

Last PM

With this issue, Vol. 95, No. 45, the *Prairie Messenger* ends publication.

Forgiveness

Seventy-three per cent of churchgoing women who have experienced an abortion are not sure if forgiveness applies to them, says Laura Lewis, executive director of the Canadian Association of Pregnancy Support Services.

— page 3

Mission territory

“Our baptismal call is to be missionary disciples,” says Daniel Pettipas, evangelization co-ordinator at St. Anne’s Parish in Saskatoon. “When we leave our churches on Sunday, we are going into mission territory.”

— page 6

Words matter

“All of this began with words,” Holocaust survivor Max Eisen told some 1,200 students who had gathered at Resurrection Church in Regina to hear Eisen tell his story. “The Nazi propaganda machine was very efficient. It dehumanized Jews, took their property. They told us we were going to work on farms, but it all ended like this,” and he showed a photo of the Auschwitz death camp.

— page 7

Our mission

“Many of us are saddened by the *Prairie Messenger*’s demise, but we must understand that the mission it undertook remains our mission: bring the message of Jesus alive in a world crying for him,” writes Michael Dougherty.

— page 13

In praise of books

In her last column for the *Prairie Messenger*, Edna Froese salutes “the veritable fort of books with which I have built meaning into my life.”

— page 15

No forgiveness until oppression stops

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — Dr. Barry Lavallee doesn’t mince words when he talks about residential schools, the health of indigenous people in Canada, and racism.

“Residential schools were the product of the government and institutions like the Catholic Church and the purpose was to kill the proxy to the land. Is it possible to forgive and forget? No. There is no forgiveness until oppression stops.”

Lavallee was part of a panel at St. Ignatius Church in Winnipeg April 20, the third such session of an ongoing Truth and Reconciliation dialogue between parishioners of St. Ignatius and St. Kateri Tekakwitha Aboriginal Church.

Lavallee, a member of the Saulteaux and Métis communities, is a family physician specializing in indigenous health and a member of the University of Manitoba faculty of medicine. His clinical work has focused on the

health and healing needs of First Nation and Métis communities.

Residential school survivors entered those institutions in good health but came out anemic and malnourished. “The patterns are no different than Auschwitz,” Lavallee said, adding that students might enter at a Grade 3 level “and exit with Grade 1.” Today, he said, the life expectancy of an indigenous person in Manitoba is seven to eight years less than a non-indigenous person.

Lavallee said racism can be “interrupted, the next time someone accuses the chiefs of being drunks or says indigenous women are poor moms ask them, ‘Can you explain that to me?’ If you do, you’ve made it safer for an indigenous person to be there.”

Elsie Moar, 71, is a parishioner at St. Kateri and originally from the Skownan First Nation, a Saulteaux community. As a child she felt the effects that residential school had on her mother, a survivor. “She was never happy, and she took it out on us,” Moar said.

Philippine cardinal tolls bells to call attention to murders

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle called for church bells in the archdiocese to toll at 8 p.m. each day to protest the continuing spate of killings in the country.



CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle

He said the tolling of the bells will “haunt the perpetrators of violence and killing to remember their victims, never to forget them,” reported ucanews.com.

“The bells beckon us to remember the dead . . . and to ask God to remember them,” said a statement from the cardinal.

Ucanews.com reported a Cath-

olic priest and a broadcast journalist were the most recent victims of assassinations.

Rev. Mark Ventura was shot to death after celebrating mass in Cagayan province April 29.

Tagle invited the faithful “to pause, remember and pray” for Ventura, the second priest to be killed in four months. In December, Rev. Marcelito Paez was shot dead in the province of Nueva Ecija.

“It’s sad that a priest was killed . . . and even if he’s not a priest, a person. Isn’t he a gift from God? Is it that easy nowadays to just kill and throw someone away?” asked Tagle.

Tagle said the tolling of the bells is a call to everybody to commit to actions of truth, justice, love, and respect for God’s gift of human life and dignity.

“The bells beg us to transform the mourning of our people into hope and peace,” he said.

Archbishop Sergio Utleg of Tuguegarao has appealed to authorities for a speedy investigation into the killing of Ventura, 37. The priest was among those who opposed black sand mining in the province of Cagayan.

“There have been too many murders already done with impunity in our country by assassins. . . . May this be the last,” Utleg added.

A day after the shooting of Ventura, assassins also shot broadcast journalist Edmund Sestoso in the central Philippine city of Dumaguete.

As the eldest of six, she took care of her siblings when her mother, and her then second husband, would leave the children, “sometimes for days.”

But now she tries to learn what she can about residential schools, in workshops and support groups. Growing up for her “would have been a lot different without residential schools.”

Christine Cyr is a Cree/Métis woman from Winnipeg and director of the Indigenous Student

Centre at the University of Manitoba. She, too, is a child of residential school survivors.

“So much was taken through residential schools and the colonial system,” she said. She tries to recover some of the losses, beginning with continuing to learn her native languages.

“I acknowledge my experience as a child of residential school survivors and I never apologize

— RECONCILIATION, page 19



Thuong Truong, RNDM

RECONCILIATION DIALOGUE — Participants in a panel discussion April 20 in Winnipeg, the third session of an ongoing Truth and Reconciliation dialogue between parishioners of St. Ignatius Church and St. Kateri Tekakwitha Aboriginal Church in Winnipeg, included, from the left: Elsie Moar, moderator Joan Molloy, Dr. Barry Lavallee, and Christine Cyr.

Restore cemetery where Ukrainian immigrants buried

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A Kingston-based academic hopes a new petition will prompt the Canadian government to restore a cemetery where Ukrainian immigrants who died in a Quebec internment camp are buried.

“The Government of Canada, between 1914 and 1920, under powers of the War Measures Act, interned 8,759 men, women and children in 24 camps,” said Lubomyr Luciuk, a professor of political geography at the Royal Military College, who initiated the e-petition E-1643 to the Heritage Minister on April 17.

Many of these interned individuals were Ukrainians who had immigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he said. They were sent to remote camps, among them the one called Spirit Lake in the Abitibi region of Quebec, near Amos. This was one of two such camps that also

housed women and children.

Luciuk said he hopes the petition, sponsored by Conservative MP James Bezan, will prompt the government “to do the right thing,” and restore the cemetery now owned privately by a farmer who has allowed the gravesites for 16 internees and several children to be overtaken by boreal forest. The federal government had turned the cemetery over to the Quebec government in 1936, and Quebec sold it to the farmer in 1988.

The Ukrainians sent to Spirit Lake came primarily from Montreal and many were Ukrainian Greek Catholics who attended the St. Michael the Archangel Greek Catholic Church.

Most Canadians do not know Ukrainians were interned during the First World War, and afterward during the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, Luciuk said.

— CAMPAIGN, page 5

Pope asks bishops to agree on intercommunion

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis asked the bishops of Germany to continue working together to find broader consensus on guidelines for allowing a Protestant married to a Catholic to receive the eucharist.

“Pope Francis appreciates the ecumenical commitment of the German bishops and asks them to find, in a spirit of ecclesial communion, a result as unanimously as possible,” the German bishops were told, according to a Vatican statement.



CNS/Elisabeth Schomaker, KNA

BISHOPS DISCUSS INTERCOMMUNION — Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki of Cologne, left, talks with Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising, president of the German bishops’ conference. They disagree about whether the bishops’ conference has the authority to develop its own guidelines about non-Catholic spouses receiving communion.

Pope emphasizes faith says ‘no’ to Satan, ‘yes’ to God

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Baptism requires rejecting Satan and professing one’s full faith in God, Pope Francis said.

Only by being able to say “no” to the devil, his works and empty promises “am I able to say ‘yes’ to God, who calls me to conform myself to him in thoughts and deeds,” he said.

“It is not possible to follow Christ (while) imposing preconditions,” he said May 2 during his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

Continuing his series of talks on the sacrament of baptism, the pope looked at the importance of the heart being ready to receive the gift of new life from God through the baptismal water and the Holy Spirit. When a child is presented for baptism, its parents and godparents renew the vows of their own baptism in rejecting sin and professing faith in Jesus.

“Either you are with God or with the devil,” the pope said, which is why the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith are “two acts tightly connected to each other.”

One must break with the past and its sinful attachments, “leaving them behind in order to embark on the new way, which is

The pope had invited six German bishops and the general secretary of the bishops’ conference to Rome for a May 3 meeting with top officials from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts.

In February, the Vatican statement said, “more than three-quarters of the members” of the German bishops’ conference approved a “pastoral handbook titled, *Walking with Christ — In the Footsteps of Unity: Mixed Marriages and Common Participation in the*

Eucharist.”

However, the Vatican said, “a not insignificant number” of bishops, including seven who head dioceses, could not give their assent to the document. “These seven turned to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts.”

Pope Francis invited leaders of the bishops’ conference and some of the bishops opposed to the guidelines to come to the Vatican for a discussion with officials from the three offices.

“Various points of view were discussed; for example, how the question relates to the faith and to pastoral care, its relevance for the universal church and its juridical dimension,” the Vatican statement said, without providing further details.

Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki of Cologne, one of the seven German bishops who objected to the conference guidelines, participated in the meeting at the Vatican

Congo bishop highlights hunger, illness

By Jonathan Luxmoore

OXFORD, England (CNS) — A Catholic bishop from the Republic of Congo lamented that persistent corruption and poverty have left many of priests hungry and ill while the country’s wealth remains dominated by a “handful of the rich and powerful.”

Bishop Bienvenu Manamika Bafouakouahou of Dolisie said the church in the violence-torn country faces “challenges from syncretism, Protestant sects and Islam, but above all from disease.”



CNS/Robert Carrubba, EPA

CONGO PROTESTS CORRUPTION — Protestors attempt to leave the safe heaven of a church during violent protests late January in Kinshasa, Congo. A Catholic bishop lamented that persistent corruption and poverty have left many priests hungry and ill while the country’s wealth remains dominated by a “handful of the rich and powerful.”

and “colonial.”

However, in a report, Aid to the Church in Need confirmed economic hardship was widespread among Catholic clergy, citing a lack of funds for religious literature and evangelization.

Although he often explains the church’s work at local markets and at mass, the bishop said, Islamic organizations offered better employment opportunities and higher pay for young people, and had recently recruited one of his own altar servers.

“There’s only one seminary here,” the bishop said, “and we’d like to focus on recognizing true vocations and providing a better education for priests.”

Christ” and to be able to “truly embrace others,” he said.

“The devil divides and God always unites the community, the people” in one body, he said.

During the baptismal rite, he said, the individual is asked to respond in the first person, to reject evil and profess his or her faith as a sign of choosing to be personally responsible in this daily commitment of trusting in God and walking with him.

The profession of faith reflects a commitment — aided by baptism — to be strong and persevere throughout all of life’s trials and temptations, he added.

“Rejecting sin, the temptations of evil, Satan — the source and cause of every sin — and faith in what the church believes” are not temporary or provisional commitments asked only at baptism, Pope Francis said.

They are required throughout life, he said, and “the presence of the Holy Spirit will give you the strength to fight well” against evil and temptation.

Whenever people bless themselves with holy water, he said, they should recall with joy and gratitude the gift they received on the day of their baptism and they ask for the grace to persevere and live “immersed” in God’s love.

“Only two of our dioceses, Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, can pay their priests appropriately while others struggle,” he explained in an interview with Aid to the Church in Need. “In my own, the first concern is to ensure priests get enough food. But if they have serious health problems, I have no idea what we do.”

The diocese lacked clean drinking water and local adults and children at the Catholic school routinely died from water-born illnesses, the bishop said. Further, he added, poverty had worsened because of a decline in oil prices and widespread corruption and public hospital employees had been on strike for months over government failure to “subsidize basic medicines.”

“The Congolese are poor people in a rich country with abundant oil reserves, where all the wealth is shared by a handful of the rich and powerful,” Bafouakouahou said.

“Politicians here see the Catholic Church as the only institution capable of challenging them, so they’ve sought to weaken it by pillorying us and financially backing other confessions,” he charged.

The church’s Justice and Peace Commission has levelled corruption allegations against the government of President Denis Sassou Nguesso, who was last re-elected in 2016 and has rejected embezzlement investigations as “racist”

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

— 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Thank you from the staff of *Prairie Messenger* and St. Peter’s Press to those who attended our farewell on April 28, and to those who were with us in spirit. We have been blessed with the love and loyal support of family and friends throughout the *Prairie Messenger’s* long life.

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

— Philippians 1:3-6

Support not adequate for post-abortion women

By Anne-Marie Hughes

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. — “When I read that 73 per cent of church-going women who experienced abortion were not sure if forgiveness applied to them, I couldn’t get it out of my mind,” says Dr. Laura Lewis, executive director of the Canadian Association of Pregnancy Support Services (CAPSS).



Anne-Marie Hughes

Dr. Laura Lewis, MD

Speaking at the national CAPSS conference held April 17 - 20 in Niagara Falls, Lewis talked about how this realization became the impetus for a new mission that she hopes will reach some 2,000 pastors across Canada.

The statistic identified came from a 2015 Care Net survey of 1,000 church-attending women. The study asked a series of questions of 1,000 post-abortion women about how they felt about their local church. Not only did the survey find that three-quarters of the women felt forgiveness might not apply to them, but that 57 per cent weren’t sure if it

was safe to talk to a pastor, and over half had never shared their experience with anyone.

“It highlighted that the church was not a place where women felt they could find healing, freedom and forgiveness in Christ,” said Lewis, “and that needed to be addressed.”

While many would like to believe that the experience of going to church regularly would give post-abortion women confidence in receiving support and healing from their congregation, the study found that that was not their experience. Both post-abortion churchgoers and non-churchgoers reported that they expected or had received judgmental or condemning reactions equally. Regular churchgoers were no more confident that they wouldn’t be condemned, and over 57 per cent had told no one at their church about their abortion.

“We heard that pastors didn’t really know how to speak about abortion from the pulpit. They would see people shutting down when they brought it up,” Lewis explained. “They knew it was a hard topic, so they would avoid it. At CAPSS we realized we had more practical experience with post-abortion women and maybe we could share those insights.”

Out of this need for change came the Healing Conversations video and booklet. The video begins with the statistics in order to show people the extent to which women view abortion as different than other sins.

“We highlight for pastors that abortion is the same as other sins,” says Lewis, “and that if it’s approached in a balanced way, it can be talked about from the pulpit.”

While many clergy steer clear

of the subject out of compassion and concern that it might cause more suffering and shame, the silence can have a damaging effect.

The *Healing Conversations* booklet describes one woman’s experience, voicing what many feel: “Does my abortion on a scale of all other sins, rank so despicably high that, though forgivable, cannot be mentioned, not at the pulpit, not with prayer partners, not ever . . . not anywhere? Let me tell you that is a very lonely place to be.”

Lewis explained that in making the video it was important to have a story for people to relate to. “We filmed a story of a woman who was suffering, even though she went to church.”

In the video, she describes learning Bible verses and hearing about Jesus’ love, but somehow it didn’t seem to take hold, she didn’t really encounter it. “It wasn’t until she made a connection with the local pregnancy centre that things changed and she started her journey.”

The video cuts between the story and a pastor who speaks about the issue from his point of view. “We wanted to have a pastor who had

watched that journey and was comfortable speaking about abortion in his church, a pastor who had asked the question, “How do I get help speaking about this?” and then address pastors watching the video.’

In the video, Pastor Paul Martin from Grace Fellowship Church in Toronto speaks about the need to assume that, within every congregation, there are women who have had abortions. The statistics bear this out.

“When you speak about this issue, you need to speak in the tone and compassion that represents that she is sitting there in front of you.” What was helpful to Martin was making connections with his local Pregnancy Care Centre and asking for advice about how to talk about these issues.

Lewis sees using *Healing Conversations* in the larger church community as a needed resource. “People need to be aware that, with one in four women being affected by abortion, they are in the room. Creating a safe place for women to share their secret and speak about things they may feel a lot of shame about, would be very relevant to any church group,

especially women’s groups. This study revealed that even women involved in their churches weren’t talking about the abortion.”

The hope is that the video and the booklet will be seen by 2,000 pastors and church leaders, with the potential to impact 40,000 post-abortion women in Canada.

The booklet includes more practical suggestions. Sermon topics are outlined, with Scripture references, and there are recommendations for talking to women who have experienced an abortion. Reaching this number of women can ripple through their wider circle. Often those close to them, like friends who may have driven them to the appointment, the father of the child, mothers, fathers and entire families may have been affected in one way or another and carry burdens of their own.

