meanings." It can be fun to trash a mediocre or bad movie playing at the multiplex, and there is generally no shortage from which to choose. My faithful editor, Maureen, says she enjoys when I use sarcasm. But if the passing parade of forgettable, meaningless fare doesn't hold my interest, I cannot recommend it.

There can be reasons to address movie failures, ones I don't like or even loathe. Still, it seems to me a waste of time writing about that which is simply a waste of time. So my approach has always been to look for something more than mere throwaway fare, for something that speaks to the culture of the times or that at least holds the possibility of meaning.

These and many more musings covering over 35 years of film comment are part of a book-length anthology currently in preparation — *The Best of Screenings & Meanings: A Journey through Film* — that will include some new content as well as selected columns drawn from the years 1999 - 2018. The aim is to have this out by the summer. It will then be available as an e-book in pdf form that can be

downloaded online at no charge from the website www.screeningsandmeanings.com. Print copies will become available to be ordered from the site for the cost of printing and postage.

In closing, there is just one new movie I want to mention which will be released in North America later this month. It is a documentary by the German master filmmaker Wim Wenders, who also directed my most loved film of all time, *Wings of Desire*, from 1987. The title is *Pope Francis — A Man of His Word*. A press release describes it as "a rare co-production with the Vatican, featuring exclusive behind-the-scenes footage and the pope addressing his audience directly, answering the world's questions on life, death, social justice, immigration, ecology, wealth inequality, materialism and the role of the family. . . . Throughout the film, Pope Francis shares his vision of the church and his deep concern for the poor, his involvement in environmental issues and social justice, and his call for peace in areas of conflict and between world religions."

There is also a presence of Saint Francis in the film, connecting back to the pope's namesake, through accounts of legendary moments in the saint's own life as a reformer and ecologist. In an era of deep distrust of politicians and people in power, when lies and corruption and alternative facts are the order of the day, *Pope Francis — A Man of His Word*, shows us a person who lives what he preaches and who has gained the trust of people of all faith traditions and cultures across the world."

This is a movie opening I eagerly anticipate. I hope it will bring the story of Pope Francis and his inspirational message to many more people than will have read books about him (the best of which so far is the 2015 second edition of Paul Valleney's *Pope Francis — The Struggle for the Soul of Catholicism*).

In these testing times a movie about faith that sustains one's faith in movies is heartening as both a reason to believe and to keep watching.

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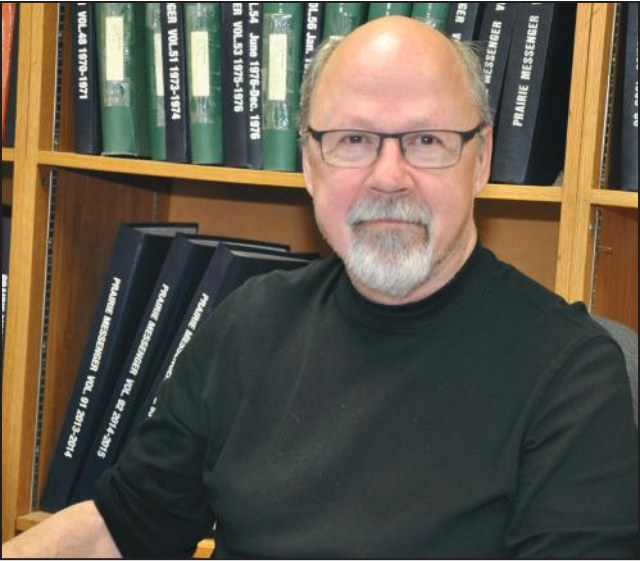
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Prairie Messenger and



Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, has been the editor of the *Prairie Messenger* since 2004.



Don Ward has been associate editor with the *Prairie Messenger* since 2001.



Karen Kolkman has been a graphic designer and accounting manager at St. Peter's Press for the past 10 years.



Randy Weber has been the printer at St. Peter's Press since the 1970s.



Gail Kleefeld, Lucille Stewart and Kevin Reiter on mailing day at the *Prairie Messenger*. Kevin works part time in mailing and production.



Kelly Wittke is the manager at St. Peter's Press. She has been with St. Peter's since 1995.



The counter on the web press marking the final count for printing the *Prairie Messenger*.



Randy Weber holding the final *Prairie Messenger* copy printed at St. Peter's Press.



St. Peter's Press staff



PRAIRIE MESSENGER/ST. PETER'S PRESS STAFF — From left: Kevin Reiter, press production; Randy Weber, printer; Don Ward, associate editor; Kelly Wittke, press manager; Peter Novecosky, OSB, editor; Maureen Weber, associate editor; Gail Kleefeld, circulation, advertising and proofreading; Lucille Stewart, layout; Karen Kolkman, graphic artist and accounting.



Gail Kleefeld is the circulation manager, the advertising manager, proofreader, and ensures the *Prairie Messenger* gets mailed every week. She has been working at St. Peter's Press/*Prairie Messenger* since 1990.



Maureen Weber has been associate editor with the *Prairie Messenger* since 1994.



All photos taken by Paul Paproski, OSB



Lucille Stewart is the layout artist for the *Prairie Messenger*. She started working at St. Peter's Press as a typesetter in the early 1970s.

PM editor sought to make paper a vehicle of dialogue

By Michael Pomedli

"I told the abbot that I want you to be the next editor of the *Prairie Messenger*."

When Rev. James Gray, then editor of the *Prairie Messenger*, declared this to me in early 1972, I was both delighted and surprised. Delighted, because he had confidence in my abilities to be editor, and surprised because his method was a drastic change from the way things were done in a monastery.

Previous ways of making appointments were top down. The superior at the top might confer with fellow monks about teaching or pastoral work, but the final decision always came from the top. Not this time.

Gray told Abbot Jerome Weber that there was an international press conference in Banff, that he wanted someone from the *Messenger (PM)* to attend, and that it was logical that the his designated successor be present.

I had previous associations with the *PM* and St. Peter's Press beginning in 1952, my first year of high school at St. Peter's College. On press day, each boarding student received his own copy of the paper. I and fellow students also had opportunities to work for the paper, doing such jobs as helping to label addresses or place insertions.

When I was editor of St. Peter's College yearbook, *The Petralogue*, my fellow student predicted that in 25 years I would be editor of the *New York Times*. Later, those of us studying for ministry wrote letters to the editor or reviewed books. After ordination, I was appointed assistant editor (by the abbot!) and was

Michael Pomedli was the editor of the Prairie Messenger from 1972 - 1976.



PM file

CHALLENGING TIMES — Michael Pomedli is seen in this 1973 photo. "My years as editor, 1972 - 76, were challenging and sometimes tumultuous," he writes.

responsible for writing the weekly column, *Liturgy and Life*, reviewing books, writing feature articles, proofreading galleys, editing the many Catholic Women's League reports, and taking and developing pictures. During two summers I was acting editor.

Before I received Gray's directive to be editor, he had asked me what I thought of his idea of becoming a hermit, joining those who already inhabited the bushes north of the abbey. I encouraged him to try this radically new lifestyle, little knowing then that I was in the line of *PM* succession.

At the time of my appointment, I already had many tasks in addition to responsibilities in my monastic community. I had just completed graduate philosophy classes at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and was writing my doctoral dissertation, teaching an introductory philosophy class, directing a high school French class and serving as co-pastor of the parishes of Muenster and St. Gregor.

But Gray's was an offer/directive I could not refuse.

One of my own first appointments was Rev. Peter Novecosky (now abbot and present editor) to be my assistant. I gave Novecosky several jobs: act as adviser for policy and decisions, write engaging articles, serve as editor when I was absent, and promote the *PM*, for already in 1972 it announced on its front page a yearly loss of \$51,000. Rev. Damian Yaskowich, OSB, became the official photographer and layout artist and Rev. Andrew Britz, OSB, *Liturgy and Life* columnist. We retained the youth page and joke section. Quite a clerically managed paper!

However, I wanted the *PM* to be a vehicle of dialogue, a movement not only from the top down, but especially from the bottom up, from church authorities but also a vehicle especially for the laity in the post-Vatican II ferment. The result was numerous letters to the editor, mostly positive.

To encourage grassroots input, I visited each of the Saskatchewan bishops, hoping they would

appoint communication officers to work with the paper. I bought a black suit, used a clerical collar and trimmed my beard. Archbishop Michael O'Neill of Regina was very supportive, appointing Rev. Stan Slezak as press liaison, and contributing a sizeable financial amount to the press to update its equipment. Bishop James Mahoney of Saskatoon appointed Rev. Ralph Kleiter as communications manager for his diocese.

Cardinal George Flahiff of Winnipeg was most welcoming

and appointed Rev. Ken Bernard to work with the *PM*. Consequently, I extended the *Messenger's* official outreach into the archdioceses of Winnipeg and St. Boniface, making the paper more representative of the prairies. The outreach into Manitoba also included part of western Ontario. I felt these hierarchical appointments were key in making the *PM* more relevant to the readership with reports such as: input from Saskatoon highlighting lay parish leadership in the Coteau Hills Pastoral Region; the news story of Archbishop Maurice Baudoux blessing the newly built cathedral in St. Boniface, and naming him patriarch of the West; Slezak coordinating the *PM* lenten series with radio broadcasts.

As editor, I realized then that although the *PM* espoused fair

wages to employees, we were paying our contributors a pittance. I doubled and tripled the amounts, though they were still inadequate.

My years as editor, 1972 - 76, were challenging and sometimes tumultuous. During this time of change there were a number of criticisms from lay readers, from the Vatican, and from the Saskatchewan hierarchy. Weber never criticized the *PM* but gave me free rein. In fact, he gave me some indirect compliments by relaying them from his conversations with co-travellers.

Although the editor's office was in the abbey building, Weber visited me on only one occasion. Then, he humbly gave me a copy of a letter from the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Canada (the pope's representative) that took serious issue with an editorial specifying that some early church fathers espoused local involvement in appointing bishops, and agreeing with this method. I told him I would suggest ideas to respond to this censure. I heard no more of the issue.

As I sat in the editor's chair, I realized I was not entirely prepared for the job. Like several monastic editors, either part or full time, I had not received any formal journalistic training. We learned on the job, leading John Stewart, linotype setter, to remark that it was he who had to train us "green horns." To help remedy this lack of formal training, I took a multi-level communications program at the University of Manchester, England. During the

— SUPPORT, page 18

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8:30 a.m. Morning devotional prayers to Mary in Polish (church)
9 a.m. Mass in Polish (church)
10 a.m. Divine Liturgy in Byzantine Rite (grotto)
11 a.m. Stations of the Cross & Anointing of the Sick and the Aged
12:15 p.m. Final Mass - Blessing for Plenary Indulgence
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Prairie Messenger: musings on past, present and future

By Bede Hubbard

As with the majority of editors of the *Prairie Messenger* (famously referred to as the *PM*), I had the privilege of knowing a number of my predecessors — Wilfrid Hergott, Augustine Nenzel, James Gray, Michael Pomedli — and engaging in at least occasional, if not at times frequent, conversation also with those who succeeded me, such as Andrew Britz and Peter Novacosky.