Lewis sees a time when women who have experienced abortion and healing will become more vocal. “Some women who have felt healing and freedom are ready to speak about it. It will be these women who know whole freedom and forgiveness that will bring a change in the culture.”

Church is listening to what youth want

By Agnieszka Krawczynski
The B.C. Catholic

VANCOUVER (CCN) — Young people are not the future of the church. According to Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila, they are the present.

“The youth are a barometer for many things about the present culture,” he told *The B.C. Catholic* during his March visit to Vancouver.

“I learned this from business people and those in advertising. If they want to sell a product, or if they are thinking of what new product to manufacture and how to package it, they always turn to the youth.”

He said as Rome gears up for a Synod on Youth and Vocational Discernment this fall, the church would do well to listen to its younger members, too.

“Very often I hear: ‘Oh, the young people of today, they are different.’ Of course they are different! And some will even say: ‘The lost generation.’ Are they lost? Or have we lost them?”

Tagle, a bishop since 2001, said he has learned many things from young people. “They’re not a ‘problem.’ They have a lot of resources for the good of society and the church, if only we can tap into them and give them the space to share the good that is in them.”

In preparation for the synod in October, extensive consultations with young people have been held across the globe. At the synod itself, representatives from around the world will present the results of these discussions to Pope Francis and others.

Tagle hopes this is only the be-

ginning of a new movement in the church that takes its youth seriously.

“They don’t listen to the elders because they don’t see the elders listening to them,” he said.

“I believe the process of this synod is what we want to do daily, not just during the synod. Can we listen to one another? When the young people know they are listened to, maybe they will to the elders.”

So, what do young people want from the church? A pre-synod meeting in Rome with several bishops and 300 young people (with another 15,000 tuning in online) March 19 - 24 came up with some interesting answers.

“Today’s young people are longing for an authentic church,”

— HONEST, page 5



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The John Bosco Child and Family Services Foundation (Bosco Foundation) is a public foundation dedicated to the provision of buildings and facilities used for the treatment, education and housing of children, adolescents and adults who are in need of support.

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Artliss Coulineur

AGREEMENT IN FAITH — Representatives of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, which serves First Nations, Métis, indigenous and non-indigenous parishioners in Saskatoon, signed an Agreement in Faith April 25, agreeing to establish regular communication and to work together. The two organizations pledged to collaborate on sharing knowledge and professional development, to build closer connections, to promote awareness of how traditional indigenous spirituality and the Catholic faith provide complimentary teachings, to establish regular communication and dialogue as Catholic entities focused on improving the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical development of indigenous families, and to explore opportunities for sharing space, knowledge, and resources in order to foster increased indigenous participation in the Catholic Church.

Korean peace hopes are at a critical stage

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

Koreans are ready for peace, reconciliation and unification, but those hopes are riding on what happens next between North Korea's Kim Jung Un and U.S. President Donald Trump, Christian experts on Korea have told *The Catholic Register*.

Leaders of North and South Korea moved toward reconciliation April 27 when they signed a declaration to work toward "permanent" peace and "complete denuclearization" on the peninsula.

The two sides have committed to negotiations that would include the United States and China in order to officially end the 1950 - 53 Korean war.

"It is such a great moment in Korean history," Presbyterian pastor and ecumenical theologian Rev. Kwang Sun wrote in an email from Seoul.

"Without meeting, dialogue and friendship, how do you make a further step to build up peace on the Korean peninsula?" he asked. "Meeting is the first step toward national unity, which is the final goal."

But South Koreans are not naive about the negotiating tactics or the ambitions of North Korea's iron-fisted regime, said Rev. Young-Suck Simon Moon, a permanent deacon at St. Agnes Kim Korean Parish in Coquitlam, B.C.

Before his retirement in 2016, Moon chaired the department of international relations in South Korea's Kangnam University and founded the Canadian Studies program at the university. He still serves as vice-president of the Society of Catholic Theology and Thought in Korea and has been a member of South Korea's special advisory committee for the Ministry of Unification.

"North Korea has used diplomatic coercion and brinkmanship, twinned with offers of talks and demands for concessions to cheat their way to a nuclear arsenal," said Moon.

Pope Francis, calling the dialogue between the nations a "courageous commitment," has asked Catholics worldwide to join him in praying a rosary for peace during the month of May, particularly for peace

on the Korean peninsula, in Nigeria and in Syria. Prior to the dramatic April 27 meeting between South Korean president Moon Jae-In and North Korea's Kim Jung Un, the pope urged "transparent dialogue."

In words reminiscent of Pope Paul VI, Pope Francis urged the Korean leaders to "have the courage that comes from hope, becoming 'artisans' of peace."

Even if Koreans are now talking, much rests on what happens when Trump is added to the mix, said Moon.

"It is impossible to overestimate the suspicion that exists between North Korea and the U.S. 70 years after the end of the Korean War," Moon wrote in an email. "There's a real chance Trump could be walking into a massive trap. Trump's own inexperience in high-stakes diplomatic negotiations increases the size of his gamble."

For Christians in South Korea the prospect of a peace treaty and eventual reunification is exciting but challenging, said Sun.

"The denuclearization process is more complicated, since another important key is held in the hands of Mr. Trump," he said.

The large Christian minority (more than 40 per cent of the population in South Korea, but a persecuted and vanishing presence in the North) has often been a force for peace and reconciliation, said Sun.

"A voice of peace undercut by church divisions," is how Sun describes South Korea's Christians. "Conservative Christians, either Catholic or Protestant, reveal their negative response to the peace process in Korea. On the other hand, many Christians hope to establish a peaceful and united Korea."

"The river of peace is flowing and we Koreans will praise God. . . . The Korean church has con-

tinuously prayed for this issue of peace for several decades. For my congregation, I put this agenda of the border summit on the church bulletin for April. We have prayed together during the public worship services."

In the North, where Moon has visited several times with official South Korean delegations, prayers for peace are drowned out by the Kim regime's constant presence in every aspect of daily life.

"North Korea is entirely a police state and people were struggling for food," Moon said "North Korea's Stalinist system is based on total devotion of the individual to an ideology. . . . Many outsiders say the ideology largely resembles a religion or cult and refugees' accounts say those who oppose it are dealt with severely, often ending up in prison camps."

Moon believes the best hope for a productive dialogue between Kim and Trump may be in Pope Francis' April 29 suggestion that a third country should mediate between them. Canada has had official diplomatic ties with North Korea since 2001, though it has not yet established an embassy in Pyongyang.

Religion is not irrelevant to the peace and denuclearization process, said Moon.

"When Mr. Moon Jae-In was elected to be president of South Korea in May 2017, I proposed to president-elect Moon's camp they send a special envoy to deliver his personal greetings to Pope Francis," he said.

"Mr. Moon is a practising Catholic and he accepted my idea and named Archbishop Kim Hee-Joong as a special envoy to deliver the new South Korean government's active intention to strengthen their co-operation for peace and security of the Korean peninsula."



Grandin Media/Lincoln Ho

INSTALLATION MASS — Bishop Gregory Bittman blesses onlookers during his installation mass in Kelowna.

Bittman installed as bishop of Nelson

By Andrew Ehrkamp and
Lincoln Ho
Grandin Media

KELOWNA, B.C. (CCN) — Following the example of St. Mark, Catholics are called to be evangelists, spreading the Gospel in their individual way even in a society increasingly hostile to faith, says Bishop Gregory Bittman.

"As Pope Francis said, true evangelization takes place under the action of the Holy Spirit," Bittman said in his installation ceremony April 25 as the new shepherd of the Diocese of Nelson, B.C.

"This means as evangelizers, we need to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to use the gifts that we have been given, in order to fulfil our mission to evangelize. This way we can introduce the world to Christ and bring to everyone you meet, the joy of the Gospel."

Bittman served as Auxiliary Bishop of Edmonton — his hometown — for nearly six years before his appointment as the new Bishop of Nelson, succeeding Rev. John Corriveau who is retiring.

Bittman said his priority is to get to know the Diocese of Nelson and to have the community get to know him.

Bittman noted in his first homily, on the feast day of St. Mark, that the writer of the Gospel was a "timid evangelist" when compared to the "fiery and superzealous" of St. Paul during the early days of the church.

He said all Christians are tasked with a mission in their own individual way, to follow in Jesus' call to spread the Good News of

his salvation, "to all the peoples of the world to the very ends of the world."

"St. Mark, and all of the evangelists who follow after the Apostles, show us that Jesus' words to evangelize were not lost on them. Nor can they be with us," Bittman told his new diocese of nearly 80,000 Catholics.

Bittman continued to state that evangelization was — and still is — key to the future of the church.

"Just think . . . had the Apostles kept to themselves or restricted the Good News to a select few, or adopted the attitude of indifference and didn't care about their fellow human beings and did not proclaim the salvation to be found in Jesus Christ," he said. "Would there have been a church?"

As the Apostles and early disciples were called to evangelize, so is each individual Christian — despite temptations "to keep quiet, to keep the faith to ourselves . . . or to live what could be called a secret Christian life where no one would even know or even guess that we are Christian," Bittman said.

"Unfortunately the secular world encourages this. It wants faith out of the public square. It wants the voice of faith to be silenced. Ultimately it wants a faithless, godless world," he said.

"As Christians, whose very mission is to evangelize, we cannot be indifferent to this. Certainly we cannot buy into it or go along with it. This goes against the very words of Jesus in our Gospel. This goes against the mission of the church, which was entrusted to her by Jesus."

Among the bishops from across Canada who attended the installation were Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop Richard Smith

— **FIRST NATIONS, page 5**

An Invitation to PM subscribers:

As we say goodbye to the *Prairie Messenger* with sadness, we look to the future with hope. The Catholic Dioceses and Eparchy in Saskatchewan are each discerning how they might develop links to ensure that local Catholic news, resources, and events can be shared with our faithful.

As a *Prairie Messenger* subscriber, if you wish to stay connected through whatever electronic means of communication are developed, the *Prairie Messenger* invites you to submit your name and email address to: pm.editor@stpeterspress.ca with the subject heading "followup." We will email you regarding any future plans. Your information will not be used for any other purposes.

*The Catholic Dioceses and Eparchy of Saskatchewan
join in extending our gratitude and asking abundant blessings
on the staff of the Prairie Messenger
and the monks at St. Peter's Abbey.*

At rally, students send message of support, peace

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Eunice Gichuhi and her family came to Canada for more opportunity, but it didn't mean that she would forget the community she left behind.

Growing up in Kenya, the then 11-year-old Gichuhi knew exactly what it meant to not have the same opportunities as the boys. She saw it in her elders, her neighbours and even her classmates.

So when Gichuhi, attended a student rally April 25 organized by Development and Peace, it wasn't just for a social justice cause — it was a personal one. She joined more than 500 high school students at Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square, asking for more peace-building efforts that support women around the world.

"When you go to school, you see that most of the kids are boys and you're just like, 'Why are there not girls in school?' Or like when you go to the villages and you find a lot of the girls are just at home cleaning," said Gichuhi, now 17. "The awareness of this oppression is raised at such a young age that when you come here (to Canada), all you want to do is just make changes."

Since November last year, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace — Caritas Canada has been running an education and action campaign titled "Women at the Heart of Peace." The campaign calls for the Canadian government to meet the United Nations' goal for wealthy countries to contribute 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to development assistance.

"While encouraged by the



Catholic Register/Jean Ko Din

STUDENT PEACE RALLY — Eunice Gichuhi shares her poetry at a student peace rally.

increase in the last federal budget, students are still concerned that it is not enough to get us much further past Canada's current contribution levels of 0.26 per cent," according to a statement by Development and Peace.

Inspired by the campaign, Gichuhi performed spoken word poetry she wrote about women peace builders working with Development and Peace around the world.

"Women at the heart of peace, / Supporting women is supporting peace, / Without them the world would cease to exist," Gichuhi said at the rally.

The rally began at the City Hall's Peace Garden where students reflected on a monument containing the eternal flame which was lit by Pope St. John Paul II from the Memorial for Peace in Hiroshima in 1981.

"I hope that by looking at the

flame that was originally lit by Pope John Paul (it) ignites a fire for peace in each and every one

of you," said Luke Stocking, rally organizer and Central Ontario animator for Devel-

Campaign should be about memory, not money

Continued from page 1

When he was working on his master's degree at Queens, Luciuk began to research the internment in 1978, when he came across people who had been interned. He had no idea this had happened.

In the mid-1980s, the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association formed to gain recognition of the internment, based on the recognition given to the Japanese who were interned in the Second World War, he said.

In 2008, they achieved a settlement that established the Canadian First World War Recognition Fund, and \$10 million of "symbolic redress," Luciuk said. This fund has a formal mandate to restore internee cemeteries, and has successfully done so in other locations.

When speaking to a woman who had survived the Spirit Lake internment, she told Luciuk, "Your campaign should be about memory, not money."

"I want people to remember," she said, telling Luciuk if people had remembered what had happened to the Ukrainians during the First World War, the Japanese might not have been interned in the Second World War.

At least 16 bodies are buried at the Spirit Lake cemetery, maybe 19, Luciuk said. "Some died trying to escape; others died of work-related injuries." Others died in the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918, so moving the remains to a new site would be prohibitively expensive.

"We thought it would be a simple matter for landowner to open up cemetery to be reconsecrated," Luciuk said, noting that almost all the crosses have now been knocked over or disappeared.

He attributed "no malicious intent" to the farmer, but described the cemetery as "in the back end of nowhere," now being overtaken by the boreal forest.

"He's a farmer, he's not interested in maintaining a cemetery," Luciuk said.

They approached the farmer several times, offering to pay for

the land, offered him an honorarium for hiring a caretaker, Luciuk said. "All we want to do is acquire the property, restore the cemetery, have a ceremony."

"We are not interested in opening it up to the public, except maybe one day a year," he said.

Near the site the Spirit Lake Camp Corporation runs a small museum near the internment site.

Luciuk has written the Bishop of Amos, and Pope Francis asking for their support in restoring and reconsecrating the Spirit Lake cemetery.

"This is such a simple matter to solve," Luciuk said, noting there's an endowment fund that can pay for the cemetery's upkeep. The petition

opment and Peace.

At the rally representatives from 18 Catholic high schools in the Greater Toronto Area presented a stack of postcards which contained signatures of almost 20,000 students.

In the postcards, which were destined for the prime minister's office, signatories called for the Canadian government to commit to peace-building efforts of women around the world.

The rally took place just two days after 10 people died when a van struck pedestrians on the sidewalk along a stretch of Yonge Street. In light of this violence, Stocking said it was even more important for students to be present and visible.

"Now more than ever to have a voice for peace is vital," he said. "I think it's great for Toronto to see there are young people saying 'no' to the violence that we saw in our city."

calls for the Canadian government to "use whatever measures necessary to provide for the archaeological examination, restoration, reconsecration and limited ongoing site visits for commemorative and religious services to the Spirit Lake internee cemetery, working in collaboration with the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund, Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association and Ukrainian Canadian Congress, so hallowing the victims of Canada's first national internment operations.

The e-petition (<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Sign/e-1643>) is open until August. Since it was launched it has garnered more than 600 signatures.

Hierarchy should be honest

Continued from page 3

said a document published on the Vatican's website after the meetings.

"We want to say, especially to the hierarchy of the church, that they should be a transparent, welcoming, honest, inviting, communicative, accessible, joyful, and interactive community."

It also said young people gravitate toward communities they feel empowered in, which means churches and families need to work harder to create a sense of belonging and provide good role models.

"There is often disagreement among young people, both within the church and in the wider world, about some of her teachings which are especially controversial today," such as contraception, abortion, homosexuality, cohabitation, marriage, and the priesthood.

"As a result, they may want the church to change her teaching or at least to have access to a better explanation," but "even though there is internal debate, young Catholics whose convictions are in conflict with official teaching still desire to be part of the church."

The document also discussed the challenges facing young people and their use of technology and social media, as well as the growing sense that religion is "no

longer seen as the main stream" where people look for the meaning of life.

"We have found that young people want authentic witnesses — men and women who vibrantly express their faith and relationship with Jesus while encouraging others to approach, meet, and fall in love with Jesus themselves."

The B.C. Catholic asked two local young adults for their thoughts on what they'd like to see from the synod and the Catholic Church.

"I'm very thankful that Pope Francis has made youth and young adults a priority and is seeking the help and input of this demographic," said Rachel Wong, a communications student at Simon Fraser University.

Matthew Furtado, a youth ministry co-ordinator at St. Matthew's Parish in Surrey, was thrilled to see the pre-synod document encourage young people to use social media to evangelize, take a gap year to serve in missions, be creative, appreciate silent prayer, and share personal testimonies.

Furtado and Wong, along with several other young adults, participated in a national youth consultation hosted by Salt and Light Television Oct. 10, 2017.

More information about the synod coming up this October is available at <http://www.synod2018.va>

Reach out to First Nations

Continued from page 4

of Edmonton, and Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi — the papal nuncio to Canada — who brought greetings from Pope Francis to a crowd which also included First Nations elders and leaders.

That continuing outreach to the indigenous community is among the challenges facing Bittman.

"One big one for me is opening the church evermore to the giftedness of our First Nations peoples," said outgoing Bishop John Coriveau. "It would bring great richness to our diocese."

"He will be a wonderful Bishop of Nelson," added Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto. "I was delighted during the time I was Archbishop of Edmonton with the tremendous work that Bishop Bittman did when he was chancellor and, of course, as auxiliary bishop more recently."

For now, Bittman said his first priority is to acclimatize to the Diocese of Nelson community, both metaphorically and literally — with his signature sense of humour.

"Of course everything is brand new. I feel totally lost. I don't know my way around. I've been using Google Maps constantly just to find a store," Bittman joked in an interview.

"It's beautiful. I'm out in the country again, and it reminds me of when I was a parish priest (in rural Alberta). I listen to the birds in the morning. It's peaceful. I'm looking at the mountains."

That sense of humour was reciprocated, even during the installation ceremony.

"We are looking forward to your visit to our parish and our parish missions," said Sylvia Jurys, president of the Nelson Diocese Catholic Women's League of Canada, who spoke on behalf of the laity in the diocese.

"We hope that you will take time to take in the magnificent vistas of our beautiful province of British Columbia" through the Kootenays into the wine country from the towns in the south Okanagan "and their big bold reds to Kelowna where the pinot noirs are magnificent, and also the chardonnay."

Jurys also mentioned that the 1,500 members of the 23 chapters of the Catholic Women's League in the diocese, "are old enough to be your mother and are anxious to meet you."

She also made a promise to Bittman, known for his penchant for candy.

"You know that infamous candy bowl? We assure you that it will always be full."

Evangelization the task of missionary disciples

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — St. Anne Catholic Church was the Saskatoon host site for a New Evangelization Summit (NES) broadcast from Ottawa to gatherings across Canada and around the world.

NES speakers April 27 and 28 addressed the meaning and challenges of the New Evangelization and the call of the baptized to be missionary disciples. Participants heard how the New Evangelization is about proclaiming the Gospel and introducing Christ and his saving mission in a modern world where even the baptized are not necessarily evangelized.

“Our baptismal call is to be missionary disciples,” said Daniel Pettipas, evangelization co-ordina-

tor at St. Anne’s Parish. “When we leave our churches on Sunday, we are going into mission territory.”

With the parish’s eucharistic chapel open for adoration and the Paschal candle at the front of the room, the local site offered prayer times as well as praise and worship, displays, a table of resources for sale by Universal Church Supplies, child care, and opportunities for small group discussion.

“The theme of the New Evangelization Summit — the three values — that we bring to the table each year are to inspire, to form, and to connect,” Pettipas told the crowd. “Let us be open to inspiration from the Holy Spirit, to our speakers, and be open to changing our mindset and our perspective. We want you to feel part of something bigger than yourself.”

A range of speakers was featured, including one local voice, Christy Dupuis, who provides pastoral ministry at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Martensville, Sask.

Drawing on her experience with Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO), a university evangelization movement founded at the University of Saskatchewan, Dupuis shared her own conversion experience and what she has learned about being a missionary over the years.

She stressed the power of personal testimony. “Our stories are one of the most powerful tools that we have as missionaries,” she said. “More than anything, people need to hear an authentic witness, an authentic telling of God’s presence in our lives. Your stories have the power to communicate

the reality of Christ.

“Authentic love must guide every effort of evangelization,” said Dupuis, “not guilt or judgment or fear. Love is going to be the doorway for conversion.”

Building a relationship, trusting and being open with each other are needed, she said. “As missionaries we need to spend a lot of time listening, understanding the people we are getting to know.”

Dupuis said that evangelization should be undertaken one person at a time, as a journey of accompaniment: “We need to be willing to walk with them, to encourage

them, to give them the patience and grace that they need to become who God is asking them to be.”

When it comes to evangelization, she said, “We need to rely on the Holy Spirit. Get up and root yourselves in the Scriptures. Pray. We cannot do this work without it.”

It’s not enough to sit and talk about evangelization, Dupuis said, but we need to “push the ignition switch,” and be persistent, and actually do the work of an evangelist. “Do not be afraid to pour yourself out in service so that others may receive the fullness of who they are called to be.”

St. Peter’s reaches for new goals

By Paul Paproski, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — Students who spend time reading in St. Peter’s College (SPC) library now have a more pleasant atmosphere for their work, according to SPC president Robert Harasymchuk. The library has nine stained glass windows that incorporate themes important to Benedictine education. The windows were funded by benefactors and are part of an ongoing effort by the college administration to offer quality education amidst a welcoming atmosphere, he said.

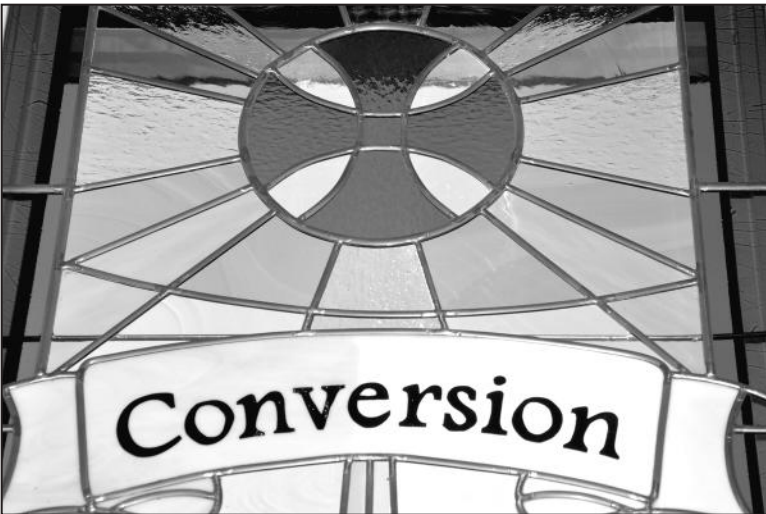
Plans are underway to find sponsors to place six stained glass windows in the hallway outside the library. The stained glass will bring more beauty to the walkway that connects the college to St. Peter’s Abbey guest wing and student residence. The college is already an impressive facility and the administration is always striving to make it even more beautiful, he remarked.

“It has already been 10 years since the college facilities were extensively renovated, with a \$16-million investment in upgrading Michael Hall (the college building), the SportsPlex fitness centre and gym. We have state-of-the-art science labs, comfortable student lounges and study rooms, wi-fi throughout the buildings and great residences,” Harasymchuk commented.

Students have access to a curriculum that offers a large variety of courses that complete most first-year requirements for arts and science, business, education, engineering and a large number of professional programs at the University of Saskatchewan. New classes have been offered recently, in the Cree language (*nēhiyawēwin*), religious studies, computer science, and writing. Student grades appear on University of Saskatchewan transcripts because SPC is an affiliate of the university.

The average class size at SPC is smaller than at the larger university, which means the student-teacher ratio is lower, giving students greater access to professors, he said. The average class size may have 15 - 18 students in the first year.

A two-year Writing Diploma



Paul Paproski, OSB

LIBRARY WINDOWS — New stained glass windows in St. Peter’s College library have themes important to Benedictine education. The windows are part of an ongoing effort by the college to improve the learning atmosphere for students. Themes of the nine stained glass windows include: love, prayer, stewardship, stability, conversion, obedience, discipline, humility and community.

program offers a large selection of writing and language classes, Harasymchuk remarked. The material prepares students for a career in writing and publishing, and it enables them to pursue a four-year degree program at the University of Saskatchewan.

The Student Services offices provide assistance in meeting the demands of course work and applying for more than \$70,000 worth of SPC scholarships. Student Services personnel help plan events for students throughout the year, and are responsible, as well, for promoting SPC to communities across the province. The student recruitment staff will be expanded this fall — from two positions to three, he said.

The work of Student Services has helped increase enrolment over the past several years, in which more than 130 full- and part-time students have registered for classes each year. The college is anticipating enrolment to continue to be strong. Recruitment staff are promoting the college to a larger audience and plans are underway to offer a greater variety of courses.

“The college is always consulting with our alumni, donors, students, the Order of St. Benedict and the larger community to better understand the needs of our current and future learners. This helps to ensure we are always offering the

right combination of courses and supports for academic and personal success,” Harasymchuk commented.

“We will be exploring some exciting projects for the coming years that will help us reduce our dependence on traditional energy sources and launch some innovative new programs.”

St. Peter’s College (Michael Hall) was built in 1921 when Abbot Michael Ott, OSB, was the leader of the Benedictine community. The building was named in honour of Abbot Michael who initiated the construction of the college. Michael Hall became a residential high school just after it opened in November of 1921. High school students lived in a dormitory on the top floor.

The building served as a monastery for the monks who lived on the third floor. They gathered for prayer in their chapel at the south end of the third floor. The other floors were reserved for offices and classrooms. Everyone ate in dining rooms on the bottom floor.

In 1926, the college became affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan. In 1968, it was registered as a corporate body. The 46,000-square-foot infrastructure was renovated between 2008 and 2012. The new fitness centre opened to students and staff in 2010.

By Karen Massett

SASKATOON — Through a pledge of \$30,000, Henry Rемаi has established two new STM bursaries and contributed to an endowed chair at the Catholic college at the University of Saskatchewan.

With annual tuition and fees for Arts and Sciences students approaching \$6,000, these new bursaries will provide funding for deserving recipients.

The Henry Rемаi Emergency Student Bursary of \$2,000 will provide funding for students who are in acute need of financial support and are at risk of withdrawing from university as a result.

The Henry Rемаi Aboriginal Student Bursary will provide one to four bursaries ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000 to Aboriginal students. Recognizing the value of providing support to first-year students at STM, preference will be given to continuing students who have participated as a mentor in programs for new Aboriginal students.

Remai has also provided funding for the STM Endowed Chair in Indigenous Spirituality and Reconciliation. This chair was established in 2016 by an initial endowment from the Basilian Fathers who founded St. Thomas More College. Rемаi’s support will encourage and foster awareness and apprecia-



STM

Henry Rемаi

tion of indigenous spirituality and advance reconciliation.

Remai attended elementary and high school in Carrot River, Sask., and subsequently earned his BA and BEd degrees at the University of Saskatchewan. He went on to receive a master’s degree in education from the University of Alberta.

Remai’s career teaching mathematics at Holy Cross High School spanned 26 years. In recognition of his dedication to students and his contributions to mathematics education, he was awarded the Prime Minister’s Award for Teaching Excellence in the area of Mathematics, and the Master Teaching Award from the Saskatchewan Mathematics Society.

“I have very fond memories of the time I spent at St. Thomas More,” says Rемаi. “The positive Catholic environment was very supporting for a kid from rural Saskatchewan. My most fervent wish is that students will avail themselves of the many resources offered at STM. The fellowship there can lead to lifelong friendships.”

STM is grateful for this gift from an alumnus and proud to recognize the support from an accomplished educator whose contributions to students, the community and the province reflect the values STM hopes to instil in its students.



Kiply Yaworski

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION — Dr. Debbie Zeni, MD, was one of the leaders of a sacramental preparation workshop for catechists, parents and parish leaders held April 21 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Saskatoon. Offered in conjunction with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada (CGS), the workshop led by Zeni and Carolyne Marie Petch offered insights into preparing children for the celebration of the sacraments of reconciliation, confirmation and first eucharist. The two leaders also offered an April 22 - 27 training session in Saskatoon for Level 1 (ages 3 to 6 years) CGS catechists. There are currently three GSC atriums offering catechesis to young children in the Diocese of Saskatoon.

Holocaust ‘began with words’: survivor

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop as Holocaust survivor Max Eisen told his personal story to 1,200 students from three school divisions bussed to Resurrection Church April 26 to hear Eisen tell of his experiences.

The event was hosted by the Regina Catholic School Division, who invited students from Regina Public and Prairie Valley school divisions to sit in on the presentation.

The *Prairie Messenger* interviewed several students after the presentation and asked what they knew about the Holocaust. Some had heard a little about it but were shocked when they heard Eisen describing his personal experiences.

“I didn’t know it was so brutal,” said one, and her friend nodded in agreement.

The Holocaust story is familiar to most adults, but it became personal to the students when Eisen showed photos of himself with his

two brothers in happier times. His two brothers, his parents and his grandparents did not survive.

Eisen also showed photos of the walking skeletons who were barely alive when they were liberated by Allied forces. There were also photos of piles of bodies and Nazi soldiers with rifles pointed at Jewish prisoners.

“All of this began with words,” Eisen said. “The Nazi propaganda machine was very efficient. It dehumanized Jews, took their property, their belongings, and all their possessions. They told us we were going to work on farms, but it all ended like this,” he said, showing a photo on the projection screen of conditions in the Auschwitz death camp.

“It all began with words,” he repeated. “Bad things happen when good people do nothing.” He urged his audience to be upstanders, and not bystanders. “You have freedom in Canada, but freedom comes with responsibility.”

Chief Commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, David Arnott, spoke prior to Eisen’s presentation, telling the students that words matter. He also told the students that Saskatchewan’s Human Rights Commission and all Human Rights Commissions as well as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights were all the result of the Holocaust, and were all efforts to prevent anything like the Holocaust from happening again. Anti-Semitism still exists in Canada, he told the students, noting there were 1,700 documented incidents last year.

The Regina Catholic School Division has developed a curriculum on the Holocaust which next year will include visits to the German and Polish concentration and death camps.

Eisen credited a Hungarian doctor in Auschwitz for saving his life. Eisen had suffered a brutal beating to his head from a gun butt wielded by a guard. The doctor operated on him and later had

him removed from a gurney that was likely taking him to the gas chambers.

“The standing rule at the camp was, if you could not walk away from the hospital after three days’ treatment, you were taken to the gas chamber,” said Eisen. “The Hungarian doctor had me taken off the stretcher and gave me the job of keeping his operating room clean.”

Eisen told the students, “Before he was taken to the gas chambers, my father told me if I survived I was to tell the world what happened here.”

Auschwitz was eventually liberated by an American army unit.

Eisen came to Canada in 1949. He has been speaking about the Holocaust for the past 29 years. His book, *By Chance Alone*, details his life and Holocaust experiences. Eisen has made speaking about the Holocaust his personal mission so that nothing like it ever happens again.

Eisen was in Saskatchewan to speak to the Saskatchewan Police Chiefs Association meeting in



Frank Flegel

Max Eisen

Warman. He came to Regina at the invitation of Domenic Scuglia, director of education for the Regina Catholic School Division. Contact was made through the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Toronto.

While he was in Regina, Eisen took part in a Yom HaShoah Holocaust memorial service at Beth Jacob Synagogue.

CWL diocesan convention held

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

KINDERSLEY, Sask. — The 83rd annual Saskatoon Diocesan Convention of the Catholic Women’s League (CWL) was held April 23 at St. Joseph Parish in Kindersley, with 196 attending the daylong event.



Kiply Yaworski

Carla Carlson

Parish delegates, spiritual advisors, provincial and national leaders, and a number of special guests participated in the convention, which included the election of a new executive, discussion of a proposed national strategic plan, guest speakers, and committee reports, as well as mass with Bishop Mark Hagemoen and a number of priests from across the diocese. A banquet concluded the event.

The convention theme was “Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God’s Call.”

MC Paula Haubrich opened the day with words of welcome, and outgoing Saskatoon Diocesan CWL president Marlene VanDresar called the meeting to order.

Darlene Possberg, chair of the spiritual development committee, led morning prayer. A number of special guests brought greetings, including Rev. Emmanuel Azike, OP, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, as well as representatives of local government, the Knights of Columbus and the ecumenical community.

Regina diocesan president Marilyn Schuck and Prince Albert diocesan president Shirley Lamoureux also brought greetings. Saskatoon diocesan president VanDresar and CWL provincial president Margaret Schwab each provided a report to delegates.