Important and formative as this was, just as significant was the daily support and advice from the larger supporting cast without whom no periodical is possible — assistant and copy editors, proofreaders, press operators, layout and business staff. These contributors may be anonymous and invisible to readers but are no less indispensable. *PM* editors appreciated this, for most had been appointed after being part of that background: correcting proofs, book reviewing, writing a column, helping with the printing or mailing. For many years the greater part of *PM* staff was from the monastic community of St. Peter's Abbey; today the majority live in the surrounding communities of Muenster and Humboldt.

Within months of arriving in 1903, the Benedictines began a Catholic weekly, first in German and then almost 20 years later in English as well. This is no historical aberration. The temporal is a window to the eternal, just as the eternal gives light on the passing and changing of time. During the Middle Ages, monasteries recorded the events of the day — a tradition continuing over centuries. Monastic records from the 19th century on garden plants led to the first discoveries in genetics. Observations by monks on how active participation in the liturgy forms and sustains faith, hope and charity were an impetus for the Second Vatican Council.

The past . . .

The *PM* was part of the life of the monastic community, as well of its staff and students. Monks and staff felt free to comment on the paper, while high school boarders at St. Peter's College welcomed the complimentary copies as a study hall alternative to homework. Compared to the enagement and negativity that so frequently accompany media today, and while instances abound in secular media of "free press" proprietors demanding adherence to corporately approved positions, I never knew of a *PM* editor not treated respectfully by the monastic community, nor obliged by the abbot to modify an editorial stance or the journal's content.

Obviously, the newspaper did

Bede Hubbard, currently Consultant to the General Secretariat of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, last year retired after 25 years as the Conference's Assistant General Secretary. In 2016, Pope Francis named him Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Gregory the Great. He and his wife, Marie, live in Gatineau, Que.



PM file

MEANING AND VALUE — “The *Prairie Messenger* has been an institution that helped shape the identity and cohesiveness of the faith community on the Prairies,” writes Bede Hubbard. “Whenever a person or an institution comes to an end, it gives us pause to wonder about life and purpose, for every ending not only concludes a reality, but opens onto reflections about its meaning and value.” Bede was editor from 1976 - 1981.

evolve over the years and from editor to editor, reflecting the needs and priorities of each generation as well as the perspectives and preferences of the editor. But what strikes me most is the underlying sense of continuity over 95 years — the consistent effort to articulate what Vatican II was to call the “joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties” of the age (*The Church in the Modern World*, 1).

After moving away from St. Peter's and into another form of publishing, someone with many more years in the field shared his experience that a periodical is “a machine always needing to be fed and maintained.” Editors soon grasp what are the daily limitations and constraints to their freedom: schedules, number of pages, costs, availability as well as flexibility of writers and staff, expectations and demands of the readership, and the challenging, at times tragic, mysteries of human communication. But there was and is so much more. The exuberance of “putting the paper to bed” and handing it over to the printer. The mechanical marvel of the press transforming thoughts and words thousands of times within minutes into newspapers, folded and ready to be addressed for mailing. Moments of communion when writers and readers with the help of many intermediaries deepened and shared common insight and understanding. The happy wonder when an idea or thought at first inadequately expressed has been grasped and better articulated in a letter to the editor or by another writer, sometimes in a different periodical!

The present . . .

Benedictine monks commit themselves to obedience, stability (living with the same community) and “*conversatio morum*” (living Jesus' lifestyle of poverty and celibacy). The Latin word “*conversatio*” is akin both to our understanding of conversion (changing one's life around) as well as conversation. A true conversation involves opening the heart and mind, mutually exchanging and sharing with the other, discovering how one's own

life is therein transformed. This perception has been further advanced over the past century in our understanding of “dialogue,” so richly developed in the teachings of Saint John XXIII, Blessed Paul VI, Saint John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis.

Dialogue is a long-standing element of our Catholic heritage and is already evident in Scripture. Discourses were retained as part of the monastic tradition in the sayings of the desert fathers and mothers from the third century. The classic medieval approach to theological and philosophical argumentation was to begin by acknowledging the key points with which one disagreed in the writings of others, and to conclude one's argument by showing how it replied to each of those points. Leading Catholic reformers when answering Protestant concerns during and after the Reformation recognized the importance of acknowledging what was right in those objections, and on the need to present them fairly and accurately. Blessed John Henry Newman's ideal in his *Idea of a University* was to give students a “clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things” which is

“almost prophetic from its knowledge of history” and free “from littleness and prejudices.”

The abbot during the time I was *PM* editor was Jerome Weber, who had closely studied Arnold J. Toynbee, a British historian and philosopher of history much admired in Canada. Toynbee saw the historian's work as a mental and spiritual feat that requires bursting “the cramping bounds” of nationalism and whatever forces held the observer “hide-bound” (*A Study of History*, vol. 5). It entailed the discipline of presenting data and the viewpoints of others so honestly and objectively there would be agreement even among those differing that the observations were fair and accurate. It is not the time or place to evaluate whether or how the *PM* under my editorship or that of others met or missed that intellectual and spiritual goal.

From the vantage point of 2018, musing back on the 95 years of *PM* reflections and commentaries on the life of church and society, those objectives of fairness, honesty and balance seem seldom achieved and rarely appreciated in present-day culture.

The popular approach used by media in our day is conflict, action, sound bites and entertainment. Our political leaders too often rely on confrontation, segmentation, “group think” and wedge issues. Society's spokespersons reduce even the solemn moments of tragedy and sorrow to 140-character Tweets.

Our culture considers communication a public relations exercise, applying simplified formulas that reject other perspectives not in conformity with preconceived conclusions. A recent example is how the media were disconcerted to hear there could be more than one way to convey sorrow and contrition about the experiences of indigenous peoples in the former residential schools.

Human nature is probably always tempted to overlook the importance of context, impartiality, fairmindedness and thoughtfulness, but it is particularly worrisome when we no longer appreciate these even as ideals — another word and notion long

overlooked as of any cultural or personal importance.

“Speaking truth to power” is the slogan of the day — but those brandishing it often fail to examine the power they themselves attempt to wield. Most media today are part of large corporate conglomerates, enterprises blind to their own political, financial and ideological force. The prophetic alternative in Scripture is to be just and righteous with all people in one's judgments, showing neither partiality to the poor nor deference to the rich (Leviticus 19:15), but listening to the small and great alike (Deuteronomy 1:17).

While one might expect that religious communications as the poorer media cousins would be less conflicted and compromised, they are not only vulnerable, but at times captive to the cultural trends and values of the day.

Commentaries are favoured and trusted over news. Institutional authority such as those speaking in the name of the church is under a cloud of suspicion. A journalist's rapid paraphrase, no matter how ill-informed or inaccurate, is preferable to citing a carefully prepared and knowledgeable news release. Emotional experiences are considered more perceptive than factual analyses. Brief accounts with a one-sided, simplified and single focus is the preferred pattern of reporting, not balanced overviews that convey and explore the multiple aspects of a complex question.

All of this justified by assumptions that readers are unable to understand the issue, that the media have mastered it, and that it is best for society if there is but one point of view and other voices are banned from public discourse!

All this is a particularly troubling sign of our present times. Government, media and cultural leaders conspire to impose their own views about abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia and gender. They curtail freedom of conscience, the dignity inherent to each human life, and the right of faith communities to express their

— INSTITUTION, page 21



St. Peter's Abbey Archives

MOVING FORWARD — In 1921 the press building, which had been located near St. Peter's Cathedral, was moved over to the abbey's new location.

Witnessing, recording for *Prairie Messenger* a joy

By Frank Flegel

An early retirement from Director of Communications at the University of Regina June 30, 1997, was staring at me. Now what? I'm not the type to spend my days playing golf (which I'm not good at anyway), or playing hockey in winter (see above reference to skill level), or looking for things to do around the house (same reference to skill level), but I can write reasonably well. I did spend most of my working life in the broadcast news arena as news reader, reporter and then news executive, so maybe someone could make use of that experience.

I had heard that the Regina archdiocese was looking for someone to write for the *Prairie Messenger*, so I approached Sister Roberta Morrissey, archdiocesan director of Pastoral Services, who, to my shame, I did not recognize as she reminded me of her time as assistant Wolf Cub teacher at St. Joseph Elementary School, which I attended.

Indeed, the archdiocese was looking for a journalist and it was a half-time position with an office in the Chancery building. A half-time position that involved com-

ing in to the office held no appeal, so I countered with an offer of two stories a week, on average, as a freelance writer, whether it took two hours or the entire week to produce. Sister Roberta said yes. We came to an agreement, and Aug. 1, 1997, began a 20-year odyssey that took me to parishes and events throughout the archdiocese.

I don't remember the first article I wrote for the *PM*, but I do remember how thrilling it was to open the pages of that first paper and see my words in print. This wasn't the first time I had seen my work in print, of course, but somehow I experienced this time as something special. And it has been.

I saw the exquisite joy of Archdiocesan Chancellor James Owolagba at his ordination to the priesthood. There were many others whose journeys I witnessed, from seminarian through acceptance to transitional diaconate and priestly ordination. I was there too, when Joe Lang and Bob Williston were so pumped after their ordination to the permanent diaconate that I thought they might levitate and float a couple of laps around the interior of Holy Rosary Cathedral.

Seven shrines in honour of Our Lady are listed in the archdiocese directory and another, unlisted, just off Highway 13 west of Weyburn, and all of them

built with volunteer labour of people of faith, and almost all of them built by the pioneers of the area. And who knew that nestled in a wooded grove near Lemberg is a grotto devoted to Divine



Frank Flegel

Mercy? I enjoyed bringing those stories to readers.

Representing the *Prairie Messenger*, I was at Rama May 15, 2012, when the bronze statue of pro-life St. Gianna Beretta Molla was unveiled. She was a pediatrician and knew the risk to her own life, but ordered the doctors to save her unborn daughter rather than her own. That daughter, Gianna Manuela, now in her 50s, has promised the Rama com-

munity she will try to visit in 2019. (Rama was special for me as early in my life it was the destination of my first charter flight as a commercial pilot. I had never been back until this unveiling.)

I have been present at countless CWL annual meetings, K of C conventions, as well as annual gatherings and retreats of diocesan priests, and arrivals and departures of foreign-born priests. Some of the significant happenings in the diocese that I have witnessed and recorded include: the arrival of Myriam Family of the Prairies; the ministry of the Madonna House Apostolate, which operates the Marian Centre soup kitchen; the establishment of Visitation House as a drop-in centre for women in Regina. There was sadness too in funerals and church closures as life and living changed over those 20 years.