VanDresar described a number of initiatives undertaken during the past year, including a CWL workshop held in five locations across the diocese, and news about anniversary milestones for various councils. Concluding her term as diocesan president, VanDresar urged members to “step out of your comfort zone. It is truly amazing how each of us can affect our councils and our community for the better, if we just have the courage, like Mary, to say yes.”

Schwab reminded members of the upcoming provincial convention June 3 - 4 in Regina, and the national CWL convention to be held in Winnipeg in August.

Former national CWL president Barb Dowding led a strategic planning workshop, gathering feedback about a national effort to chart goals and concrete steps for the Catholic Women’s League at every level.

Rev. Emmanuel Mbah gave a brief presentation about his new book, *Living in Dominion*. Mbah described how the idea for the book began several years ago when his home diocese in Nigeria chose “living in dominion” as its annual theme, based on the passage from Genesis in which God gives Adam and Eve dominion over the earth, calling on them to nurture creation and to live in balance.

“After some months in Canada, I discovered that what I am trying to address cuts across cultures,” he said. “This book is about integration. This is what *Living in Dominion* is all about: striking a balance.”

Guest speaker Carla Carlson of Swift Current, Sask., shared experiences from her life and career that demonstrated how “everyday grace” breaks through in ordinary encounters of life — offering stories and examples from her work

as a social worker as well as her current law practice.

Offering insights recorded in her book *Everyday Grace: Finding Your Extraordinary in Ordinary Events*, Carlson urged her listeners to be present, to be open and to be positive. This conscious effort provides a way to be attentive to the workings of grace, and to keeping God in the forefront. “We must put things in perspective, the good and the bad,” she said. “We must maintain our heavenly focus.”

A number of standing committees delivered reports, covering such areas as organization, spiritual development, Christian family life, community life, communications, health and education, and the operations of the CWL Clothing Depot.

A motion calling for every CWL council in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon to write letters to government expressing concerns about the legalization of marijuana and the minimum age of consumption was also passed.

As the business portion of the convention drew to a close, diocesan spiritual adviser Claire Heron spoke on behalf of the CWL spiritual advisers in attendance, and a lively group of organizers invited members to next year’s diocesan CWL convention to be held in Watson on May 11, 2019.

A new diocesan CWL executive was elected to conclude the convention, and members were commissioned and blessed by the bishop at the celebration of the eucharist.

The new executive includes President Ingrid Eggerman of Watson; Past-President Marlene VanDresar; President-Elect Edna Hodgson of Bruno; Recording Secretary Margot de la Gorgendiere of Holy Family, Saskatoon; and Treasurer Connie Chrichton of St. Mary, Saskatoon; as well as committee chairs Audrey Zimmerman of Englefeld; Mary Kehrig of Holy Family, Saskatoon; June Gorgchuck of St. Peter the Apostle, Saskatoon; Wendy De Sa of St. Patrick, Saskatoon; and Paula Haubrich of Kindersley.

Christ spoke to each of us

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — New Evangelization Summit speaker George Weigel examined the origin of the New Evangelization in the unfolding of church history: “I think we are living in an extraordinarily privileged moment in the 2,000-year history of the church,” he said.

Speaking at the Ottawa event broadcast to host sites around the world, the theologian, author, and biographer of Pope John Paul II pointed to this as one of the moments in history when the Catholic faith is taking on “a new expression in order to meet the challenges of being the pilgrim people of God in a given age.”

The latest challenge for the pilgrim church is to be the church of the New Evangelization, he said. The movement has its roots in the election of Pope Leo XIII in 1878, which marked the beginning of “the church’s great project of not conceding to the modern world and not rejecting the modern world, but seeking to convert the modern world,” said Weigel.

Efforts undertaken under Pope Leo XIII ultimately led to an explosion of Catholic intellectual life, Scripture study, the development of Catholic Social Teaching, and eventually the Second Vatican Council, which was launched by Pope John XXIII in 1958 and completed by Pope Paul VI.

“Vatican II was intended to be a great missionary council.”

Weigel described a number of ways how, under the leadership of Pope John Paul II, the Vatican II understanding of the church as “a communion of disciples in mission” became clearer.

He reflected on John Paul II’s trip to the Holy Land at the dawn of the third millennium: “He was in effect picking up the entire Catholic Church . . . and taking us to the places of salvation history, so that we could touch and feel and see the fact that Christianity is

not a pious story, it is not a myth. Christianity begins with radically transformed lives, in a place you can go to today.” It is “to understand again, that, like those transformed lives of 2,000 years ago, we are called by our encounter with the risen Christ to offer his friendship to the world.”

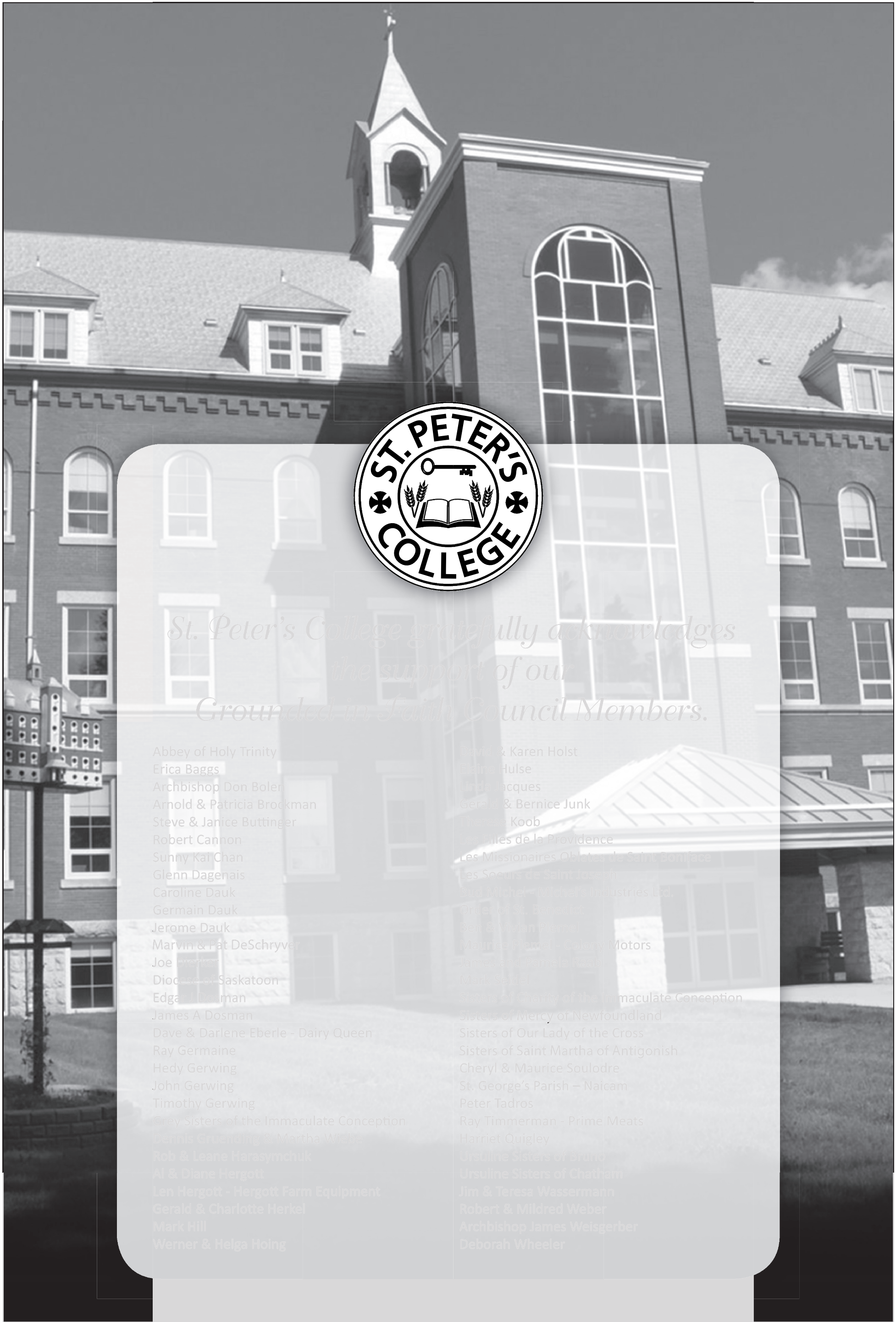
The transformation of the church of the Counter-Reformation into the church of the New Evangelization has come “just in time,” added Weigel. While the church of the Counter-Reformation could count on the surrounding culture to help pass along the faith, “we now know that is no longer the case. The cultural air we breathe not only does not help transmit the faith, it is toxic.”

“To be the church of the New Evangelization is going to mean, for all the people of the Church, a deepened friendship with the Lord Jesus, through regular immersion in the Word of God, a more frequent encounter with the sacraments, and, above all, by owning our baptism.”

Another challenge Weigel presented to NES participants was to grow in self-awareness, and recognize that we must respond to the mission field that exists all around us.

“Missionary territory today is your kitchen table. It is your neighbourhood association. It is your workplace. It is your life as a citizen. It is your life as a consumer. All these are arenas of missionary activity.”

The words of Christ to “go and make disciples” were spoken to each of us on the day of our baptism, Weigel stressed: “We are being called to be part of the birthing of the church of the New Evangelization, which is the church of the apostles. If we can own that missionary discipleship, we will not only embody what we were called to be at our baptism, we may begin, in converting others, to convert this culture, and give the nations a new gift of freedom.”



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Deborah Wheeler

On the lines: parish assistants are unsung heroes

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

It was an otherwise quiet Wednesday morning when a woman walked into the parish office of St. Joan of Arc in Toronto. She was in tears.

She was looking to meet with a priest but the parish secretary, Rosanne Kelly, was the only one working in the office that day. The pastor was away on retreat and the associate pastor was visiting a local nursing home.



Photo courtesy Tess Bondoc

Tess and Marga Bondoc form a mother-daughter team at Holy Family in Whitby, Ont.

“She told me she was having difficulties with her son who wasn’t well and I could relate to it because I have a son in Vancouver,” said Kelly. “As a mother, I talked to her with similar problems but that’s not really church-related. It’s just she came to the door and needed somebody to listen so I listened.”

Kelly said moments like these happen at least once a week at St. Joan of Arc Church in Toronto. Her job description may say parish secretary, but Kelly is sometimes called to be a counsellor, a bookkeeper, an event planner or a referee. Basically anything the parish needs her to be.

The unsung hero of parish life, the parish secretary — or administrative assistant as some prefer — is both the face and the drive behind the church community. Every day, they answer calls, balance books, put out fires and make sure the flock is looked after. Kelly’s pastor and boss, Rev. Dan Callahan, jokes that the parish secretary is not a pastor’s sidekick, but more like a partner in crime.

Kelly has been a member of her parish for 45 years and she has worked as the parish secretary for 32 of those years. Her job has grown from just greeting people and answering phone calls to handling priests’ schedules and taking care of the sacristy. She has worked with five different pastors and witnessed the parish shift administration from the Priests of the Sacred Heart to the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement.

“The job just kept growing and

once Father Dan came, I got more responsibilities,” said Kelly.

In May, St. Joan of Arc is celebrating its 100th year anniversary and the parish is as busy as ever.

“It allows me to be relaxed knowing that (Kelly) knows the daily adminis-trivia that I don’t have to concentrate on because I can depend on the fact that she knows what she’s doing and she stays on top of these things,” said Callahan. “And I can come and go, knowing that she’ll take care of this.”

For Kelly, it is a 24/7 job. She often finds herself working well outside her office hours, but she doesn’t mind. The church is like a second home to her.

“I live only about 15 minutes away from the church so it’s easy for me to come anytime,” she said. “If Father (Callahan) is away for the weekend, I’d come down early in the morning to open up the church for the 8:30 mass and I might come down late at night to close the church.”

H a v i n g Kelly is invaluable,

said Callahan, because it allows him to bring his full attention to the pastoral care and ministry around the community. He can spend his day meeting with parish groups, going to meetings or visiting hospitals and nursing homes.

Sometimes, he also relies on Kelly when settling disputes at the church.

“The other thing is the good cop, bad cop,” said Callahan. “If she says no, it’s a lot less painful for people than if I say no because I’m expected to say yes all the time as the pastor. So I get to always be the nice guy.”

“As secretaries, we know when to hide the pastors,” Kelly joked. “And we don’t let people know that.”



Photo courtesy Boots Montano

Ida Foch was given a fond farewell by parishioners after serving St. Mary Immaculate Church for 37 years.

Tess and Marga Bondoc are a mother-daughter team at Holy Family Parish in Whitby, Ont. Tess, 50, was hired in 2010. It was her first job after immigrating to Canada from the Philippines.

But even if it wasn’t her job, Tess said she would still be doing the same thing.

“Even back in the Philippines, I was involved in the church. I was involved in baptismal preparation class, marriage prep classes . . . I’ve done all of that back home so coming here, it wasn’t difficult for me to transition in this church,” Tess said.

Moving to a new country is a difficult transition, but Tess said she and her family of five found comfort in belonging to the parish community.

“For me, it’s being a part of a family. It’s to belong. It’s being a part of something that’s bigger than myself and I can only see this in a church.”

Tess is now passing on her love for parish life to her oldest child, 22-year-old daughter Marga. When Tess is away from the office running workshops and attending seminars, Marga is hired part-time as the receptionist.

“It’s important to us that people feel valued and important so there is always someone at the front when the church is open,” said Tess.

On a daily basis, Tess has to deal with unusual requests from the priests, parishioners and sometimes, passersby. One of the more unusual but common requests is when people come into the office with their old statues, crosses and other sacramentals.

“They would leave it with me, like bags or boxes of them, because they say the items are blessed and they don’t want to throw them away,” said Tess. “They leave it with me whether I want to take it or not.”

Holy Family parish has accumulated quite a collection, said Tess. As often as they can, she and pastor Rev. Laszlo Nagy gift the items to people who need them.

When Tess is not greeting people, answering phone calls or checking emails, she is bookkeeping, scheduling appointments, processing sacramental documents, doing the payroll, updating the parish website and the parish smartphone app.

Late last year, Tess’s title officially changed from parish secre-



Photo courtesy Peter Leitmann

Peter Leitmann with St. Boniface pastor Rev. Mark Robson.

tary to office manager.

“It’s just a change of title, I don’t really call myself that,” she said. “Everyone calls me the parish secretary and I don’t mind.”

Outside of her full-time duties, Tess volunteers as a lector, a catechist for communion classes and a member of the parish council.

Stephanie Nargoz, director of Human Resources at the Archdiocese of Toronto, said the role of the parish secretary has changed dramatically even in the span of five years, let alone two or three decades. Many have seen their roles evolve.

“Technology is a big one,” said Nargoz. “There has been a shift from typewriters and now we have computer technology. There’s a lot of change in the positioning of the role. The titling has changed. The parish secretary title is still there but we’re seeing a move to administrative assistant or office administrator.”

Even in the past three years as director, Nargoz said the Human Resources office has put more emphasis on professional performance reviews. She uncovered a performance review template from 1985 which listed categories like “neatness” or “dress.” “I know there was one person who I chatted with that said they couldn’t wear pants to work when they first started,” said Nargoz. “A lot of it focused on appearance of the incumbent versus the role itself. So now, you would see more of a move to what is the work they are accomplishing.”

The role of parish secretary is traditionally a female role and for the most part, it still is. Within the Archdiocese of Toronto, Nargoz said she only knows of two male secretaries in its 221 parishes.

One of them, 41-year-old Peter Leitmann, is the only male parish secretary who works full time in the archdiocese. He has been working at St. Boniface Parish in Scarborough for almost two years, but sometimes people are still taken aback when they see a man in the office.

“Sometimes people get kind of shocked when they come in and they see a man. They’d say, ‘We’re looking for the secretary’ and I’d say, ‘You got him,’” Leitmann laughed.

“That happens quite often, especially on the phone. Someone calls in and I get called ‘Father’ right away and well, I’m a father of three young children, but I’m not a Father of the people.”

Leitmann’s official title is parish animator. This means that on top of his regular office work as secretary, he manages the various programs and events that take place in the parish. Leitmann has a background in youth ministry, so one of his main initiatives has been to grow the EDGE and LifeTeen programs for elementary and high school students.

Laura Cumming, who is the human resources director for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, said she is seeing the same pattern in her diocese’s 67 parishes and 21 mission churches.

“I can probably count (the number of male secretaries) on one hand,” said Cumming.