I followed the late Archbishop Daniel Bohan as he travelled tirelessly celebrating the Regina Archdiocese Centennial in parishes large and small. I experienced the faith of the early settlers in the churches and shrines they built, usually as the first order of business as communities were established and began to grow. I am thinking of Kaposvar, a Hungarian settlement whose stone church was built sitting on a hill south of Esterhazy, and enjoys a vista of sky and land

where you can almost see the curvature of the earth. Gravelbourg is grounded by its beautiful co-cathedral and Ponteix, further west, has a magnificent twin-spired brick church nestled in a shallow valley with Our Lady of Auvergne poised above a huge pedestal watching over the community from a low-rise hill.

I would be remiss if I didn't include St. Peter's Colony celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lady of Lourdes Aug. 12 and 13 of 2017. Archbishop Olivier Mathieu celebrated the inaugural mass and Archbishop Donald Bolen celebrated the centennial mass at the grotto on that Sunday. The mass was preceded with a smudging ceremony and an honour song performed by a group from the Kawacatoose First Nation. In his homily Archbishop Bolen said God was speaking to all the people who came to this area and built this grotto, and his great grandparents were among the people who immigrated there in 1891.

For me, being there at the Colony brought back many memories of my childhood visiting the colony, and the famous grotto, with my parents and playing with my older sister's children, who lived in Kronau, just down the road from the grotto.

— EVERYWHERE, page 20

Prairie Messenger has been a constant in life of former correspondent

By Therese Jelinski

Add my voice to the many who have expressed regret and dismay about the imminent closure of the *Prairie Messenger*.

The *Prairie Messenger* has been a constant throughout my life. Growing up in northern Saskatchewan, I remember it arriving every week in my parents' mailbox — a trusted source of all things Catholic and Christian. In my adult life, it has become a good friend.

Whenever I have struggled with troubling news or developments in the world, I have found myself turning to the *Prairie Messenger* to help me see the news through a Catholic/Christian lens, and to help me make sense of it all.

So I was thrilled to become the Prince Albert diocesan editor for the *Prairie Messenger* in the fall of 1993. Since I was ready to move back into the workforce part time after years at home with my young children, being able to write for this well-respected Catholic newspaper was my dream job. I submitted news from the Prince Albert diocese on a weekly basis for 10 years (1993 - 2003), and then sporadically as a freelancer until 2016.

I was fortunate to be working under the leadership of Father Andrew Britz, the *Prairie Messenger* editor who joked about having taken up his posi-

tion on April Fool's Day (1983). I faithfully read all his editorials and considered him a prophet. Like all prophets, he inspired and challenged people, but he also received more than his fair share of criticism (and very un-Christian abuse) for his views. The best of his insightful editorials over 21 years are beautifully



Therese Jelinski

captured in two books: *Truth to Power* and *Rule of Faith*.

Every year, Father Andrew would gather the diocesan editors — from Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, and St. Boniface — for helpful meetings at St. Peter's Press. He would enlighten us about our roles and that of the *Prairie Messenger*, as well as his vision of the church and the *sensus fidelium* (sense of the faithful) as expressed by the Second Vatican Council.

He emphasized the importance

of reporting truthfully and honestly if we were to have any credibility, which included covering stories that exposed the darker side of church. I also recall him talking about the new "Young Christian's Forum" page as a section that, if done well, would also be read with interest by older Catholics wanting assurance that their faith was being passed on to a new generation.

Father Andrew would make periodic trips to each diocese, meeting with the bishops and helping to ensure that the *Prairie Messenger* remained top of mind. He also initiated *Prairie Messenger* fundraising dinners that were held for a few years and insured an extended life for the paper.

I smile when I remember that, whenever he was coming to Prince Albert, he would phone to invite himself to our family table. Don't fuss about dinner, he would say, and I could picture his eyes twinkling. "Just cook me a wiener."

During my tenure at the *Prairie Messenger*, I also appreciated working with other writers and editors of calibre — in particular Roma De Robertis, SCIC, who was the Saskatoon diocesan editor at the time, and Maureen Weber, the *Prairie Messenger's* longtime associate editor.

The Prince Albert diocese at the time was under the leadership of Bishop Blaise Morand (who just celebrated his 60th anniversary of priesthood!). Much of his time and energy was taken up with efforts to bolster the dwindling numbers of priests. I wrote many stories about his experiment of accepting 10 Polish seminarians at

once to study for the diocese, followed a few years later by the recruitment of priests from Africa, Vietnam, and the Philippines to help fill the gaps. As in other dioceses, this approach to the clergy shortfall was both welcomed and criticized.

There were also many stories about the diocese's first fundraising appeal in decades. Its main purpose was to boost the embarrassingly meagre priest pension plan. That was followed by an increase in priests' salaries and benefits in parishes across the diocese. At the various meetings to introduce and explain the new policies, the bishop was often heard saying that his priests were living below the poverty line.

Then there were the ongoing church events and programs: youth rallies; the Vita Nova lay formation program; workshops and conferences on liturgy, music ministry, catechetics, and prayer; the annual Bishop's Appeal; Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings; pilgrimages to the shrines in Wakaw and St. Laurent; priest ordinations; First Nations ministry (as it was then called), and so on.

The work gave me access to many excellent speakers and a deeper appreciation of the importance of good liturgy and of social justice in the life of the church. And that it's important to know church history to better understand and respond to church life with its struggles and joys, upheaval, and various periods of vibrancy and stagnation — and yes, church politics!

Beyond diocesan news, the *Prairie Messenger* also covered

Catholic education, Catholic health care, ecumenical, ecological, and social justice initiatives and events, and other stories of broader interest. In 1994 I had a delightful interview with Anthony Burton, who at 34 had just become Canada's youngest Anglican bishop (of the Diocese of Saskatchewan).

There were light moments too, such as the photo of an impressive Snowman-Bishop built by Father Jim Kaptein and friends in Bishop Morand's front yard, drawing attention to the fact that for a few months in the spring of 1995, Morand was the province's only Catholic bishop as a result of the death or resignation of the others.

It seems somewhat ironic that the last story I wrote for the *Prairie Messenger*, in August 2016, was about the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary transferring Rivier Academy to the Prince Albert Catholic School Board. Today the beloved school no longer exists, despite a long and proud history. Like Rivier, the *Prairie Messenger* — with its own long history and proud tradition — has touched many lives and shaped people's faith and perceptions of the world.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Benedictine community who believed in the *Prairie Messenger* enough to sustain it through its financial shortfalls. My own faith has grown during my years of reporting for, and reading, the *Prairie Messenger*. This newspaper has helped shape the person I am. I know that it has done likewise for thousands of faithful readers over the past century.

Therese Jelinski was diocesan reporter for the Diocese of Prince Albert from 1993 - 2003.

PM inspired young writer's passion for journalism

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

My relationship with the *Prairie Messenger* goes back a long way — farther than I can even clearly remember.

"Dear Sister Ben: I am a girl of nine. My hobby is bowling. . . ." began the letter to the *Prairie Messenger's* "Go! Go! Go! Go! Junior Page" that I wrote some 50 years ago.

I don't actually remember writing that letter, but I do remember regularly seeking out the Junior Page every week to find messages from the kind and enthusiastic Sister Ben, and later, Sister Em, as well as the puzzle corner, poems, stories, and drawings. The ministry of that Junior Page had an impact — including instilling a love of newspapers at an early age.

And given the fact that I have now served for 15 years writing articles for the *Prairie Messenger* as a diocesan reporter, I ended that short note to Sister Ben in February 1968 somewhat prophetically: ". . . I hope to write again."



Kiply Lukan Yaworski

As I grew up, the *Prairie Messenger* continued to be part of my life and my faith formation. My parents regularly referred to and discussed articles, commentaries and editorials — not always in agreement with everything published, but always interested and engaged, even at times enthusiastic. The *PM* was one of the ways in which the Benedictine presence, charism and mission profoundly shaped our family, our community and our local church.

Later, when I moved to Alberta and finally began taking up my Catholic faith as an adult, a subscription to the *Prairie Messenger* came with me — and the formation it offered continued.

It was in Alberta that I also discovered that the excellence of the *Prairie Messenger* was appreciated beyond the borders of St. Peter's Abbey. When an admired friend and mentor in our Leduc parish gave impassioned witness to the excellence of the *Prairie Messenger*, I was pleased on behalf of this "gem from home," but also a bit amazed to discover it was known

Kiply Lukan Yaworski has been the Saskatoon diocesan communications co-ordinator since 2003, but her relationship with the *Prairie Messenger* goes even further back — some 50 years.

and so loved abroad.

Of course, the connection to the *Prairie Messenger* became even closer after I was hired by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon as communications co-ordinator.

I clearly recall my job interview in January 2003 with Director of Pastoral Services Dorothy Fortier, sitting beside *Prairie Messenger* editor Rev. Andrew Britz, OSB. That amazing editor was happy to hear of my journalism training and experience in community newspapers, but I particularly recall his glee when I answered his question "where do you see yourself in five years?" with the words "right here." It seemed he was longing for a "vow of stability" and a lot less turnover from his diocesan reporters!

The editor's presence at that diocesan interview clearly demonstrated the depth of the partnership between the diocese and the *Prairie Messenger*.

Hired by the diocese, with funding from the Bishop's Annual Appeal — and the firm support of Saskatoon bishops — one of my tasks as the diocesan communications co-ordinator has been to provide local reporting and news-gathering services for the *Prairie Messenger*. It has been a unique and fruitful arrangement — for the Diocese of Saskatoon and for other dioceses and eparchies in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

For dioceses to work so closely with this source of independent Catholic journalism — rather than simply producing diocesan publications under the purview of an individual bishop — has brought both great richness and occasional moments of challenge and even tension. It is a sign of the health of our Catholic community here on the Prairies that this has worked so well for so long.

So hundreds of articles and 15 years later, I am still here, but we are now bidding farewell to the *Prairie Messenger*.

It has been an amazing time and the *Prairie Messenger* has provided our Catholic community with a tremendous resource, a place of record, and a touchstone that will be greatly missed. Communications will continue, news will continue, social media and new platforms will continue, but this particular brand of Prairie Catholic journalism cannot be replaced.

When I think of the impact and contributions of the *Prairie Messenger*, there is a word that resonates: faithfulness. Faithfulness to the community, to the gospel, and to God — but also faithfulness to the week-in, week-out presentation of news, reflections, theology, formation, culture, inspiration, issues, insights. Faithfulness has been the hallmark of this remarkable Catholic publication. The cumulative effect of having all of this richness delivered in one, regular weekly package, for decades upon decades, simply cannot be underestimated.