Both Nargoz and Cumming said they are seeing more men apply for the role in the past few years, but, regardless of the gender, they see the job as demanding.

“I think a lot of times, the parish secretaries feel that people don’t think they do as much as they do and these ladies, and the men, work very hard. Our priests kind of keep them on their toes,” said Cumming.

The typical salary of parish secretary can range from about \$30,000 to \$60,000 a year. The range is based on their hours of work, their responsibilities, their experience and even the size of the parish.

The turnover rate for these roles are often very low across the Canadian dioceses. Many see their work as more than just a job but a service. They enjoy going above and beyond the call of duty and they often do, which is why many choose this as a lifetime career.

Eighty-three-year-old Ida Foch is currently enjoying retirement after 37 years as secretary at St. Mary Immaculate Church in Richmond Hill, Ont. When she was first hired to work part time during the Advent season in 1980, she worked with a typewriter and a

A sendoff highlighting the 17th Tribeca Film Festival

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Forget the juggernaut of *Avengers: Infinity War*, my last week-end of April wrapped New York's Tribeca festival showcasing selections from 46 countries and almost 9,000 submissions. Before it started I also saw Lynne Ramsay's savage thriller *You Were Never Really Here*, based on the Jonathan Ames novel. Cannes awarded it best screenplay and best actor to Joaquin Phoenix in the role of Joe, a battled-scarred, haunted character who, while caring for an ailing elderly mother, gets hired to rescue children from sex rings. He does so with extreme prejudice when a job for a well-connected politician propels the scenario, with its immersive images and soundscapes (score by Jonny Greenwood) into a deeper circle of hell. Dark, disturbing, and unforgettable.

From the festival (check out the online guide: <https://www.tribecafilm.com/filmguide/>), the following highlights a number of dramatic and documentary features, several shorts, docuseries and a virtual reality presentation.



In Susanna Nicchiarelli's *Nico, 1988* (Italy/Belgium) Danish actress Trine Dyrholm gives an astonishing performance as singer Christa Päffgen, known as Nico, in the last years of a tormented life. Veteran film writer Kent Jones helms the major jury award winner, *Diane*, with Mary Kay Place a wonder to behold in the lead role of an aging widow searching for atonement while trying to pull her son, Brian (Jake Lacy), out of the throes of addiction. Canadian director Jason Reitman and writer Diablo Cody team up again for *Tully* in which a harried mom, Marlo (the excellent Charlize Theron), finds an unusual but effective way to cope with the arrival of a third child.

Other films had strong female roles, including those of fictional American women on death row in Hagar Ben-Asher's chilling and affecting *Dead Women Walking*. Michael Mayer's adaptation of Chekov's *The Seagull* has Annette Bening as the celebrated actress Irina, Saoirse Ronan as the young ingénue who beguiles Irina's partner Boris, and Elisabeth Moss as the bitter Masha, who resents both. Elle Fanning is convincing as the 19th-century teenage author of *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* in Haifaa Al Mansour's *Mary Shelley*. Joy Rieger received a jury best-actress award for her role as the teenage Lana dreaming of escape from a run-down community on Israel's Mediterranean coast in Keren Ben Rafael's *Virgins* (Israel/France/

Belgium). (Others in less successful films: French actress Léa Seydoux opposite Ewan McGregor in Drake Doremus's futurist human/robot tale *Zoe*, a Canadian co-production; Alia Shawkat (*Blaze*) in the lesbian romance *Duck Butter*; Mary Elizabeth Winstead as a transgressive standup comic in *All About Nina*; Liv Hill as an exploited teen in *Jellyfish*; Marguerite Bouchard in the Quebec teen sex comedy *Charlotte a du Fun* (*Slut in a Good Way*)).

Local hero, writer-director-actor Edward Burns hits a home run with *Summertime*, set in Long Island's Rockaway Beach circa 1983, sporting a great ensemble of young actors and a fabulous period soundtrack. The vibe is unabashedly feel-good with no smoking, drug-taking or f-words . . . miraculous.

Awarded best international narrative, Marios Piperides' *Smuggling Hendrix* (Cyprus/Greece/Germany) is a great shaggy dog satire about the misadventures of Greek Cypriot Yiannis when his canine companion, "Jimi," bolts through the divided island's UN buffer zone and gets trapped on the Turkish side.

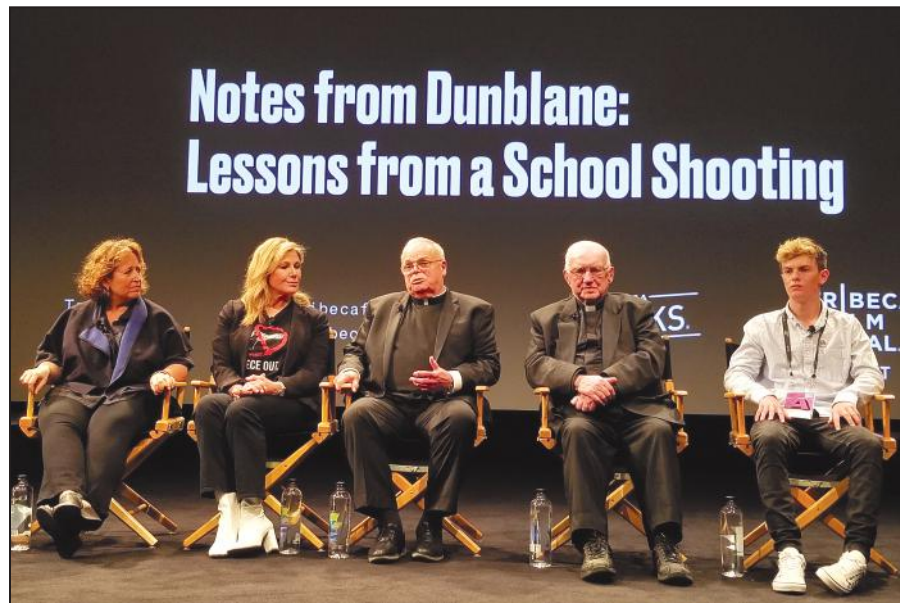
Writer-director Amélie van Elmbt's *The Elephant and the Butterfly* (Belgium/France) gets an extraordinary performance from Lina Doillon as the little girl, Elsa, who discovers that her accidental babysitter, Antoine (Thomas Blanchard), is actually her father. Two other excellent child performances: Sarah Casu as 10-year-old Vittoria torn between two mother figures in *Daughter of Mine* (Italy/Germany/Switzerland); Milan Hurdic as nine-year-old Dragos in Ioana Uricaru's *Lemonade* (Romania/Canada/Germany) about an immigrant mother, Mara (Mălina Manovic), whose desperation to maintain her American residency is exploited by an unethical immigration officer.

I'm generally not a fan of the horror zombie genre, but the Australian "midnight" selection, *Cargo*, by directors Ben Howling and Yolanda Ramke, with Martin Freeman in the role of a father trying to save his child, added a compelling Aboriginal angle to the allegory of the human causes and consequences of a modern environmental plague. Speaking of death and after, Shawn Snyder's *To Dust* is an excellent two-hander between Géza Röhrig (*Son of Saul*) as a Hasidic Jewish cantor, Shmuel, grieving his wife's death, and Matthew Broderick as the biology teacher he involves in his obsession with what happened to her bodily remains.

In *Stockholm*, Ethan Hawke, back working with Canadian writer-director Robert Budreau (*Born to be Blue*), is terrific as Lars, the Bob Dylan-loving robber bumbler whose antics in a bizarre 1973 bank heist in the Swedish capital — turning several hostages,

notably Bianca (Noomi Rapace) to his side — gave rise to the so-called "Stockholm syndrome." Also based on actual events, and given that I was staying next to the legendary Chelsea Hotel, I should mention Ondi Timoner's *Mapplethorpe*, about the controversial photographer who died of AIDS and famously hung out there with singer Patti Smith before becoming a gay icon. (The Chelsea was immortalized in a Leonard Cohen song and is where Sir Arthur C. Clarke wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the classic Kubrick film of which is having a 50th anniversary revival at Cannes this month.)

On to the hybrid of docudrama with Danish provocateur Mads Brügger's subversive satire *The Saint Bernard Syndicate* in which school chums Rasmus Bruun and Frederik Cilius Jørgensen (actual Danish comedians) head to Chongqing, China, with a scheme to sell Saint Bernard dogs to a Chinese elite that covets pedigree dogs. Having been diagnosed with ALS, Rasmus presses on as the whole wacky blend of fact and fiction goes to the dogs. Bruun received the jury's best-actor prize in the international competition. The best actor award for U.S. narrative went to Jeffrey Wright as a longtime inmate awaiting release in the powerfully realistic prison drama *O.G.* directed by Madeleine Sackler, another filmmaker with a documentary background.



Gerald Schmitz

SHORT DOCUMENTARY AWARD-WINNER — At Tribeca, a panel discusses the award-winning 22-minute documentary *Notes from Dunblane: Lessons from a School Shooting*. From left: director Kim A. Snyder; producer Maria Cuomo Cole; Msgr. Bob Weiss; Rev. Basil O'Sullivan; Parkland shooting student survivor Dylan Young (as well as Ryan Dietsch, not pictured).

Moving to the documentary selections, Tribeca premiered the first episodes of two terrific docuseries. Just as the 50th anniversary of Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination has sparked new films, *Bobby Kennedy for President* recalls another figure of hope and tragedy. Directed by an African-American woman, Dawn Porter, the series streaming on Netflix combines archival material with contemporary interviews. The Tribeca panel on it included Bobby's daughter Kerry Kennedy whose book *Robert F. Kennedy: Ripples of Hope* will be released June 5. Even more timely given Donald Trump's war on the media as "enemies of the people" was the premiere of the Showtime series *The Fourth Estate* directed by Liz Garbus, which goes behind the scenes of *The New York Times*

coverage of the Trump presidency. It's scheduled for broadcast in late May (<http://www.sho.com/the-fourth-estate>).

Tribeca tuned into the political moment with introductory video segments that connected to women speaking out (<https://www.timesupnow.com/>) and to citizen activism (<https://www.rockthevote.org/>). In that vein, among the feature-length documentaries is Norah Shapiro's *Time for Ilhan* (<https://www.timeforilhanfilm.com/>), the inspiring story of former Somali refugee Ilhan Omar's successful run for the Minnesota state legislature. She took on a longtime incumbent to become the first Somali Muslim immigrant woman elected to public office in the U.S.

— FILM, page 11

The monks of St. Peter's Abbey thank the staff of the Prairie Messenger and St. Peter's Press, past and present, for their dedication to excellence in producing a quality newspaper over the past century. May God bless you in all your future endeavours.



All 95 volumes of the *Prairie Messenger*, and the liturgical music suggestions, will be available at: www.prairiemessenger.ca

In film, look for what engages

Continued from page 10

Neil Gelinas' *Into the Okavango* (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/films/okavango/>) chronicles an epic four-month 1,500-mile expedition across three countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia) to document what is happening in a river basin that is among the last remaining wetland wildernesses under increasing pressure from human activity. Another conservation perspective comes from John Kasbe's *When Lambs Become Lions*, capturing the frontlines of the battle to protect wildlife in Kenya pitting park rangers against elephant hunters and the illegal ivory trade. Nicolas Brown's *The Serengeti Rules* addresses critical research into the role of "keystone species" in the restoration of vulnerable ecosystems.

The jury award went to writer-director Gabrielle Brady's *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* (Germany/U.K./Australia <http://www.christmasislandfilm.com/>), which contrasts the beauty of Christmas Island, and its remarkable migration of red crabs from jungle to shore, with the presence of a high-security detention facility in which the Australian government holds asylum seekers, some suffering from trauma and torture, for indefinite periods. PJ Raval's *Call Her Ganda* (U.S./Philippines <http://www.callherganda.com/>) probes the case of a transgender Filipina woman, Jennifer Laude, murdered by a U.S. Marine protected by the Visiting Forces Agreement, in order to understand why it became a sensational flash-point in the Philippines post-colonial evolution.

U.S. Marines and the killing of foreign civilians is also at the heart of Michael Epstein's *House*

Two about the November 2005 massacre of 24 men, women and children in Haditha, Iraq, during the American occupation. (The horrific events were dramatized in Nick Broomfield's 2007 film, *Battle for Haditha*.) Epstein uncovers a miscarriage of justice in what became the biggest and costliest trial in Marine Corps history, with the probable perpetrators granted immunity despite perjuring themselves. Moreover, the testimony of the sole survivor, a young girl, was kept out of the proceedings, and the general responsible for signing off was none other than Trump's current defence secretary James Mattis.

There were excellent docs dealing with diverse, sometimes bizarre, aspects of American culture. The audience award went to Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown's *United Skates*, about the rise and fall of roller-skating rinks frequented by African Americans, ending on an upbeat note. Tom Dumican's *No Greater Law* investigated children's deaths among an Idaho sect called "Followers of Christ" that believes in faith healing alone. Assia Boundaoui's *The Feeling of Being Watched* digs into FBI surveillance of a predominantly Muslim Arab-American community in Illinois. Laura Brownson's Netflix production *The Rachel Divide* looks into the controversy over Rachel Dolezal, who was born white but became a self-identified black activist. In terms of the arts, Jeff Kaufman's *Every Act of Life* is a revealing tribute to acclaimed playwright Terrence McNally. The Albert Maysles award for best new director went to Dava Whisenant for the highly entertaining *Bathtubs Over Broadway*, about the golden

age of "industrial shows," expensive musicals made exclusively for private corporate clients, as searched out by Steve Young, a longtime writer for the David Letterman show.

The documentary film that made the strongest impression on me was the award-winning 22-minute *Notes from Dunblane: Lessons from a School Shooting* (<https://www.facebook.com/notesfromdunblane/>) directed by Kim Snyder who also made Newtown (<https://www.newtownfilm.com/>), about the 2012 shooting of first-graders at Sandy Hook. In March 1996 a massacre of primary school children took place in the Scottish village of Dunblane, shocking Britain and leading to tough gun controls and no recurrence since.

The Sandy Hook massacre prompted Dunblane's Catholic pastor, Rev. Basil O'Sullivan, to reach out to Newtown parish priest Msgr. Bob Weiss. The film, which notes that 1,600 mass shootings have occurred in the U.S. since Sandy Hook, concentrates on the efforts of post-traumatic healing and exchange of correspondence between the two Catholic priests, both of whom were present for a special post-screening panel that also included several survivors from the Valentine's Day 2018 Parkland school shooting involved in the "march for our lives" campaign.

Also deserving mention is the half-hour *Earthrise* (<http://www.earthrisefilm.com/>) about the first image of earth from space captured 50 years ago in 1968 by the Apollo 8 astronauts who recount their experiences and memories of an



Paul Paproski, OSB

In Honour Of The *Prairie Messenger*

The sowers plowed the fields of the mind with the word, planted the seeds of hope near the sparks of truth, and watered them with wisdom.

All they could do then was leave it in the hands of the Creator of the universe. It was a long work of trust in this harsh and beautiful land.

Now the sowers slowly rock in the chairs of experience, trusting the new reapers heading to the golden fields with cellphones in their hands.

By Michael Dallaire

awesome sight that evoked a planetary consciousness as never before. The icon image of our blue planet against the blackness of space had a powerful impact on the astronauts and the world, offering a perspective of Earth as a shared home transcending national, political, and religious boundaries.

Finally, Tribeca's "Cinema 360" program premiered the virtual reality docuseries *This is Climate Change*, created by Danfung Dennis and Eric Strauss, that immerses viewers in the realities of an unfolding global crisis as it has an impact on people and places. The experiences range from melting ice and disappearing glaciers to raging wildfires to rainforest destruction to the desertification of once-fertile lands — all signs of ecosystems in peril that call for an imperative of collective action.

Although this is my last *Prairie Messenger* column, I will continue to follow the film scene as president of One World Arts and a programmer of its the One World

Film Festival (<http://oneworldfilmfestival.ca/>), the longest running documentary film festival in Canada's capital, now in its 29th year. I am also on the board of the Group of 78, which is devoting its next annual conference in September to the theme "Meeting the Climate Challenge: Accelerating the Transition to a Past-Carbon World" (<http://group78.org/annual-policy-conference-2018/>). As part of that, the G78 and One World Arts will be presenting a special screening of the documentary *Anote's Ark* (<http://www.anotesark.com/>) by Canadian filmmaker Matthieu Rytz. A reminder that we are all in the same boat when it comes to the imperative of protecting our planet for future generations.