LOVE OF NEWSPAPERS — 1964's Grade 1 class at St. Augustine School in Humboldt, Sask., had two future *Prairie Messenger* employees. Kiply Lukan Yaworski, who is the Saskatoon diocesan communications director and has been reporting for the *PM* since 2003, writes that when she was a girl she used to send letters to "Sister Ben," at the *PM*. (Could Sister Mary Phillip, seen here, have been the mysterious Sister Ben?). "The ministry of that Junior Page had an impact — including instilling a love of newspapers at an early age." Kip can be seen in the top row, fifth from left. Maureen Weber, who became associate editor in 1994, is back row, left.

The lens of justice, Scripture, ecumenism, liturgy, and theology provided by the *Prairie Messenger* from the time I could read has certainly shaped how I understand my faith, how I experience my church, and how I relate to

the wider world. Multiply that impact by all the readers, over all the years: it is huge. The *Prairie Messenger* has shaped its readers, and that in turn has shaped the church, both here and beyond.

The only way to end is with a

profound sense of gratitude to God for the great gift of the Benedictines and all who have worked for and with the *Prairie Messenger* and St. Peter's Press over the past century.

We will miss you.

Prairie Messenger's vision inspired growth

By Roma De Robertis, SCIC

I came for the vision. Through ups and downs, I stayed for the *Prairie Messenger's* vision for mission.

When I arrived in Saskatoon early in 1993, someone asked me why I came for such a part-time position. From outward appearances it could seem puzzling. Following a call to be Saskatoon diocesan editor, I learned, struggled and came to appreciate the Prairie church, land and people.

Early on I recall sitting nervously across from longtime Bishop James Mahoney in his office. With candour, he said: "I asked (then Edmonton) Archbishop Joseph MacNeil about you. He said you were focused on social justice. However, you will need to cover a range of topics here."

"That's my intention," I replied. At the *Western Catholic Reporter* in Edmonton, I was accustomed to general assignment reporting and planned to continue that commitment, I assured him.

The *PM* long offered information and inspiration for a church and world to which I remain committed. Like many women religious in English-speaking Canada, I cherished and supported its faithful, dynamic approach which honoured questions and welcomed diversity.

I remember little of church before the Second Vatican

Roma De Robertis, SCIC was *PM* Saskatoon diocesan editor. Later, she was an occasional contributor as well as *Liturgy and Life* columnist. She lives in Saint John, N.B.

Council. Openness to the world with evolving roles for women and laymen characterize the church I know and love.

I found the Saskatoon diocese strongly committed to education and formation of lay leaders. There were many memorable events and occasions. Frequent interaction with indigenous peoples was a special gift.



Roma De Robertis, SCIC

Soon after I arrived, I joined another reporter to cover culmination of the Saskatoon diocesan synod. Later I was to cover the death and funeral of Bishop Mahoney and eventually, the ordination and installation of Bishop James Weisgerber.

These diocesan turning points were pivotal in the life of the local church. Yet I grew most from day-to-day reporting with those faithfully committed to education and evangelization; respect for all life; ecumenism and inter-faith relationships; charitable outreach, as well as social and eco-

logical justice and peace.

To be sure, I soon learned not everyone favoured the newspaper's approach and perspectives. There was a challenging need to balance differing visions of church, as well as priorities for communications within limitations of budget and time.

Father Andrew Britz, the late Benedictine monk and longtime editor, was a major influence. I experienced him as highly intelligent, prophetic, bold and occasionally daunting. His personal style could be forceful. Yet I was drawn to his unflinching commitment to strengthen and communicate a more mature, just, inclusive church of the Second Vatican Council and beyond.

A few years after I moved east I was grateful for our final visit during a return trip to St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster, Sask. It was peaceful and positive, with "Andrew" retired and suffering from illness, yet still focused on getting the message out.

Through the years I was grateful to other editors, leaders, staff and friends in Saskatchewan who offered needed hospitality, support and guidance. Their names are written in my heart. My religious community, Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception, contributed generously, supporting my ministry.

I am thankful to the Benedictine monks who published the *PM* for decades. Certainly I thank readers who shaped its resounding voice for a more faithful, just and sustainable church and world.

Since life is changed, not ended, I hope and believe the vital message will find fresh expression in ways yet unknown.

PM the only Catholic journal to encourage dialogue

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



I didn't read the *Prairie Messenger* until I was 21.

Now, I don't know what I'll do without it.

Brand new to Saskatchewan in 1974 and tasked with animating social justice efforts in the Archdiocese of Regina, I had a lot to learn. The first event I organized could have been a failure — only a smattering of people showed up to a public meeting on the federal government's new immigration policy.

The presentations were excellent — Rev. Jim Weisgerber spoke to the churches' desired policy outcomes on the subject, and Larry Brown aptly described the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's demands.

But nobody would have known — except for the fact that I had reached out blindly to a young journalist I didn't even know — a fellow named Dennis Gruending — and asked him to cover the meeting. Dennis' wonderful article in the *PM* provided us with a ter-

Gunn serves as the Ottawa-based executive director of Citizens for Public Justice, www.cpj.ca, a member-driven, faith-based public policy organization focused on ecological justice, refugee rights and poverty elimination.

rific summary to share. The event thus had a greater impact.

That day, young Joe learned a lot. I made friends for life with these remarkable social justice advocates — and I came to understand the value of the *Prairie Messenger*.

Later in the 1970s, debates around the development of uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan demanded attention. The bishops of the province released their first joint statement in 30 years on the moral implications of such developments. But only in the pages of the *PM* did the ethical questions get the regular and considered attention they deserved.

It seemed that if you wanted to read challenging viewpoints from a progressive, faith-filled Christian viewpoint, the *PM* was the go-to source for inspiration. When I later came to meet several esteemed editors of the paper (like Fathers Gray and Britz, Art Babych, and Maureen Weber) I developed further insight into why the *PM* served this important role in church and society.

Having good people in leadership can make a real difference. And leaders who allow and even encourage good writing and challenging thinking are pearls of great value.

I want to echo what Arch-

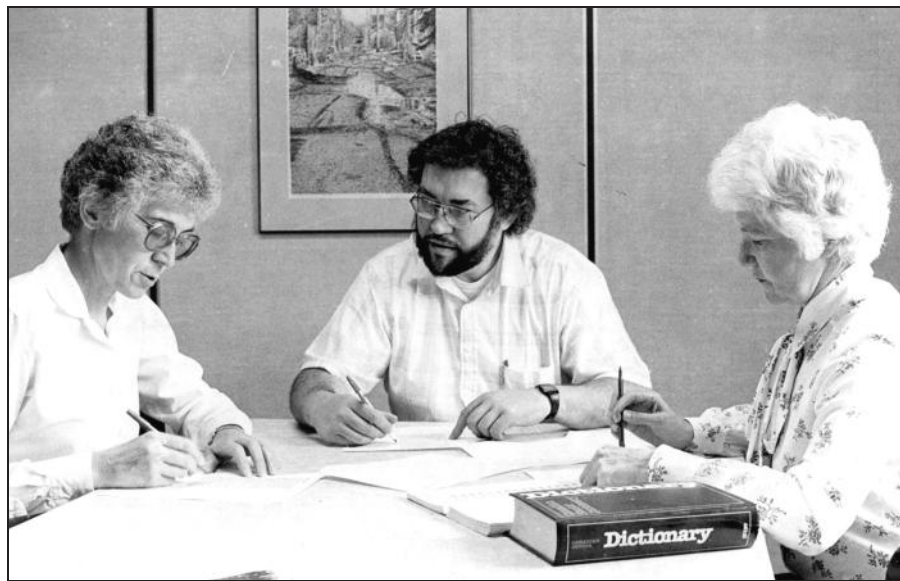
bishop emeritus Jim Weisgerber recently wrote in these pages: "It is important to single out the solid and long-standing commitment to the pursuit of social justice that has characterized the *Prairie Messenger*."

Moreover, what was unique about the *PM* was that it also opened up spaces for debate and presented ideas toward needed reform in the church. For example, the *PM* carried several opinion articles criticizing the decision of the bishops' conference to abandon a decade and a half of ecumenical work in KAIROS, the social justice coalition of the major churches.

An explanatory defence of the decision by then-bishop of Saskatoon Don Bolen was also published. Elsewhere, the decision of the bishops was merely reported. The *PM* was the only source, anywhere, where dialogue and debate were entertained.

Yes, the *PM* published material not found anywhere else. When doing research for his 2016 book, *Pilgrimage: My Search for the Real Pope Francis*, Mark K. Shriver (of the Kennedy clan) recounts how he struggled to find any confirmation of an unheard-of meeting of 150 community activists invited to the Vatican.

Apparently, he then "stumbled upon . . . an article in a Catholic journal called the *Prairie Messen-*



PM file

PROPHETIC MISSION — Marian Noll, OSU, Andrew Britz, OSB, and Emily Greter during an editorial meeting, circa 1992. "Should Catholic journalists today succeed in finding a way of proclaiming the prophetic word without causing pain and frustration, and indeed without producing some outright anger, they would surely have achieved something the Lord himself failed to attain. If the violence of the cross is to tell us anything, it should drive home to us that fear and hostility are inherent in the prophetic word" (Andrew Britz, from *A Journey of Faith: St. Peter's Abbey 1921 - 1996*).

ger." Shriver recounts that the article's first sentence grabbed him: "Chances are you will never have heard of this encounter." (He was right about that!) The article went on, "There is no document about it in English. Only one person attended from Canada."

According to Shriver's web searches and interviews, the *PM* was one of the only publications to publish a report on Pope Francis' October 2014 World Meeting of Popular Movements, a meeting where the pope was quoted as saying, "It is strange, but if I talk about this, some say that the pope is a communist. They do not understand that love for the poor is at the centre of the Gospel. Land, housing and work, what you struggle for, are sacred rights. To make this claim is nothing unusual, it is the social teaching of the church."

Today, in a church that lacks democratic structures, there is a

pressing need for spaces allowing critical debate and clarification of values. Institutional churches are diminishing in the West, and among the young, and still struggle to advance gender equality. Most of the Catholic press seems tame, self-congratulatory, and frankly, rather boring. The closures of Edmonton's *Western Catholic Reporter*, the *Presbyterian Record*, and *Scarboro Missions magazine*, may all be signs that religious print journalism is going extinct.

Is there room for a new, online medium that displays a faithful, loyal, but critical role, that opens up debate, that includes a wider range of perspectives?

As an homage of thanksgiving to the Benedictine monks and their associates who offered the *PM* to readers for over a century, I'm interested in exploring possibilities for such a necessary platform today.

Closure of PM sparks fond memories

By Art Babych

It's hard to believe that 30 years have passed since I was hired as editor of the *Prairie Messenger*. What started as a personal commitment of two years



PM file

Art Babych

lasted more than three years, thanks to the encouragement and support of editor-in-chief, Father Andrew Britz, and the *Prairie Messenger* staff.

Art Babych was editor of the Prairie Messenger from 1989 to early 1992.

My new job required that I move closer to where St. Peter's Abbey, the oldest Benedictine monastery in Canada, and the *Prairie Messenger*, are located. Thanks to a wonderful local resident, John Stewart, I was able to rent his small home in Muenster at an incredibly low price.

Another plus was the daily short drive to the serene rural setting of the Benedictine community. It contrasted sharply with the noises, busyness and traffic bottlenecks of my previous home in Saskatoon.

And topping it off was the warm feeling of being surrounded by friendly, dedicated staff members when I arrived at work.

Since the impending demise of the *Prairie Messenger* was announced last year, many articles, columns and letters to the editor, have been written expressing thoughts and feelings on the impact the newspaper has had in their lives and mourning its loss.

But if the closure of the *Prairie Messenger* is akin to the death of a friend, it seems appropriate also to celebrate the life of that friend. I do so with thanksgiving:

— for the important role the *Prairie Messenger* has played in promoting the Catholic Church's authentic social teaching.

— for the constant companion-

ship of the prayers of the monks of St. Peter's Abbey.

— for the kind and hard-working staff of the *Prairie Messenger* and St. Peter's Press, some of who have remained with the newspaper since before I became editor and whose jobs, sadly, will end soon.

— for the faithful readers and talented contributors.

— for the prophetic Benedictine monk, Father Andrew Britz. It was Andrew who invited me to become editor after having served as the newspaper's correspondent for the Diocese of Ottawa. I had also been a part-time reporter at CBC Saskatoon. It was Andrew who gave me editorial freedom (and his office) at the *Prairie Messenger*. And when I announced I was leaving, it was Andrew who invited me to become the first reporter for Canadian Catholic News in Ottawa. And in so doing, I became the first religion reporter in the Parliamentary Press Galley in Ottawa.

— for assistant editor Sister Marian Noll, OSU, whom I could always trust to replace my misplaced modifiers.

— for the hummingbird that occasionally fluttered by my office window leaving a smile on my face.

Thanks for the memories, *Prairie Messenger*. Well done!

Support personnel among the paper's unsung heroes

Continued from page 14

course, I examined national Christian and Jewish papers for their approaches to communication. This became the basis for my master of divinity thesis.

During my tenure the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (now Development and Peace — Caritas Canada) invited and sponsored me to represent English-speaking Catholics in a development mission to Vietnam. This mission by the Canadian Catholic Church was to ascertain the needs of this U.S.-ravaged country. The Paris-led endeavour, initiated just before the war ended, was a controversial and to some degree a secretive one since Vietnam had a Communist and mostly atheistic government.

I was pleased to participate in the trip and wrote editorials and several articles with photos depicting my experiences, a series sent to 40 countries. A light moment occurred during one of many visits to co-operative farms

around Hanoi. As one meeting dragged on, I walked to photograph some rice farmers ploughing their fields with oxen. What a great picture that would make for the *PM*, I mused. The distance to the rice paddies, however, was greater than I thought. I got some great photos, but when I returned the van and delegation had departed without me. I envisioned spending some time on this farm, but then the van returned to pick me up.

I am saddened that the *Prairie Messenger* will cease publication. However, I warmly applaud Rev. Paul Paproski's series on the *Bote* (German-language publication) and the *Messenger*, covering 43 and 95 years respectively.

While Paproski's articles focused mostly on the role of the editors, *PM* staff and production personnel played a vital part in the weekly editions. These staff and personnel, both monks and lay, served with great dedication. They are among the papers' unnamed and unsung heroes.

For PM staff and contributors, a litany of thanks

By Patty and John Thompson

Dear PM:

In our faith tradition, messengers of God show up as angels and prophets. These messengers tell the “good news” of divine presence and hope in our lives and for our times too.

In the *Prairie Messenger* we have participated in that good news. Its weekly arrival at our home since 1975 when we moved to the Prairies has been angel and prophet, words and Word. Editorials, news stories, official church documents, reviews of films and books, letters to the editor, remarkable and varied columnists, photographs, reflections on

context of faith — challenging them, assuring them, supporting them — in their wanting to know what the reign of God looks like in our times, in our Prairie place, in our relationships. What does our local church look like as part of the Universal Church? Readers also found in the *PM* an acceptance of diversity and not condemnation, a welcoming spirit. Readers considered the *PM* a friend, one with whom they could disagree and still continue as regular subscribers.

Our friendship with the *Prairie Messenger* endures. The *PM* and we, however, will no longer meet at the table over coffee to talk about “things.” We won’t have *PM* editorials and

Peter’s Messenger (1923-1928) and the *Prairie Messenger* (1928-2018). In drawing on the pages of these publications, he has reminded us of the concerns, challenges, controversies in the contexts of their times, a boldness in speaking out and telling truth, adapting to changes with courage and intelligence in renewed directions without selling out, while always short of funds. We met the Benedictines and others — portraits of angels and prophets — whose stories and voices have been alive in the *PM*, in our lives and in our times.

Three gifts of words and remembrance of two Benedictine *PM* editors remain. *Bush Dweller: Essays in memory of Father James Gray, OSB*, 2010, edited by Don Ward; *Truth to Power: The Journalism of a Benedictine Monk*, 2010, Andrew Murray Britz, OSB, edited by Dennis Gruending; and *Rule of Faith: As we worship, so we believe, so we live. (Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi)* 2012, Andrew Murray Britz, OSB, edited by Maureen Weber and Marian Noll, OSU.

We have been connected to you, your generosity, your attention to details, your worry about getting the words right and out on time, about paying the bills. You have been, as Paul Ricoeur says of Jesus’ parables, “the extraordinary within the ordinary.” Too often we have taken you for granted. Too seldom have we said thank you in public.

So we want to take a few minutes to express our thank you by name to those of you who are at the *PM* now, you who stand at the end of the long line of *PM* angels and prophets.

Praying the litany of the saints is part of our faith practice, commonly sung at Easter vigil and baptisms. We pray to holy women and men, whose lives inspired us and who are in the Communion of Saints to intercede for us. Here we will express our gratitude in a litany of thanksgiving for those of you who guide and write for the *PM* now. In writing your names, we are also remembering all those who have been the *PM* over the years, whose shoes many before and you now have filled so well and worn with faithfulness and style.

For Abbot Peter (editor), Don Ward and Maureen Weber (associate editors), Lucille Stewart (layout), Gail Kleefeld (advertising, circulation, proofreading, mailing). Randy Weber (printer), Janice Weber (website),

we thank you, Lord.

For diocesan editors Kiply Lukan Yaworski (Saskatoon), Frank Flegel (Regina), James Buchok (Winnipeg), writers from Prince Albert and Winnipeg, and all who assist these editors,

we thank you, Lord.

For writers at Catholic News Service, Religion News Service, and Canadian Catholic News,

we thank you, Lord.

For Around the Kitchen Table writers: Lloyd Ratzlaff, Don Ward, Joan Eyolfson Cadham (1980s to 2015), Maureen Weber, Tom Saretsky (also Soul Searching, Liturgy and Life),

we thank you, Lord.

For Liturgy and Life writers: Michael Dougherty, Gertrude Rompré, Bob Williston, Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, Joe Gunn (also Journey to Justice), Catherine Ecker, Brenda Merk Hildebrand, Margaret Bick,

we thank you, Lord.

For Music for Liturgy writers: Bernadette Gasslein, Karen Koester, Heather Reid, Christina Ronzio,

we thank you, Lord.

For Gerald Schmitz (Screening & Meanings since 1999),

we thank you, Lord

For Ron Rolheiser, OMI (In Exile),

we thank you, Lord.

For writers Edna Froese, Gerry Turcotte (Figure of Speech), Sandy Prather (Breaking Open

(Everyday Theology), Mary Marrocco (Questioning Faith), and many more of you who have contributed to the *PM*,

we thank you, Lord.

For the many who have written Letters to the Editor,

we thank you, Lord.

For any who contributed but whom we inadvertently did not mention here by name,

we thank you, Lord.

In thanking each of you, we are thanking all of you — you at the *PM* today and those many thousands who came before you, whose words and voices have announced the “good news” in the pages of the *PM*.

Micah 6:8 offers a question and a saving response. “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love

Over the years, Development and Peace has had some challenging campaigns which required us to dig deep into our faith while learning about world realities near and far. We could always count on the *Prairie Messenger* to provide that intersection of news which tied into the D&P work. The *PM* provided other articles and authors that corroborated D&P’s research and broadened the context of issues that we, as a church-in-the-world have grappled with. In so doing, the *PM* helped us to see this work as an essential part of the fabric of the Canadian church.

The *PM* has strengthened our intellect, resolve and faith! We will miss you so much!

— Armella Sonntag, D&P regional staff

the weekly Sunday readings, music for liturgy and meditations on songs, announcement of celebrations, analyses and critiques, poetry. Much more. The *PM* has told us of our church from local to regional, national to international, parish to Vatican, of ourselves embodying the *sensus fidelium*, as the People of God.

In a survey that Father Andrew Britz conducted on *PM* readership in the late 1980s, now nearly 30 years ago, *PM* readers (subscribers) were compared with former *PM* subscribers and with non-*PM* readers in five Saskatchewan parishes and two in Winnipeg on a number of items. On the measures of fidelity to the beliefs, participation, and commitment in their Catholic faith, to parish participation, to social justice, *PM* readers stood out.