My last word is to look for the best in the cinematic experience — for what engages as well as entertains by moving audiences and illuminating the signs of the times. Keep watching with that in mind and you will be rewarded.



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Converted into Christ: the real purpose of eucharist

By Bernadette Gasslein

Most Catholics know that during the celebration of the eucharist, by the power of the Holy Spirit called down on the bread and wine, these gifts, which earth has given and human hands have made, are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. What few of us know that a second change, one that is just as important, happens in our eucharistic celebration. We too are changed as we share in his body and blood.

In his March 21, 2018, catechesis on the eucharist Pope Francis highlighted this change (see the March 28 *Prairie Messenger* story, page 3). Pope Francis said: “Although it is we who move in procession to receive communion, . . . it is actually Christ who comes to us to assimilate us to him. There is an encounter with Jesus! To be nourished by the eucharist means to allow oneself (to) be changed as we receive. . . . Each time we receive communion, we resemble

Gasslein holds a licence in sacred theology with specialization in pastoral catechetics from the Institut catholique de Paris. For the past 40 years she has been engaged in various liturgical and catechetical ministries, leading workshops around the country and is editor of Worship, a journal published by Liturgical Press. She and her husband live in Edmonton.

Jesus more, we transform more into Jesus. Just as the bread and wine are converted into the Body and Blood of Christ, those who receive them with faith are transformed into a living Eucharist. . . . Because when you receive the eucharist, you become the Body of Christ. This is beautiful, very beautiful. While it unites us with Christ, tearing us from our selfishness, communion opens us and unites us to all those who are one in him. This is the prodigy of communion: we become what we receive!” (Translation: Vatican Press Office)

This is not some new-fangled theory. Pope Francis quotes the fourth century St. Augustine who “helps us to understand it, when he tells us about the light received in hearing Christ say: ‘I am the food of strong men; grow, and you shall feed upon me; nor shall you convert me, like the food of your flesh, into you, but you shall be converted into me’ ” (*Confessions* VII, 10, 16: PL 32, 742). And recent popes — both St. John Paul II and Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI — have reiterated this in their own writings. It is a longstanding, but overlooked aspect of our understanding of eucharist.

We are converted into Christ. This awesome mystery both attracts me and terrifies me. Attracts, because there is nothing that can offer any human being more healing, more dignity, more life! Terrifies, because if I am converted into

Christ, then I must live and be as he is: in self-emptying love that is stronger than death, in ongoing concern and compassion for the least among us. I live with all the baptized in the dance of love that is the Trinity.

This is the mystery of the eucharist that for centuries we have failed to hand on from generation to generation in any systematic way. Since the eucharistic debates of the Middle Ages, we have focused almost exclusively on the change that happens in the bread and wine. But if we listen to the prayers of the mass, and read the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, it’s all there. But, since we don’t expect it, we don’t see how this transformation is set out. At the Presentation of the Gifts, we bring our gifts: bread and wine, and ourselves. The General Instruction comments: “Even though the faithful no longer bring from their own possessions the bread and wine intended for the liturgy as was once the case, nevertheless the rite of carrying up the offerings still keeps its spiritual efficacy and significance.” How can we describe this significance? Emeritus Pope Benedict puts it well: “In the bread and wine that we bring to the altar all creation is taken up by Christ the redeemer to be transformed and presented to the Father (144). In this way we also bring to the altar all the pain and suffering of the world in the certainty that everything has value in

God’s eyes” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 47). That of course, includes our own lives.

Just before he prays the institution narrative, the priest prays, “by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts . . . that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son . . .” Just after the Institution narrative, he prays again, “grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.”

This “coming into union,” into oneness, into communion, is a thread that runs through the whole eucharist. Listen for it! And then we who are being made one pray the Lord’s Prayer, to “*Our Father*”; we share the sign of peace, and pray “grant (the church) peace and *unity*.” Then we begin the communion procession which is to be accompanied by the communion song, “its purpose being to express the spiritual *union* of the communicants by means of the *unity of their voices*, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the ‘*communitarian*’ character of the procession to receive the eucharist” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 86).

Our common song during the procession makes audible the work of the Spirit who is fashioning us more deeply into the ecclesial Body of Christ as we receive the sacramental Body of Christ. Whether we sing in unity or in

harmony, the voices of the whole assembly led by the music ministry proclaim our communion, our coming into deeper union with Christ and the other members of his body. This motley crew of saints and sinners is being transformed into the Body of Christ. We, too, are changed. This is the ultimate purpose of eucharist: to change us. We say Amen to the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ, and to our own reality as Body of Christ. We say Amen to letting go of anything that would keep us from being the Body of Christ in our world.

“Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.” Suddenly, this mission with which we are dismissed from the eucharistic table at each celebration takes on new contours. We have not just received the eucharistic body and blood of the Lord. By that reception we are also transformed more deeply into his body. We were made members of that body when we were baptized; our sharing in the eucharist reconstitutes us as his body. The consequences of this sharing in communion are profound: we are sent forth to be his enduring presence in the tabernacle of the world; we are sent forth to act with him, and through him, and in him. To us can be applied the same verbs that we apply to the eucharistic bread. Like Christ, we are to be broken and given, poured out for the life of the world. To this we have said “Amen.”

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Our Pentecost challenge comes to us continually



Liturgy and Life

Michael Dougherty

Before his resurrection the Gospel of John tells of a time when the disciples hid in a locked house. They still focused inwardly and found themselves paralyzed by the fear of what hostile authorities both civil and religious might do to them. This embattled Jewish community of only a handful of women and men had believed their teacher, Jesus, was the Messiah, but they wavered. Had their leader truly risen from the dead? Suddenly he stood among them and said “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me so I send you.” “He breathed on them and said to them ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’ ”

“And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like a rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.” This vivid description in the Acts of the Apostles marks another entry of the Holy Spirit at a crucial moment in our religious history. “(A) tongue of fire rested on each of them.” It filled the disciples with a holy zeal. This signified the breakout of the proto-church from their Jerusalem and Israel centric evangelizing focus. The wider understanding of their founding mission enabled a broader missionary impulse to sweep over them, facilitating the rapid expansion of what was to become Christianity across the circum-Mediterranean world.

In its first days the disciples found a ready audience and support community in the Jewish community in diaspora from Cappadocia to Pamphylia, both now in modern-day Turkey. They continued to rely on familiar Jewish customs and traditions. For the Jewish people the feast of Pentecost initially had been a celebration of thanksgiving at the end of the first grain harvest and a formal end on the 50th day to the time of Passover. Even for the Jewish people the meaning evolved.

The Romans destroyed the second temple in Jerusalem in AD 70. This attack on the core of their culture came in response to the Jewish revolt against them. Following this calamity the Jewish Pentecost came to focus more on the

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

giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai or Horeb.

As the early church developed, the Jewish Pentecost came to take on a specifically Christian significance, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. Pentecost for Christians marked the shift in God’s redemptive purpose for humanity from only the first chosen people, “descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,” to everyone, everywhere and in every time.

Does the Holy Spirit still move us? It would be impossible to look over the last 2,000 years of our collective church history and not intuit the Holy Spirit moving through it. The People of God continually stray, as witnessed in the Jewish Torah and testament and as we see around us now. Prophets and holy people emerge constantly to challenge us to return to our true calling as daughters and sons of the Lord.

The power and privileges granted to the church by the Roman emperor Constantine as the quid pro quo of stabilizing a fracturing empire. However, this led quickly to corruption and abuse of power. The monastic movement under inspirational leaders like Benedict of Nursia grew as a counter to this. A half a millennium later church wealth again sparked a wide divergence from the founding vision of Jesus.

Inspirational guides like Francis of Assisi presented a clear critique of the deviant behaviours and offered voluntary poverty and living a simple lifestyle as a vehicle to

Pentecost	Acts 2, 1-11
	Psalm 104
May 20, 2018	1 Corinthians 12, 3b-7
	John 20, 19-23

ensure righteousness. Inquisitions, burnings at the stake and myriad other abuses like the Albigenian or Huguenot massacres and Jewish pogroms mar our history. The church even survived the notorious scandals of the Medici and Borgia popes in the Renaissance era.

The suppression of intellectuals like Galileo or the legitimizing of slavery, and a hundred other wrong turns were made, but still the saints and reformers showed us that the spirit moves among us constantly calling us back to the truth and light.

The classic saying of great Catholic intellectual of the 19th century Lord Acton continues to ring true. “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Add on



CNS/Gregory Shemitz

A scene from Pentecost is depicted in artwork at Our Lady of Divine Providence Church in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands.

his next phrase for a fuller understanding of his idea. “Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority.”

What about our own time? Church officials of the highest rank are called to account. Misogynistic and patriarchal structures weighted down by medieval institutional accretions block needed reforms. Reconciliation efforts on a wide variety of concerns are blocked.

We are and will be continually challenged to address the ills that afflict us either individually, or as communities, church and in our world. I have personally met and been inspired by people like Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Paulo Friere, and dozens of other witnesses shared by prophetic organizations like Development and Peace or KAIROS. They, like the *Prairie Messenger*, have affirmed that the spirit continues to move among us. More voices will emerge.

Many of us are saddened by the *Prairie Messenger’s* demise, but we must understand that the mission it undertook remains our mission: bring the message of Jesus alive in a world crying for him. It has been an honour and a privilege to write for the *PM*.

Our Pentecost comes continually. Will we accept our “tongues of fire”?

Poverty, chastity, and obedience in a secular age

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Cardinal Francis George was once asked what he thought of the radical pacifism of people like Dorothy Day and Daniel Berrigan, prophetic figures who believed in absolute non-violence. How can this be practical, he was asked. It’s utterly naive to believe we can live without police and without soldiers.

This was his reply: The world needs pacifists in the same way as it needs vowed celibates: they’re not practical. They’re out of place in this world. But they point to the eschatological world, the world of

Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website: www.ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiserwebsite www.ronrolheiser.com

heaven, a world within which there will be no guns, where relational exclusivities will not exist as they exist now, where family will not be based on biology, blood, or marriage, where there will be no poor people, and where everything will belong to everyone.

I thought of that recently as I was conducting a workshop on religious life for a group of young people who were discerning whether or not to enter vowed religious life. My task was not to try to persuade them to join a religious community, but to help them understand what that life, should they join it, would entail. That meant, of course, long discussions on the three vows that people take to be in religious life: poverty, chastity, and obedience (classically termed “the Evangelical Counsels”).

What’s to be said about poverty, chastity, and obedience in a world that, for the most part,

places its hope in material riches, generally identifies chastity with frigidity, and values individual freedom above all else?

Well, no doubt, poverty, chastity, and obedience are seen as radically countercultural; but that’s mostly because they are generally not very well understood (sometimes even by those who are living them out). For the most part they are seen as a drastic renunciation, the sacrificing of a full life, the unnatural denial of one’s sexuality, and the adolescent signing over of one’s freedom and creativity. But that’s a misunderstanding.

Poverty, chastity, and obedience are not a missing out on riches, sexuality, and freedom. *They are rather a genuine, rich, modality of riches, sexuality, and freedom.*

The vow of poverty isn’t primarily about living with cheaper things, not having a dishwasher and doing your own housework. It’s also not about renouncing the kinds of riches that can make for the full flourishing of life. A life of voluntary poverty is a lived way of saying that all material possessions are gift, that the world belongs to everyone, that nobody owns a country, and that nobody’s needs are first. It’s a vow against consumerism and tribalism, and it brings its own wonderful riches in

terms of meaning and in the happiness and joy of a shared life.

Likewise for the vow of chastity. Properly understood, it is not a missing out on the joys of sexuality. It’s a rich modality of sexuality itself, given that being sexual means more than having sex. Sexuality is a beautiful God-given drive within us for lots of things: community, friendship, togetherness, wholeness, family, play, altruism, enjoyment, delight, creativity, genital consummation, and for everything that takes us beyond our aloneness and makes us generative. And so the very real joys that are found in community, friendship, and service of others are not a second-rate substitute for sex. They bring their own sexual flourishing in terms of leading us out of our aloneness.

The same holds true for obedience. Properly understood, it’s not a missing out on real freedom. Rather, it’s a rich modality of freedom itself, one practised by Jesus (who repeatedly says: “I do nothing on my own. I do only the Father’s will.”) Obedience, as a religious vow, is not an immature sacrificing of one’s freedom and adulthood. It’s rather a radical submitting of one’s human ego (with all its wounds, desires, lusts, private ambitions, and envies) to

something and Someone higher than oneself, as seen in the human and religious commitments in persons from Jesus, to Teilhard de Chardin, to Dag Hammarskjöld, to Simone Weil, to Mother Teresa, to Jean Vanier, to Daniel Berrigan. In each of these we see a person who walked this earth in a freedom we can only envy, but clearly too in a freedom that’s predicated on a genuflecting of one’s individual will to something higher than itself.

Our thoughts and our feelings are strongly influenced by the cultural software within which we find ourselves. Thus, given how our culture understands riches, sex, and freedom today, this may well be the most difficult time in many centuries to make the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and live them out. Small wonder religious communities are not flooded with applications. But because it is more difficult than ever, it is also more important than ever that a number of women and men choose, voluntarily, to prophetically live out these vows.

And their seeming sacrifice will be amply rewarded because, paradoxically, poverty brings its own riches, chastity brings its own flourishing, and obedience provides us with the deepest of all human freedoms.

It takes a community to call a priest or pastor



Double
Belonging
Rev. Marie-Louise Ternier

Looking out at the crowd that had filled the Anglican cathedral, I was amazed, surprised, and overwhelmed. They had come from everywhere: friends and family, colleagues and ecumenical co-workers. The church catholic was present in its fullest sense: Pentecostal, Baptist, United, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Anglican and Roman Catholic. Especially Roman Catholic: a sea of them along with several priests and one higher-ranking official. The happy grins spoke volumes: I was not the only one who had looked forward to this moment.

In the midst of this ecumenical community of faith I claimed my call before the bishop, made vows and promises, and knelt for the “holy huddle” — Anglican, Lutheran, United and Presbyterian clergy colleagues and two Roman Catholic priests joined the bishop in the solemn laying on of hands.

Marie-Louise Ternier is an Anglican priest. This column is co-published with the Saskatchewan Anglican. Marie-Louise blogs at <http://graceatsixty.wordpress.com>

Ordained a priest. I still struggle to find the words. The impact of the experience was profound in my own heart-mind-spirit, in my experience of church, and in the effects upon my current ministry. Given the ecumenical makeup of the assembly that night, I felt truly ordained by and into the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in the broadest/fullest sense of that term.

I have always been mindful of the role the faith community plays when one claims a call to ministry; one is called by and for the community, never for oneself. Now this crucial role was expressed in the most tangible way possible — the community’s presence and participation was their fiat. A deepening and affirmation, blessing and mandate all rolled into one holy Spirit-filled act of ordination. No wonder I still struggle to find words.

The next morning I presided over the (Anglican) holy eucharist for the first time in a Catholic retreat centre, which included a renewal of marriage vows for Jim and I — it was our wedding anniversary. Like the night before,

the People of God in all denominational diversity packed the worship space, hungering for a “taste of heaven” where divisions and barriers melted away: take and eat, take and drink, all of you.

Maybe a number of firsts occurred: Roman Catholic clergy present, some joining in the laying on of hands, another bowing his head for my first priestly blessing afterward; a religious sister leading music at the Anglican eucharist the next morning while persons from various traditions served as acolyte, readers, communion assistants; communion bread baked by an Anglican-RC couple; those with different beliefs finding a space of respect and hospitality while getting caught up in the joy and gratitude of the occasion.

That I may at last taste the joy of fulfilling this vocation still feels like a miracle. What seemed elusive for more than 26 years has come to pass. At the same time it was always there, for the priestly call lived in my heart as an animating light, a wellspring of grace and love. Several months later, I clearly have not recovered from the intensity and holiness of it all — I hope I never will.

Nothing is wasted in God’s economy. I am now pastoring two rural parishes, Anglican and Lutheran. All the pieces of my life’s puzzle have come together: formation and ministry experiences of the past 26 years are now all bearing fruit in these two small parishes on the Canadian Prairies.

Now living Christian discipleship in the Anglican household of God is opening new spiritual vistas and blessings. Meanwhile, my Roman Catholic family of origin continues to occupy a cherished place in my heart. In her bosom my faith was nourished and my vocation was born. I truly live a double belonging. The increasing opportunities for joint ministry with my local Catholic priest and his parishioners are therefore sources of deep joy and immense gratitude, weaving unity in my

spirit and among our people.