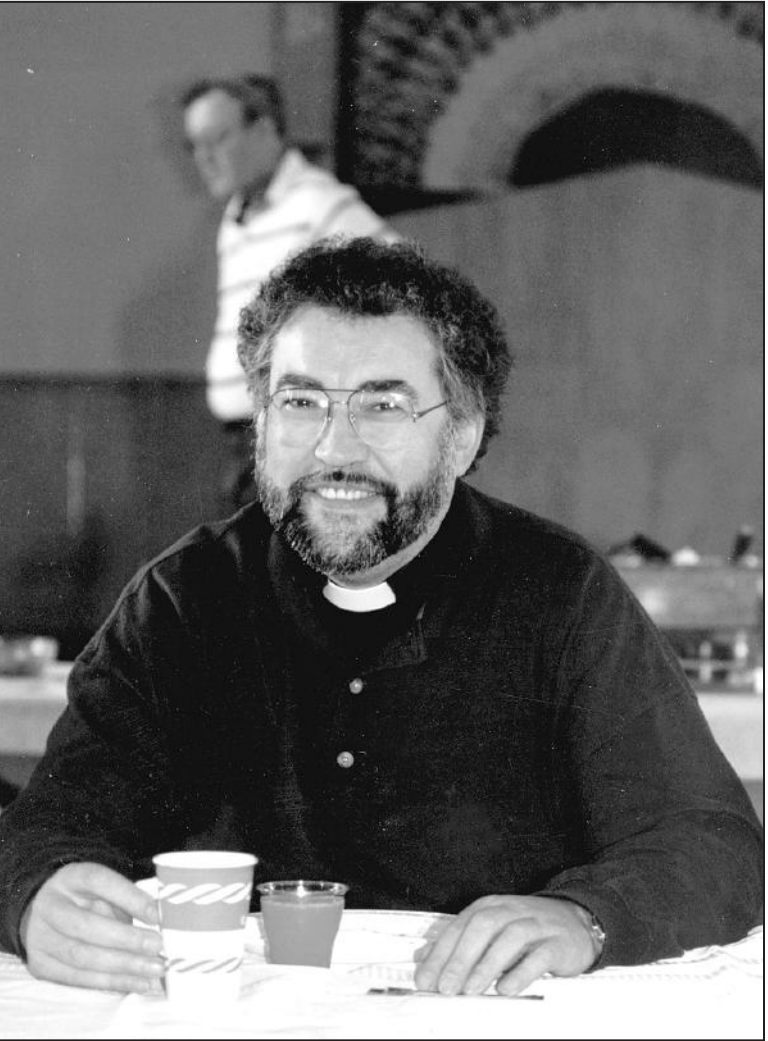
The bishops of both Saskatchewan and Manitoba heard these findings in meetings in Saskatoon and Winnipeg. Though aware of controversy and even expressing their own disagreement at times with *PM* stories and editorials, the bishops expressed their gratitude for the *PM*, its readers, and its staff. They said they were pleased, though not surprised, at such positive findings about *PM* readers. They said they knew *PM* readers were active in parishes. Standing out in the survey too was the way reading the *PM* was integral to *PM* readers practising their faith. In contrast to non-*PM* readers, *PM* readers read, watched and listened to a lot of news, raising questions about how to respond to issues of the day. Their faith was as an inquiring faith.

The *PM* allowed readers to think about these questions in a

columns and reviews and news stories to make us think twice, offer us informed ways to sort out key issues of faith, culture, society and politics, ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, economy and justice, ecology. Or letters to the editor to talk about. Or even to evoke a smile or celebrate a parish event or to be inspired by a sister at her golden jubilee. We will no longer be able to find out what the *PM* says about that question.

We will have, however, the enduring grounding of the Benedictine way of faith and hope and love that has permeated the persons and pages and journalism of the *PM*. The *PM* has allowed us to “pray with our eyes wide open” to discern the reign of God in our lives and in our times, and to feel an integral and renewing participation as the People of God.

This weekly messenger has arrived throughout the Prairies and beyond because of the work and worry of many. Thousands have contributed in its 100 years of publication in English and the years before in German as *St. Peter’s Bote* starting in 1904. We express our thanks to all who have made possible and been the *PM*. Many of you are in the Communion of Saints. Most of you are hidden. Your journalism, past and present, we could count on. And we did. Honest, challenging, trustworthy, not afraid of controversy, inspiring, critical and comforting, calling us to renewal and owning up to failures, celebratory and with hope. In his seven-part series (2018, Vol 95, No. 33 to No. 39), subtitled “*Prairie Messenger*: more than 100 years of journalism by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter’s Abbey,” Paul Paproski, OSB, has given us the gift of an overview and review of the history of *St. Peter’s Bote* (1904-1947), *St.*



PM file

ALL OF US SAINTS — From Andrew’s editorial “All saints,” Nov. 1, 2000: “We are called to visualize ourselves as part of a mighty throng dazzled before the very throne of God. It is in seeing ourselves as part of the communion of saints that we come to experience the resurrection of Christ as the story of our lives. . . . In the liturgy we are encouraged not so much to pray for our departed brothers and sisters, as to see them around God’s throne as our special intercessors. So as we, Sunday after Sunday, remember our special saints celebrating with us as the one mass of the kingdom, we come to realize that whether we live or whether we die, we continue to be that communion of saints called to stand in awe in God’s presence, flabbergasted at the sheer gift of God’s grace. . . . Most of us are not ready to find our meaning in grandiose stories of cosmic proportions. But in the stories of Sts. Anthony and Jude, of Sts. Elizabeth and Hildegard, of Grandma and Uncle Bill, of our spouse and close friend — in these stories we are called upon to find our place in the communion of saints . . .”

the Ordinary), Brent Kostyniuk (Both Lungs), Leah Perrault (Barefoot and Preaching), Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers (Double Belonging), Tom Ryan, CSP (Challenge of Ecumenism), Caitlin Ward, Dennis Gruending (Pulpit & Politics), Paul Paproski, OSB, Cedric Speyer (Outlooks from the Inner Life), Ed Buettner (book reviews), Jon Hansen, CSsR (From the Canadian Arctic), Yvonne Zarowny (Soul Mending), Mary Deutscher (Building a Culture of Life), Peter Oliver, Louise McEwan

mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” That’s the response we have heard over and over in the *PM* woven into the “news” of people and events, editorials and columns, controversy in renewal, faithfulness to the “good news” that we are walking with our God in walking with each other.

We have been blessed by the *PM* angels and prophets as enduring gifts of Divine presence and hope among us, the People of God.

Thank you, our *PM*.

Patty and John Thompson are longtime friends of the *Prairie Messenger*.

STM medal goes to the *Prairie Messenger* ‘team’

The following remarks were given by Caitlin Ward the evening of Oct. 21, 2017, when the *Prairie Messenger* was presented the St. Thomas More Medal on behalf of St. Thomas More College

The St. Thomas More medal has been established to recognize and honour persons, groups of persons, and organizations who combine personal qualities of care, integrity and faith with significant contributions to community and public life. The award is named after St. Thomas More whose extraordinary example of faithful virtue and public service remains an inspiration to all.

This year, the recipient of the St. Thomas More Medal is the *Prairie Messenger*. Founded in 1923 by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter’s Abbey in Muenster, this weekly paper has been one of the key voices for Catholicism on the Canadian prairies for the better part of a century. It has been

many things to many people. In its pages, the *Prairie Messenger* has given equal column inches to the local lives of parishes across the western provinces and to the struggles and victories of a universal church. One of the things that has defined the *Prairie Messenger*, especially in the last half-century, is its constant outward reach. The editors and writers of this paper have rarely been content to simply report on doctrine or theology, but have consistently asked what these things mean in the context of a diverse and rapidly changing world. Confident in the church’s teachings, the *Prairie Messenger* has not retreated from secular culture, but instead has sought to engage

with and understand it. Perhaps most importantly, the *Prairie Messenger* has never shied away from calling out the church’s clay feet: a voice of loyal dissent that loves the sacramental church but is willing to recognize its corporeal flaws. The decision to be a voice in the wilderness has not come without its risks, challenges, and probably mistakes, as well, but as an institution of Catholic higher learning, we at St. Thomas More College know that if the pursuit of truth is not messy, and contentious, and complicated, then it is not brave, and it is not honest. The *Prairie Messenger* has always been brave.

When the paper closes its doors in May 2018, that brave voice will be quieter across the Prairie Provinces, and the rest of us will have to begin to speak a little louder.



Russ Weber

STM MEDAL — Don Ward, Maureen Weber, and Abbot Peter Novecosky accepted the St. Thomas More Medal, which was presented to the *Prairie Messenger* team in October 2017.

‘I’ve been everywhere, man’

Continued from page 16

On Nov. 22, 2017, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi was here in Regina to invest Archbishop Donald Bolen with the pallium to officially denote his position as Archbishop and Metropolitan of Saskatchewan. I was there for the *Prairie Messenger* and I remembered Donald Bolen at Campion College before he went to Rome, and now I was here, witnessing him receiving this visible symbol.

More recently, in January of this year, I was present when the Relic of St. Francis Xavier tour stopped at Campion College at the University of Regina, and another at Resurrection Parish in Regina. I was in the queue to pass by the relic with hundreds of the

faithful and curious, and was not allowed to take a close-up photo because it would cause a delay in streaming the people through. A tremendous disappointment.

All of this and much more I have witnessed and all appeared in the *Prairie Messenger*. It reminds me of that Johnny Cash song, “*I’ve been everywhere, man . . .*”

I see the experiences I have received through journalling for the *Prairie Messenger* as another example of God’s continuing influence in the direction he has shown in my life. I became much more familiar with my own faith as well as opening the eyes of our *Prairie Messenger* readers to the important role our faith played and continues to play in the spiritual growth of southern Saskatchewan.

You may know that before the end of this month, I will be 99 years of age.

During my lifetime I have been involved in a number of organizations. But I must tell you that the one closest to my heart is Development and Peace (D&P).

The one outstanding action that I participated in as a member of D&P took place I believe, in 1998. The D&P animator at that time was Michael Murphy. Michael had arranged to have D&P members in Canada sign over 40,000 petition signatures, addressed to the president of Brazil — asking him to make land available to the poor and unemployed citizens, so they would be able to produce food for themselves. (This was good, productive land, in the hands of colonial interests, and was not being used by anyone.)

And then, Michael asked me to personally present these petitions to the president of Brazil. So, I went to the capital, Brasilia, to present these signatures.

However, we did not get to present them to the president, but did present to Brazil’s Minister of Justice. This took place in the presence of about 1,000 Brazilian citizens, as it coincided with the second anniversary of the killing of 21 members of a peoples organization, named Sem Terra. These killings were committed by Brazil’s large land holders with help of Brazil’s federal police force.

We were gone for a total of five days. I was anxious to get back home, to prepare for seed-ing.

— Leo Kurtenbach, Saskatoon



Paul Paproski, OSB

To end is to begin again . . .

Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



With a heavy heart, I write my last column for the *Prairie Messenger*. In just a few short weeks, the print voice of the church, my faith and my family since my childhood, will cease publication. For more than a century the black-robed monks of St. Peter's Abbey worked faithfully to enrich, enliven and deliver the voice of the church to its people. The iconic institution, known as the *Prairie Messenger*, will give way to the sounds of silence.

The *Prairie Messenger* invited me, an inexperienced writing "hack," to be a part of its *Liturgy and Life* group of columnists back in the fall of 2004. I was included in a paper that published the insights, thoughts and wisdoms of world-renowned theologians, whose writings inspired my parents and shaped their thinking for so many years. My dad would later become a featured columnist, as would my sister (and associate editor Maureen), and now I would get to have my very own black and white composite picture, too!

Ever since I can remember, this paper arrived in the mail on a weekly basis. My parents absorbed every detail of its con-

tents. I was young, but I vividly remember how the columns and features of this publication would invoke conversation and dialogue, arguments at times, and spirited discourse about what was happening in this institution called the Roman Catholic Church. The conversations *around the kitchen table* were interesting and intense, especially with visitors.

When I was 10, the editor

phoned and asked me to sell *Prairie Messenger* subscriptions at a St. Peter's College reunion that year. I could sit at a table and try to convince people to "stay in the know" (Dad's words) about matters of church and their faith. I even managed to sell a few subscriptions. A \$10 cheque arrived in the mail a few weeks later as "payment" for my hard work. I felt like a part of the *PM* family.