We don’t make journeys like this in isolation. In this final column of Double Belonging I extend a heartfelt thank you for the company and friendship, prayers and support of so many on this road toward priestly ministry. It truly takes a community to call a priest/pastor. Pray that I will continue to fulfil this sacred trust faithfully, placing my priesthood at the service of the full visible unity of God’s one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Compassion is necessary

Continued from page 9

wall of file cabinets.

Foch, who retired in 2016, used to enter all of the registered parishioners and organize their donations using a file folder system. The office didn’t transition into a computer database until about 1983 to 1985. She had a volunteer parishioner come by once in a while to help her meticulously enter the information into a database.

“I think the hardest part (of the job) for me was when I had to learn bookkeeping,” said Foch.

In all her years working at St. Mary Immaculate, Foch said there was never a dull moment. Both the doorbell and the phone rang constantly and about 20 or more people came in and out of the office all day.

“One time we had a young man, he was on drugs, and he came into

the office and he was just very confused and he wanted to have some help,” she said.

“We had many, many people come in for help, for food or money, and so this was an instance which it was very hard for me to handle.”

Foch said she and the pastor were able to sit the young man down on a couch in one of the priests’ office. They never called the police. They just let him rest. When he became a little more sober, they gave him a phone number for the St. Vincent de Paul Society and sent him on his way.

“I always just try to be honest, kind, friendly and compassionate to everyone who comes in,” said Foch. “Many times, I am the first face they see when they walk into the church, so I tried to represent that the best way I could.”

Thank you

Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation would like to thank the **Prairie Messenger** for 11 years of dedication and support for its insightful and honest reporting on the news and issues facing Catholicism, ecumenism, and the church in general. We are grateful for the ecumenism before and especially after the Second Vatican Council. Your support and inspiration for our mission.

For many who have followed the work and vision of the **Prairie Messenger** for the past 11 years, we hope that doors are being opened, long era's take heart and know that there is hope and love in the world, and young leaders are taking their leadership role in those windows open to faith and faith's evolution.

This year Salt and Light celebrates the 15th anniversary of its mission to be Canada's national Catholic Television Network. Available across Canada through our local cable and satellite TV provider, our mission's work can also be found on our Catholic Channel on Sirius Radio, on social media, and on our website. If you continue to seek Catholic news and information with a cutting edge balanced approach, please subscribe to Salt and Light or visit us at www.saltandlighttv.com.

Stay tuned to us and rejoice in thanking God for the great things accomplished these past 11 years through the **Prairie Messenger** and **Salt and Light**.

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These fragments I have shored against my ruin

By Edna Froese

The title is T.S. Eliot's line in the last stanza of "The Waste Land," his 1922 cry for meaning in a world where all had seemingly gone mad. In the wake of the pointless slaughter of the First World War, the old verities had lost their hold. Eliot responded with a lengthy poem of seemingly disconnected fragments: bits of

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.

old stories, remnants of forgotten myths, tag ends of religious ceremony, glimpses of relationships more bored than tragic.

When I first encountered the poem as an undergraduate, newlywed and full of joy, I hated it. Not even three years of English courses had given me tools enough to make sense of the senseless. Yet a patient professor (kudos to the young Dr. Ron Marken) initiated us into the very human enterprise of making meaning out of the shards that litter all lives, eventually — precious fragments that we gather and cling to as a way of holding chaos at bay.

In this, my last column for the *Prairie Messenger*, I salute the veritable fort of books with which I have built meaning into my life. In

almost all the columns I have written for the *PM*, some book or books have hovered in the background, providing a focus or silently directing the process by which I tried to make sense of some experience or observed phenomenon.

This is not to disregard the teaching and influence of many good people who taught me values and lessons without which I would have lost my way far more frequently than I already have. It is just that as the *Prairie Messenger* gives way to other means of communication and community-building, I want to praise the power of the written word and honour the friendship of all those many writers who invited me to enter their experiences, or their characters', for my benefit. As Adele Wiseman once wrote about her own love affair with literature, in "stories life was in a sense holding still for (her) to look at and learn from and make judgments on" (Memoirs 7).

My copies of T.S. Eliot's *Selected Poetry* and *Four Quartets* are almost in tatters now. At such a time as my libraries (yes, that's a deliberate plural — our house has more than one room) are dispersed, these little books will be tossed into the recycle bin. Meanwhile, I pick them up now and then, not only to remind myself of particular lines or to be drawn into Eliot's profoundly mystic, yet grittily realistic images, but also to converse again with my younger self who was once stunned to discover how poetry could expand the soul and revivify the world.

Many other old literature textbooks (anthologies, poetry, novels) still claim space on my bookshelves because they likewise belong to my identity. I now own an almost new volume of Shakespeare's plays in which I can reread as much as I



A "fort of books"

Edna Froese

wish, and the Internet makes searching for quotations easy. Yet I cannot part with my well-worn copy. It was lent (given?) to me by my sister for my very first seminar class; it had already been copiously annotated with her delicate script.

During that difficult, painful year, when family cohesiveness was strained almost to the breaking point, I studied obsessively, pondering Shakespeare's poetic wisdom, and linking it forever with the now essential relationship with my sister. When I pull that heavy book from the shelf now, even if only to raise a flat of bedding plants under grow lights, I breathe again within a sisterly love that made all the difference in the world. As Hamlet ruefully — and gratefully — observed, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will." Indeed.

The religious shelves of my library tell another co-existent version of who I am. Unlike my literature collection, which shaped my identity twice — once as a con-

fused, struggling, student, and again as an instructor who relied on all those books to supply exactly the right lines for the moment — my religious collection is a record of a journey, with very little circling back to my former self.

While once upon a time, the very evangelically oriented books of John White and Leanne Payne offered some kind of salvation, most have long since been sent to some book sale. The Edna who needed those books has changed; once-valued texts have become debris, maybe even stumbling blocks. C.S. Lewis, however, will remain until necessity forces a major downsizing. His guidance into a more ecumenical understanding of Christianity, accomplished through writing that was beautiful as literature and logical as a map, established a friendship that continues. If nothing else, the collection is there to stand behind his masterful *Till We Have Faces*, which I understood not at all the first time I read

— STRENGTH, page 17

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For program details visit www.queenshouse.org

To register please call 306-242-1916

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We are community — ‘Wahkohtowin’



Catholic Connections

Lynn M. Colquhoun

Holy Family School system strives to really “live holy family.” We are storytellers and story-makers treating all members of our communities as they would like to be treated. This means seeking to understand first! — G. Keith, Director of Education

It is our belief in Holy Family RCSSD #140 that we do need to embrace the meaning of this Cree word *Wahkohtowin*, and be “in good relationship; kinship beyond the immediate family.” We spend so much of our time learning and leading together, it is best if we consider one another sister or brother.

There are many moments throughout the year where I am simply taken aback by the reverence our young people show for Jesus. Whether it be from the good works of our weekly gospel assemblies or our annual passion play, it’s wonderful to see my staff and students truly try their best to walk as his disciples. — Darrell Perras, school-based administrator

Our annual theme this year took us on a journey to better understand community and the need for us all to be leaders, learners and builders of relationships. We recognized early on that, although four distinct geographical areas, there were many commonly accepted understandings of what a community is, does and provides. Our “community” needed to be one that was deeply rooted in the teachings of our Catholic faith. We needed to ensure that the good news of Jesus Christ continued to provide the foundation for all that we do on our Catholic education mission.

We soon found that the challenges and celebrations were similar across the geographical areas we serve. We were reminded that the message of our theme needed to reach throughout the organization entirely. Our earliest entrant learner would come to know what

it means to learn and lead and share with others while our most senior Board of Trustees members would reflect on the same.

Holy Family is an amazing place to lead, learn and grow. As a lifelong learner, I am continually inspired by our staff who enthusiastically engage our students in their learning journey and our students who are problem solvers, critical thinkers and innovators. Our future is bright! — Chad Fingler, Superintendent

One area to consider is leadership. Whether it would be the sharing of the leadership in planning school masses, assemblies and celebrations, or the opening of doors for an after-hours movie night, the various citizens of the school community clearly understood the role they played in making it successful. Each community activity needs organizers. These people generate a plan, gather materials and disseminate key information. Motivators are needed. These people encourage attendance and participation and spread the word. Facilities arrangers have a job to do. These people make sure the seats are available, the presentation technology is working and the sound is of good quality. Hosts play an important role. These people welcome guests, ensure that everything runs smoothly and deal with the challenges that arise.

I am still relatively new to St. Michael School, so my experience is that of coming into an established family and community. That can be either a blessing or a curse: but in my case it has definitely been a blessing. There was already a community in and around the school of strong leaders and amazing learners. My role has been to foster the leadership of others and to model servant leadership. In any school, there are too many needs and priorities for one person to be

the leader in everything. In a large school — over 500 students — leadership must be shared. My role is to clear the path for those staff or students who have an area of expertise or a passion that will benefit our school community. I believe it is only through this shared leadership that each individual can serve the community to the best of their ability and we thrive as a community. — Dean Loberg, school-based administrator

The incredible fact is that all of these roles are honoured and filled whenever anything takes place in Holy Family. The best part is, they might be filled by staff, students or other members. One can never be too sure where to direct the credit for a successful event. It might be that a student group such as Student Leadership Committee or perhaps the School Community Council made up of parents or the office staff of the school, principal and administrative assistant, have taken the lead and made great things happen for all participants. The key message: be sure and show gratitude and appreciation. Pause and give thanks when you are part of a community that succeeds by getting all jobs done!

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Prv 22:6). The success of our students at Sacred Heart School/École Sacré Coeur is a shared co-operation between home, school and community. We work together with families and through partnerships to give our students opportunities to grow, reflect and experience learning that they may not otherwise have. Our dream as teachers and leaders is to be able to build a foundation within each of our children that is full of faith, hope and love. We work diligently to see each and every child achieve their dreams which in years to come will continue to support the growth and development of our wonderful community. — Amber Hilstrom, school-based administrator

The second key area of consideration — learning. Our students are engaged in a deeper learning model where pathways to achieving an outcome are created. These pathways involve the teacher and student planning together for the achievement of the outcome. Student voice dictates whether the experience will involve a change in environment, the leveraging of digital technologies, a variety of learning strategies, or perhaps

even a learning partnership. We have seen students more excited about their studies than ever before. They have an increased sense of ownership that, combined with the values of their faith development, allows them to celebrate deeply and fully the level of achievement that is earned.

I am always amazed by the welcome I receive when I, as a central office employee, visit any one of the schools in our division. It doesn’t matter whether I am greeted by one of the littlest learners or energized adolescents or caring adults, I am always made to feel welcome and respected. I believe that our schools do a terrific job of teaching everyone to identify the Christ Child in each of us and help us feel loved. — Lynn Colquhoun, co-ordinator

Finally, the task of building relationships so that we are truly “one with all.” Students and staff, through the efforts of dedicated central office staff, are provided with an opportunity to embrace truth and reconciliation and grow in honour of and respect for our indigenous nations.” “We are all treaty people” is commonly heard within school buildings and at events. We reach out in stewardship of our time, talents and treasure to meet the needs of our neighbours and friends who might not have the ability to achieve on their own.

We celebrate those who give great effort and support us in our education journey. We recognize the value of having our parish communities participate in and provide support for our Catholic education objectives and goals.



In 1897, six Sisters from St. Brieuc, France arrived in Prince Albert, with the mission “to make Jesus Christ known and loved.”

Prairie Providence

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June 10, 2018 at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Prince Albert
Mass: 11:00 a.m., followed by cold buffet /program
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(Bilingual with translation)

Info/RSVP: contact Sr. Dolores Bussière, FDLF,
306-954-1830 or email: dbussiere2@shaw.ca

*A heartfelt thank you, Prairie Messenger,
from Manitoba Provincial Council of
The Catholic Women’s League of Canada*



*for your many years of having been
the voice that weekly subscribers relied upon
to nourish and remain current
about their Catholic faith.*

There are things I will miss . . .

Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



A few weeks ago my daughter Janice visited St. Peter's Press to take a few pictures, and spent more time than she had intended contemplating the beauty of a place that contains within it the tools of a dying era.

Nobody really knows where it is. The press is on 100 College Drive, but you'll have a hard time finding it driving into Muenster if you don't know where you're going. It's past the railway tracks, around a curve and down beyond the creek that runs under the gravel road.

The road is flanked by a row of elms on one side, and an open field on the other. Further along, the elms line both sides of the road and form a canopy of green in the summer, and deep gold in the fall. If you're lucky enough to experience thick hoarfrost in winter, it's magic.

Depending on the time of year, chickadees and nuthatches hang out in the shrubs by the parking lot and give a perfunctory greeting. Generations of birds at the abbey are used to human contact — they don't beg for sunflower seeds and peanuts, they expect them. I once put out an empty hand just for the pleasure of feeling their airy feathery-ness brush my fingers. The birds made me feel cheap, and rightly so. I never extended an empty hand again.

In December I've loved arriving in morning darkness, Lucille's coffee already brewing and Christmas lights gracing the desks with soft radiance.

Late in fall there have been countless red sunsets that glow like stained glass through the stand of tall fir trees on the west side. The pines whisper — or roar — depending on the strength of the wind.

These are among the things I will miss when the whoosh and clack of the Heidelberg grows silent, and the smell of ink fades.

But what I'll most miss is the people with whom I've corresponded these 24 years. Relationships built slowly at first, but as email became the common mode of communication, and as our website grew, our reach became wider. Strangers would write to say how moved they'd been by something they'd read.

I have dozens of saved messages from readers who took the time to say, "I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for all the wonderful work you and the other contributors do to make the *Prairie Messenger* such a breath of fresh air . . ." (Vancouver).

"There is so much to love about the *PM* and the quality of articles regularly featured" (Saltcoats).

"Keep up your good work. I say this to you: the *Prairie Messenger* has been and continues to be the best Catholic paper in this country . . ." (Toronto).

"I want to congratulate the *Prairie Messenger* for . . . (a specific issue). I spent over two hours reading it! It reported and commented on so many good words

and good actions in the church and the wider Christian community and, in this manner, fostered openness to others, the desire for justice and resistance to 'the globalization of indifference' " (Pope Francis) . . . (Montreal).

Many were one-time notes. But some wrote a second time, and a third and, from North Palm Beach, Florida (thank you for your prayers, Jeanette L.), to Alabama, up to Washington, D.C., parts of the Maritimes, through places in Quebec, Ontario, the Prairie provinces, to the far corners of B.C. and up to Yukon, friendships were formed. One even prayed a novena to St. Jude when one of my cats was missing (we found him — thank you, Jeannette T.). I've met almost none of these people, and yet our sharing of stories has been enriching and fulfilling.

Often, however, I did meet people in person. My work at the *Prairie Messenger* has led to three lifelong friendships. Roma, Lloyd, and Gerald (Gerry) at first corresponded only with regard to deadlines, but, as the years passed and we got together over bottles of wine, barbecued steaks, and city strolls, I have found in each of them a kindred spirit.

When I was younger I believed nothing could surprise me, as if low expectations could signify sophistication. Working at the *PM* taught me the joy of surprise:

- an empty half-page with a looming deadline would be filled, more often than seemed possible, by someone sending an unsolicited piece of beautiful writing;
- an emailed poem could flood my head with light;
- poets found our paper;
- sometimes people changed their minds;
- I could make someone's day.



Some things I will miss. M. Weber

My former boss, friend, and mentor, Andrew Britz, OSB, loved to write about the saints in our midst. He acknowledged it is difficult for anyone to identify with the stories of martyrs, or those who have given away everything to work among the poorest of the poor.

In his "All Saints" editorial from November 2000, Andrew wrote, "We are called to visualize ourselves as part of a mighty throng dazzled before the very throne of God — to see ourselves as part of the communion of saints."

This was a revelation to me.

" . . . Most of us are not ready to find our meaning in grandiose stories of cosmic proportions," he wrote. "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 . . ."

It is my favourite editorial because it offers hope for us all: ordinary people who go to work, raise families, live alone; those who volunteer and get tired, frus-

trated, bored; who love, and then hate; who are loyal and then betray; who know kindness and then hurt another; who give all day and collapse in resentment when night descends; who make mistakes and then apologize; who forgive as they are forgiven.

The effort to pick up and start again, and again, is the pursuit of holiness, whether we are aware of it, or even believe it. Because we are good. That, to me, is *not* a surprise.