What was it about this paper that made it such a cherished commodity in our household? Who were these men and women, behind their black and white composite photos, sharing their wisdom and educating us from wherever they lived? Who was this nameless and faceless editor, perhaps living *in exile*, to which many readers would write to compliment or condemn?



St. Peter's Abbey Archives

HELPING AT THE PRESS — Sister Valerie Scheiber, OSE, right, and Sister Isabelle Zoller, OSE, help assemble a two-section paper in the 1970s. Both sisters also worked in the abbey kitchen for many years. Their legendary cookies could often be found in a tin at the press — if you were quick!

When an institution comes to an end, it gives us pause to wonder about life

Continued from page 15

ethical perspectives in the public square. All the while, this cultural chatter gives little effective attention to urgent national and international social issues — the discrepancies between rich and poor, and the lack of access by the marginalized to adequate education, employment, health care and housing.

For Catholic communications especially, the dominant cultural approach means greater risk, not only of impoverishing the voice of the faith community, but of rendering its vision narrow and one-sided. "Catholic" should indicate the communion of voices in the church — those of the bishops united with the pope and other clergy, as well as the voices and perceptions of consecrated life, laity, movements and associations, theologians and other experts.

Church history testifies that debate is always part of the life of the faith community — it is the way every society and each person think through questions and issues of import. But it is the pope and the bishops who ensure an underlying unity and cohesive-

ness within the community, past and present, locally and universally. The basic root of the word institution is "to stand." It refers to the need for an organizational reality that continues in the midst of change, even as individuals are born and die, families come and go, and the surrounding population may grow but might also diminish and disperse, a frequent enough reality on the Prairies.

Our culture looks askance at all social institutions, especially the church. Perhaps this is mistakenly thought as a way to assert the unique importance of the human person at a time there are such serious concerns about alienation, anonymity and loneliness. Or maybe it is evidence in itself of increasing social fragmentation and isolation. But if there are not strong social institutions, a community cannot maintain its sense of identity and cohesiveness from one generation to the next. Unfortunately, it is often in the dark moments of tragedy that one most clearly recognizes and desperately seeks out a community's institutions, as evident following the recent highway accident that tragically ended or otherwise

altered so many lives of those associated with the local Humboldt Broncos junior hockey team.

The future . . .

The *Prairie Messenger* has been an institution that helped shape the identity and cohesiveness of the faith community on the Prairies. Whenever a person or an institution comes to an end, it gives us pause to wonder about life and purpose, for every ending not only concludes a reality, but opens onto reflections about its meaning and value. Our society and Catholic communications are at an important cultural juncture. Profound social and cultural changes require finding the means to reflect, discuss and explore divergent perspectives, with a determined effort to respect differences and disagreements while working toward the righting of wrongs, all in the spirit of communion and solidarity.

The passing of the *PM* and of other religious periodicals provides food for deliberation, especially as new communications approaches come into place:

- Church communications and information are an urgent priority as our society and its dominant

As I grew older and began to participate more in faith and church discussions at home, the *PM* was our reference point. When my teaching career began, almost 30 years ago, the *Prairie Messenger* was my faith formation tool. It was a weekly diet of spiritual, liturgical and theological sustenance, giving me the knowledge and the courage to teach, converse, dialogue and even argue on some of the most pressing and contentious church issues of the day.

The *PM* was not without its detractors. Throughout the years the *Prairie Messenger* was vilified for daring to be the "voice crying out in the wilderness." It had its way of provoking crises, because it afflicted the comfortable of our church. It unsettled many and could

easily get under the skin of its readers by daring to deviate as it challenged, criticized, questioned, admonished, affirmed, yet celebrated the very institution that was its life.

Blessed Oscar Romero once wrote, "Very nice, pious considerations that don't bother anyone, (is) the way many would like preaching to be. Those preachers who avoid every thorny matter so as not to be harassed, so as not to have conflicts and difficulties, do not light up the world they live in."

The *Prairie Messenger* lit up the world and was not afraid to light a torch in the darkness of ignorance, to illumine eyes blinded by the narrowness of their own ideologies and theologies, and with *both lungs*, boldly speak truth to power.

The end of the *Prairie Messenger* should not mean an end to the dialogue and discussion that the *PM* was famous for promoting. The bounty of this paper's richness and its history should live on in our discussions, our dialogues and our mission, as Catholics, to minister to a fractured and often divided church. We should accept the challenge the *Prairie Messenger* assumed so many decades ago when it dared to be the voice that encouraged us to be more than just readers of the Word, but doers of the Word.

It may be an end, but perhaps we should look upon it as our chance to begin again . . . back to our roots . . . *barefoot and preaching*.

Thank you, *Prairie Messenger*, for inviting me to add my voice to yours, but especially for all you did to enrich the lives of all who were fortunate enough to read your paper. You will be greatly missed.

culture continue to be shaped and influenced primarily by secular media and the social media;

- Faith formation and education need to do more in preparing Catholic communities and their members to be active listeners and participants in the church's ongoing discourse;

- While recognizing the important opportunities offered by social media, the most effective communication involves the participation of local communities and their institutional engagement;

- As secular and Catholic media become more centralized, it is increasingly important to ensure local voices and perspectives from across the county are part of the national conversations, while also finding ways to foster dialogue and reflection within the local community;

- The life and vitality of Catholic media require ongoing con-

versations and engagement with all the Catholic faith community;

- To be Catholic means involving both the local and the universal church, both tradition and history as well as "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the present age."

As for the *Prairie Messenger*, its present staff and readers can only do what the monks who published it have always done: entrust its mission into the hands of God. The unfolding of time and the sifting of history in their own way will evaluate the accomplishments and failures. But for those who believe we are "fellow workers for God . . . God's field, God's building," the most important test is what we lay on the foundation of Jesus Christ, be it "with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble — the work of each will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it" (1 Corinthians, 3:9, 12-13).

The *Prairie Messenger* has consistently supported the voice of Development and Peace, helping to educate Canadians on justice and environmental concerns in the Global South and encouraging all to share our cries with our elected officials.

— Marian Grady, Regina

Healing a black eye

Pope Francis has a black eye from the clergy abuse file.

It was brought to a head in Chile. During his visit there in January, the pope sparked controversy when he pledged his support for Bishop Juan Barros of Osorno Diocese, who allegedly witnessed abuse by Rev. Fernando Karadima. He later apologized to the victims and admitted that his choice of words wounded many. He followed this up with a letter of apology April 11, asking “forgiveness of all those I have offended.” He said he hoped to “be able to do it personally in the coming weeks.”

This past weekend he followed this up with private meetings at the Vatican with three clergy abuse

survivors from Chile. While the Vatican issued no statements after these private meetings, the survivors did. They appreciated the time and concern Pope Francis showed them.

“I spoke for more than two and a half hours alone with Pope Francis. He listened to me with great respect, affection and closeness, like a father,” Juan Carlos Cruz tweeted April 29 after his meeting with the pope. “We talked about many subjects. Today, I have more hope in the future of our church. Even though the task is enormous.”

Another victim, José Andres Murillo, said he spoke with Pope Francis for two hours and that “in a respectful and frank way, I expressed the importance of understanding abuse as an abuse of power, of the need to assume responsibility, of care and not just forgiveness.”

The third victim, James Hamilton, sent two tweets April 28 shortly after his papal meeting, saying it lasted a “little over two hours” and that it was “sincere, welcoming and enormously constructive.” I am “very happy and satisfied,” he said.

Pope Francis plans another followup — a meeting with all the bishops of Chile. He invited them to Rome to discuss the findings of a 2,300-page report from Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta, president of a board of review within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Vatican’s chief prosecutor of clerical sex abuse cases was sent to Chile to meet people with information about Barros.

The pope’s black eye appears to be healing. The remedy needs to spread through the rest of the church. — PWN

What does the pope’s ‘no apology’ mean for reconciliation?



Life In Canadian Arctic

Bishop Jon Hansen, CSsR

It has been a couple of weeks since the Canadian Bishops released their “Letter to Indigenous Peoples in Canada” (PM, April 11). The letter “updated” the people that Pope Francis’s response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s call to action #58 was a no go. He was not coming to Canada to apologize for the church’s role in the Indian residential schools.

The letter was a highlight in the media for a few days and has since faded from the public view of most Canadians, but I don’t think that we have seen the end of the story. It may have seemed for some to be a quick bite, over and done but, for those to whom it was written, it is now being slowly digested. My worry is that the aftertaste will be lasting and bitter.

I was a pastor in Saskatoon when Pope Francis was elected. The first months of his pontificate made daily headlines as he continuously broke with the pattern of former popes, diving headlong into the sheepfold of the masses, encouraging bishops and pastors to do the same and get their hands dirty on the frontlines of the church.

The word around town was that Saskatoon might be a place that the pope would come and visit. This was well before the final report of the TRC, but it was holding one of its national events in the city and it was thought that Saskatoon would make an ideal place for Pope Francis to speak to Canadians and, in particular, to the Indigenous people who make up a significant percentage of the western Canadian demographic.

With the Calls to Action, and the desire for the Indigenous people to receive an apology from the Holy Father for the residential schools, it seemed like the perfect, added reason for the pope to make the trip. With the “Letter,” two things have happened. First,

the trip is postponed indefinitely. If there was no word there was always the hope that Pope Francis would be coming sometime soon, even if we didn’t know when. That hope seems to have been taken away as “sometime soon” has been replaced with “maybe, in the future” You only had to have been a kid hearing those words about a possible family trip to Disneyland to understand the difference in tone and how deflating to a heartfelt desire.

Despite the letdown the second thing is more concerning. “With careful and serious consideration and after extensive dialogue,” Francis feels he cannot personally respond to the request for an apology. I am not questioning the Holy Father’s motives, I personally trust that there are good and valid reasons for his and the Canadian bishops’ decision but, whatever the reasons, it sends a message that will not be helpful in our moving forward with the process of reconciliation and may, in fact, hinder its development.

Some have argued that the apology isn’t really necessary; after all, Pope Benedict already expressed his sorrow for the residential schools to Assembly of First Nations leader Phil Fontaine in 2009. Other church leaders, including bishops from our own diocese, have made similar gestures. But in the eyes of the aggrieved, an expression of sorrow does not amount to an explicit apology and the authority of a local bishop does not amount to the authority of the supreme pontiff of the Universal Church.

Strong voices within the First Nations community are saying that, without an explicit apology from Pope Francis, reconciliation cannot move forward. But let’s put this argument aside. Let’s say we, as a church, have apologized, and apologized well. Does it really mean that we do not have to take Call to Action #58 seriously? When a relationship has been damaged by a breach of trust, not in a small way but in a very serious, catastrophic way, what is the correct number of apologies?

When asked by his disciples how many times should one forgive when we have been wronged Jesus said seventy times seven, a number which figuratively means a boundless amount of times. If Christ had been asked the converse, “If I hurt someone, how many times should I ask forgiveness,” his answer may have been similar. Sometimes it is necessary to say “I’m sorry” more than once.

So where does that leave us as we look forward?

As a bishop whose diocese is made up of a majority of indigenous people, I am torn in how to respond. First, for those people who are silent, I want to encourage them to speak and make sure I listen to their voice before I project my own concerns and feelings over what this might mean. To those who are vocal and angry and who say reconciliation is not possible without an apology I want to counsel against giving this news too much energy, to not letting the decision of someone so far away have such control over the future of our journey toward reconciliation here at home.

For now, I think that listening is the better option and I encourage anyone who wants to share their thoughts on this development to get in touch with me, so I can hear you.

One thing from the letter is clear: moving forward, the onus is left on us, all Canadians. Indige-

nous people and non-indigenous people together; first peoples, pioneers and new-comers, must take the matter of reconciliation into our own hands. Whether an apology will ever come or never come, we must continue the other, harder work of reconstructing that which has been broken.

The letter has it right when it says that the pope encourages bishops “to continue to engage in an intensive pastoral work of reconciliation, healing and solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples and to collaborate in concrete projects aimed at improving the condition of the First Peoples. . . . The bishops of Canada are equally convinced about the primary need for additional work to be done at the most local level, in terms of au-

thentic encounters which address the helps and hurts, dreams and aspirations, needs and traditions of Indigenous Peoples.”

Intensive, concrete, authentic. . . . This kind of work takes time, patience and perseverance but if we commit ourselves to it, it will have a better chance to make a far-lasting effect than a momentary, media-driven papal visit. In numerous ways this work is already proceeding but it will not be without setbacks. These need to be expected and faced because the work of reconciliation is never a straight forward path.

At the beginning of this letter I expressed my worry that the flavour of this setback would be bitter and lasting, my hope is that it will not, in the long run, spoil the feast.

Ecumenical partner will miss PM

The Editor: It is unfortunate that the *Prairie Messenger* is shutting down and will no longer publish Catholic content. I found the newspaper an invaluable source of information of what is happening in Saskatchewan, Western Canada and the world when it comes to Catholic issues and stories. The columns were some of my favourite things to read, while the letters to the editor were always entertaining.

With the closure of the *Prairie Messenger*, there will now be a large hole in Catholic journalism

in this part of Canada. It will be now difficult to know what is happening in one diocese, let alone the country or the world. A large journalism and information vacuum has been created.

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Anglican monthly newspaper and other Anglicans in Saskatchewan, I want to thank the *Prairie Messenger* and its staff — at home and abroad — for putting out a valuable and important publication. — **Jason Antonio, managing editor, Saskatchewan Anglican**



CNS/Carlo Allegri, Reuters

Hansen was ordained bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith diocese in the Northwest Territories on March 16.

TORONTO VIGIL — Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and Toronto Mayor John Tory visit a makeshift memorial April 24, one day after a van struck multiple people along a major street in Toronto.

Pray for strength to face difficult situations

Canada[®]

Fighting in Yemen creating humanitarian crisis

By Dale Gavlak

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) — Catholic and other faith-based aid groups are urging an end to fighting in Yemen, where three years of war have created a humanitarian crisis, including “the world’s largest food security emergency,” according to the United Nations.

Children are bearing the brunt

of Yemen’s conflict, the UN warned, with 80 per cent of them in desperate need of aid and two million suffering from acute malnutrition.

“We were shocked about the numbers coming out of Yemen on famine and starvation, especially of children under the age of five,” said Giovanna Reda of the British Catholic aid agency CAFOD, a

member of the Caritas network.

Reda expressed concern that if the conflict continues to spiral, it will unfold into a “protracted humanitarian crisis.”

“We are calling for humanitarian access and a diplomatic solution to the war,” she said of all parties involved. “People should not be allowed to die because they no longer have food.”

Reda told Catholic News Service that the critical situation prompted her London-based agency to get involved in the impoverished country found at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The civil war there — pitting government troops and Houthi rebels, proxies of Saudi Arabia and Iran — is having a decimating impact, she said.

More than 5,000 children have been killed or injured — an average of five children every day — since the conflict began in March 2015, reported the UN children’s agency, UNICEF.

“Even after the conflict ends, the effects of malnutrition, such as stunted growth and delayed cognitive development, may linger,” it said. “In the worst cases, it is fatal.”

“CAFOD and its partners are running programs tackling nutrition and food security for Yemeni communities and local health care centres dealing with malnutrition cases, reaching some 30,000 people,” Reda explained.

“These people are mainly children under five as well as pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. This food assistance is helping families most affected by malnutrition, whether it be severe, acute, or moderate acute. From a health point of view, the situation is dangerous,” Reda said of one part of a larger crisis.

A cholera outbreak affected one million Yemenis some months ago, while diphtheria has emerged recently.

Aid officials estimate that about 80 per cent of Yemen’s 22 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance such



CNS/Mohamed al-Sayaghi, Reuters

UNREST IN YEMEN — A boy shouts during a protest in Sanaa, Yemen, April 26. Catholic and other faith-based aid groups are urging an end to fighting in Yemen, where three years of war have created a humanitarian crisis, including “the world’s largest food security emergency,” according to the UN.

Pope asks Catholics to pray the rosary for peace

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis prayed that the hopes for peace strengthened by the meeting of the leaders of North and South Korea will not be dashed, and he urged Catholics during the month of May to pray the rosary for peace.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in made a “courageous commitment” April 27 to ongoing dialogue to achieve “a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons,” Pope Francis said April 29 after leading some 30,000 people in praying the *Regina Coeli*.

“I pray to the Lord that the hopes for a future of peace and more brotherly friendship will not

be disappointed and that the collaboration may continue bringing good fruits for the beloved Korean people and the whole world,” the pope said.

Noting that May is a month the Catholic Church dedicates to Mary in a special way, Pope Francis told the crowd gathered in St. Peter’s Square that he would begin the month with a visit to Rome’s Shrine of Divine Love and lead a recitation of the rosary there.

“We will recite the rosary praying particularly for peace in Syria and the whole world,” the pope said. “I invite you to spiritually join me and to prolong for the whole month of May praying the rosary for peace.”



CNS/Korea Summit Press Pool via Reuters

KOREA SUMMIT — South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attend a banquet inside the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas April 27. Pope Francis urged Catholics during the month of May to pray the rosary for peace, especially in Syria and Korea.

Villanova meet examines pope’s impact

By Matthew Gambino

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Pope Francis’ five-year pontificate has not only had a broad impact on the Catholic Church, but it has also had widespread implications across human society, said speakers at a recent Villanova University conference.

Catholic prelates, theologians and lay experts in fields as diverse as economics, church history, social justice and the environment examined the pope’s vision for the church, how he is expanding the goals of the Second Vatican Council and how those efforts are being received during the April 13 - 14 conference.

It’s not that the pope is changing church teaching, but that he is challenging Catholics to under-

take a “radical embrace of a church for the poor” in calling for a “return to the values of the Gospel, the values of mercy, justice, love and care for God’s creation,” said Barbara Wall, whose Office for Mission and Ministry at Villanova organized the conference.

The gathering, Pope Francis, a Voice Crying Out in the World: Mercy, Justice, Love and Care for the Earth, featured 60 speakers and an audience of 150.

Massimo Faggioli, professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova and a conference co-organizer, said the pope’s interpretation of Vatican II “is the most important event in church history in the last four centuries.”

Rather than rolling back Vati-

can II, the pope believes it is essential to orient the Catholic Church “in the world of today,” and to recover “the missionary dimension of the church,” Faggioli explained.

He said Pope Francis already has left “important legacies,” although the popular pope has faced opposition, most acutely from within the United States.

Faggioli cited issues the pontiff has raised over the past three years, including care for the environment and pastoral practices concerning married couples and family life. These have met with resistance, which Faggioli attributed to “a very active Catholic media system” in the U.S.

Francis’ writings — including *Laudato Si’*, on Care for Our Common Home, *Amoris Laetitia*, *Evangelii Gaudium*, and *Gaudete et Exsultate* — have generated criticism, but they need more extensive study by Catholic scholars, Faggioli suggested.

Pope, others mourn death of British toddler Alfie Evans

By Simon Caldwell

LIVERPOOL, England (CNS) — Pope Francis said he was mourning the death of English toddler Alfie Evans, who died four days after doctors withdrew his life support system.

The 23-month-old boy died at about 2:30 a.m., April 28 after his father, Tom Evans, spent 10 minutes trying to revive him by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, according to reports in the British media.

Tom Evans, a Catholic, announced the death of his son on Facebook later that day with words: “My gladiator lay down his shield and gained his wings at 02:30 . . . absolutely heartbroken . . . I LOVE YOU, MY GUY.”

Alfie’s mother, Kate James, wrote: “Out baby boy grew his wings tonight at 2:30 a.m. We are heartbroken.”

Soon afterward, Pope Francis, who had met Tom Evans at the Vatican April 18, tweeted: “I am deeply moved by the death of little Alfie. Today I pray especially for his parents, as God the Father receives him in his tender embrace.”

The Vatican-owned Bambino Gesù hospital in Rome offered to

which is also a member of the Disaster Emergency Committee, a network of 13 British-based agencies, works with partners in Yemen, mainly in the south of the country. However, the non-governmental agency it co-operates with cannot be named due to security concerns.

Islamic State militants abducted Indian Salesian Father Tom Uzhunnalil March 4, 2016, from a home for the aged and disabled run by the Missionaries of Charity in the southern city of Aden and held him for 18 months until his release. Four Missionaries of Charity and 12 others were murdered in the attack.

Islamic State and al-Qaida are active in parts of Yemen, also hindering humanitarian access to various areas, Reda added.

care for Alfie, although doctors who examined him said not much could be done but to make him comfortable. On April 23, the Italian government granted citizenship to the boy so he could be evacuated by a waiting air ambulance.

But that same day, Alfie was taken off his ventilator, and he was expected to die imminently. He began breathing unaided, prompting appeals by his parents to the High Court and then the Court of Appeal to allow their son to leave the country.

Judges upheld the original decision that it was in the “best interests” of Alfie, who suffered from a severe degenerative brain condition, to be allowed to die.

Tom Evans, who had been highly critical of Alder Hey Children’s Hospital in Liverpool, ceased to give media interviews April 26, saying he wanted to co-operate with doctors in the hope Alfie might be taken home.

His inability to remove his child from the hospital led to passionate demands from politicians and media commentators for an “Alfie’s law” to allow parents to seek help elsewhere when doctors believe they can do no more.

You can’t change the world from the rearview mirror.

— Anita Roddick