A couple of weeks ago, on the first really beautiful morning after a long winter, I arrived at work wearing my rubber boots. They're necessary for about five days in spring, for about five steps from the car to the sidewalk. A paper-thin transparent layer of ice had formed over a puddle on the grass. Crows in the distance asserted their dominance over the otherwise still soundscape. With the toe of my pink boot I tapped the surface of the ice ever so gently, until it cracked into jagged lines and water oozed across the surface.

Some things I will miss.

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There is strength in letting go

Continued from page 15

it, but which I now still value greatly. In it, his artist self took precedence over didacticism.

Of various miserable explanations of what a "Christian woman" should be, only one is left, and that is solely because of the author's personal note on the title page. Her view of life is no longer relevant for me, yet I have not forgotten her kindly encouragement when, overwhelmed with demands of babies and church and parents, I had concluded that my love of words had no future. She told me it did. She was right. Her book stays on my shelf as a memory capsule, although I am certain I will never read it again.

Our identity is forged in the crucible of human interactions and experiences, both of which are temporal, even fleeting. One cannot freeze a conversation, except by writing it down (already an interpretive act);

one anchors an experience often by tethering it to some solid physical entity, such as pictures, souvenirs, furniture, clothing, even journal entries. There are those who collect stuff, preserve even the broken teacup and old newspapers. Others stockpile pictures, physical and digital. For some, regrettably, the shoring up of fragments becomes pathological as the fragile identity cannot bear to lose anything.

I gather and keep most of my books. I keep buying new ones, too. I warehouse my writings, of whatever sort, whether published or never even intended for publication. There is something about the written word that tells me who I am and who I might become. I pray only that I will be able to distinguish between the necessary and the blindly obsessive when the time comes. To be able to let go is also an indication of strength. That is what I say to myself as I say goodbye to the *Prairie Messenger*.

Guidelines for dying

With the advances in technology, it’s becoming harder to decide when it’s best to terminate treatment for someone who is dying. The recent case of Alfie Evans, who died April 28, is a case in point.

Alfie was 23 months old. He suffered from an incurable degenerative neurological condition. Doctors in Liverpool, England, judged that it was in the “best interests” of Alfie to be allowed to die. The case was taken to the courts, to settle a dispute between the parents and the doctors. British judges decided that nothing could be done to save Alfie.

Alfie’s parents, Tom and Kate, were young — 19 and 18 years of age, respectively — when Alfie was born on May 9, 2016.

They were assisted in their struggle by a small group of people outside Britain, according to Robert Mickens, writing in *La Croix International*. In an article entitled, “The ‘pro life’ zealots who manipulated the end-of-life tragedy of a British toddler,” Mickens reported that the zealots entered the young couple’s lives several months ago, uninvited and entirely on their own initiative.

“These people befriended Tom and Kate and ended up playing a key role in advising the young couple’s course of action and, especially, in helping to make Alfie’s saga known throughout the world.”

He commented, “These outside forces actually exploited this young family to advance their own politically motivated agendas. They accused the doctors of one of the world’s finest pediatric hospitals as being cruel and deceptive. They pilloried England’s Catholic bishops for acting like Pontius Pilate. They called for the sacking of Pope Francis’ handpicked president of the Pontifical Academy for Life. And they even chastised Britain’s Royal Family for not ‘saving’ Alfie, while branding the United Kingdom a police state and dictatorship.”

The parents appealed to Pope Francis, who met Alfie’s father. The Vatican-owned Bambino Gesù hospital in Rome offered to care for Alfie, although the

doctors who examined him said not much could be done; they could only make him comfortable. On April 23, the Italian government granted citizenship to the boy so he could be evacuated by a waiting air ambulance helicopter.

The affair attracted worldwide attention as church leaders were accused of being unfaithful to church teaching. The Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales defended the actions of the hospital.

American National Right to Life president Carol Tobias, for example, said in an April 29 statement that “no parent should ever be forced to the sidelines while the government decides whether their child will receive medical treatment or not.”

She said: “Let’s be clear: Alfie Evans was sentenced to death by Britain’s National Health System (Service) and the High Court. Their intransigent commitment to the country’s faulty single-payer health system led them to conclude it was better for Alfie to die than leave the country and receive potentially life-saving treatment elsewhere.”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, archbishop of Westminster, London, said he believes everything possible was done to help Alfie, and criticized those who “sought political capital” from the tragedy “without knowing the facts.”

Some decades ago, the church distinguished between ordinary and extraordinary treatment to help medical staff and families decide when a person could be allowed to die a natural death instead of being kept artificially alive for days or weeks. It is not easy for family and friends to watch a loved one die. But it is a fact of life.

The issue of euthanasia and the recent focus on assisted suicide serve only to confuse the issue today.

Church teaching was spelled out by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (No. 65).

“For a correct moral judgment on euthanasia, in the first place a clear definition is required. Euthanasia in the strict sense is understood to be an action or omission which of itself and by intention causes death, with the purpose of eliminating all suffering. ‘Euthanasia’s

terms of reference, therefore, are to be found in the intention of the will and in the methods used.’

“Euthanasia must be distinguished from the decision to forego so-called ‘aggressive medical treatment,’ in other words, medical procedures which no longer correspond to the real situation of the patient, either because they are by now disproportionate to any expected results or because they impose an excessive burden on the patient and his family. In such situations, when death is clearly imminent and inevitable, one can in conscience ‘refuse forms of treatment that would only secure a precarious and burdensome prolongation of life, so long as the normal care due to the sick person in similar cases is not interrupted.’ Certainly there is a moral obligation to care for oneself and to allow oneself to be cared for, but this duty must take account of concrete circumstances. It needs to be determined whether the means of treatment available are objectively proportionate to the prospects for improvement. To forego extraordinary or disproportionate means is not the equivalent of suicide or euthanasia; it rather expresses acceptance of the human condition in the face of death.”

Mickens commented: the Alfie affair “has been a sad and heart-wrenching saga. And it has been marked by a blistering degree of bitterness and divisiveness stoked by certain journalists who have shown not an ounce of shame for deliberately peddling falsehoods as if they were facts. They have worked as tools and fellow activists of the people who became self-appointed advisers to Alfie’s parents.”

Death is rarely an invited guest, especially for a young family; emotions run high and facts are difficult to accept.

We trust the *Prairie Messenger* has helped our readers navigate their way through the difficult decisions they face in our increasingly complex world. The Alfie affair may be an example where we need some clarity and background to understand what is happening, and why.

We urge our readers to keep a vigilant and critical attitude in all they read, whether it’s fit or unfit to print! — PWN

Some advice is not helpful for persons struggling with cancer

By Rod Andrews, Saskatoon

“You are a person to be loved, not a problem to be solved.” Kate Bowler, a professor at Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina, is 38 years old and a young mother. She studies the religious belief “that health, wealth and happiness will come to those who believe.” She tries to understand why many people believe that a person with the right kind of faith will be healthy, prosperous and happy.

Her own faith has been challenged by a diagnosis of colon cancer. Friends and colleagues offer comfort and advice. Not all their words are helpful. They try to solve her problem for her. She just needs to be loved.

Three years ago she was busy in her office when the phone rang. A woman “who sounded like she had many phone calls to make” told her, “The tests came back. You have stage four colon cancer. You need to come in.” Kate’s response was: “But I have a son.”

Originally from Manitoba and raised as a Mennonite, Kate was thrust into a world of hospital beds, intravenous therapy and physical pain. She “lives from scan to scan.” “Cancer has kicked down

Andrews is a retired Anglican bishop. This article appeared in the April Country Guide. Reprinted with permission.

the walls of my life.” Her illness caused her to reflect deeply on her life and her relationship with God. She protested, “Does cancer not care I have plans?” “Does cancer not care that I have tried to be a good person?” “I have so much that I love.”

She talks about a neighbour who came to their door and attempted to comfort her husband. The well-meaning woman told him, “There is a reason for everything.”

“I’d love to hear it,” Kate’s husband responded. “Pardon?” was the startled neighbour’s response. “I’d love to hear the reason my wife is dying.” There is not a reason for everything. Some things evade all reason. Kate’s latest book is called *Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I Have Lived*. Other people began their sentences with “At least.” “At least you have a husband, at least you have a son, at least you live close to a hospital,” and so on. Sentences beginning with “At least” do not help a young mother with incurable cancer.

Kate has a suggestion for people who say, “God never gives us more than we can handle.” “Instead of speaking theology, why not be the faith your friend needs? Help shoulder her burden instead of blithely reassuring her that she should be self-sufficient in handling hard times.”

Kate was interviewed recently on the CBC radio program The

Current. The interviewer asked “How do you keep your faith when there is no cure for your disease and you do not know how much time you have left?”

She replied, “I don’t have to try quite so hard to achieve God’s nod of approval. What I need is for everyone to come alongside and fill in the gaps.” She finds joy in everything that comes in the course of a day: “what is big and brave and also what is small and cuddly.”

Henri Nouwen was a Dutch priest who reflected deeply on faith and suffering. Nouwen wrote: “When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain.”

“The friend who

us in a moment of despair or confusion . . . is a friend who cares.”

Kate says, “Life does not keep, but love does.”



Ken Nowakowski Photo

UKRAINIAN BISHOPS MEET — The annual meeting of the Ukrainian Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States of America was held April 30 - May 4 at Seton Retreat Centre, in Kelowna, B.C., in the Eparchy of New Westminster. From left, is Bishop Andriy Rabyi, administrator of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia; Bishop David Motiuk, eparch of Edmonton; Archbishop Stefan Soroka, emeritus of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia; Bishop Paul Chomnycky, eparch of Stamford; Metropolitan Archbishop Lawrence Huculak, OSBM, of the Archeparchy of Winnipeg; Bishop Bohdan Danylo of the Eparchy of Parma; Bishop Ken Nowakowski, eparch of New Westminster; Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, eparch of Saskatoon; and Bishop Venedykt Aleksiychuk, eparch of Chicago. The bishops discussed topics in preparation for the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to be held in Lviv, Ukraine in September. These included English translation of liturgical services, development of catechetical programs, vocations to the priestly and religious life and priestly ongoing formation, cantors institutes, etc.

VICS ad in PM changed life of small-town prairie teacher

The Editor: I just put down the May 2 issue of the *Prairie Messenger*. I was delighted to see that the advertisement for VICS was part of the publication to the very end. Delighted because it was in Humboldt, a town near Muenster, that I began my teaching career and where I spent five years as part of the *PM*/Benedictine monastery groupies.

I received my first issue of the *PM* in 1973 and for the past 45 years I have been a faithful subscriber. The *PM* even sent issues to Kenya and The Gambia when I was a VICS volunteer; even though they came six weeks or two months late, I read every word.

And the *PM* and that VICS advertisement brings me back to the point of this little trip down

memory lane. It was while I was 25 years of age and four years into my first go around at teaching in rural Saskatchewan that, while searching for that “something” to calm the “Holy Restlessness” that I felt, the advertisement for VICS popped out of the pages of the *PM*. I wrote away (writing is what one did those many years ago; yes with an envelope and a stamp) to the far away planet called “Toronto.” Then, like most early VICS volunteers, I began a correspondence and lengthy late-night phone conversations with Dermot Doran.

I was not to meet Dermot until just before I went overseas but I was sent off to Regina to be interviewed by returned VICS volunteer and my friend for over 40 years, Dolores Fehr. Dolores gave

me her blessing. Dermot wisely went with her positive vibe of the big guy from small-town Saskatchewan. And there followed two tours with VICS, my joining the Spiritans and eventually the privilege of serving for some time as VICS director.

Today (May 3) as I read that second-to-last issue, I wonder what if VICS never advertised in the *PM*, what if I had never heard of this big city organization that would change the life of this small-town prairie boy forever? Thanks so much, *Prairie Messenger*, for being there and allowing one VICS advertisement to change my life forever. — **Rev. Bob Colburn, Toronto, VICS Volunteer, Kenya 1978 - 80; The Gambia 1980 - 82**

Where is the accountability for LifeSiteNews?

The Editor: I don’t remember who said it, but some cleric said there would be more trouble evangelizing from “within” the church than from “without.” No truer a statement was ever made. The example of squabbles and accusations from LifeSiteNews was never truer of fighting from “within.”

This makes me ask several questions. Where is the unity in the church? Why is transparency and accountability called for when it comes to Development and Peace, but not from LifeSiteNews? Why does LifeSiteNews always bring up questionable issues when the church is collecting funds? Why is it that LifeSiteNews knows how much is collected by D&P? (see *PM*, April 15).

Why let the Evil One smile on

“our” dissension, spirit of jealousy and/or competition? Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Greek, whether *D&P* or *LifeSiteNews*, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

To me, the question is clear that the “issue” is not about “abortion” or pro-life (we are all pro-life), but about the “money.” After all, the “issue” always comes up during collection time. If the issue is about abortion, then why isn’t the “issue” raised all year round, or in the fall, winter, or summer?

The LifeSite website says “their purpose is to provide balance and more accurate coverage . . . and accuracy in content

is given high priority.” So where is the balance? It is more like distortion. And who are they accountable to? Accusations that are made of innuendos with no accountability or transparency should be investigated, but settled once and for all by the bishops and management of organizations in a “unified” response.

Spreading accusations widely amongst the faithful *only hurts the people who will need the funds the most, in the Global South*.

We are all “pro-life,” from conception to death.

All I ask for is transparency and UNITY. — **Marcella Pedersen, Cut Knife, Sask.**

Bishops misunderstand Samaritan parable

The Editor: The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and Development and Peace — Caritas Canada are at it again. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) seems to have been misunderstood by many of Western Canada’s 25 bishops who met in February 2018. Their action interprets the parable as if the *priest* asked the victim: are you a Catholic?; and the *Levite* asked: do you hold to Catholic Church’s sexuality prescriptions? (*PM*, April 11).

No scripture scholar consulted comes close to this “interpretation.” The Samaritan, the graced human one, did what he was able to do to his human brother, an action of God’s mercy.

The questionable quality of the CCCB leadership in overseeing the Canadian Catholic

Church is now attempting to deal with issues in other cultures and countries. The current Canadian government’s requirement to sign accepting its “ethical platform” to receive its federal grant for the Canada Summer Job program is very similar. The CCCB is very much opposed to it (and rightly so). It is really the same approach.

It is a shame that the new head of the D&P has been bullied from true charity — the love of one’s neighbour in need (Luke 19:10).

When the CCCB and D&P conflict appeared a few years ago, our family found other Christian-based organizations for our outreach for development and justice. I guess we are imitating the Samaritan to extend God’s mercy without limits. — **Bob Burns, Richmond, B.C.**

Not all the children of the Warsaw Ghetto died

The Editor: My dear friend, Piotr (Peter) Alapin (now deceased) was one of the very few children who survived the Warsaw Ghetto (*PM*, April 25). He was absent from grade school the day the Nazis removed all the children from the Warsaw ghetto and hidden in a hollow step when people realized what was happening.

A very brave Polish lady with five kids got him out. She was a night cleaner in a Nazi building which abutted the ghetto, showed up for work one evening with her five kids in tow, convinced the

Reconciliation happens by getting to know each other

Continued from page 1

for my tears. It makes me sad and angry,” Cyr said. “Angry because it has been 25 years of learning and acknowledging my story and that of my community. In so many ways it is both beautiful and horrible.”

She said she and her husband’s parents and both their grandparents are residential school survivors, “and we have been learning about what happened over 500 years. In my family there is a history of abuse and trauma. As grownups we were seven siblings who never hugged, we were raised in a way that it was not accept-

able. There has been lots of healing, but there’s still a long way to go.”

Cyr said she does fewer such presentations like these than in the past because of the pain it recreates in her. But she came to this session at the request of Sister Marilyn Gibney, one of the organizers, and one of Cyr’s teachers at St. Mary’s Academy.

To introduce the evening, the pastor at St. Ignatius, Rev. Frank Obrigewitsch, said truth and reconciliation “happens by getting to know each other better. One can accept and forgive the better one knows the other person.”

PM covered Christian view on issues

The Editor: *Prairie Messenger*, you have been my help and encourager when I was catechism teacher, co-ordinator, choir member, liturgy co-ordinator, CWL and lately with the MAiD and conscience in medicine issues.

I could rely on you to cover the Christian view of issues covered in the print and TV media. What

will I do without the *PM*? It will take a tremendous amount of time to cover just some aspects via the Internet.

Thank you for the work you did. You have been a blessing to us, your readers. Now receive, God willing, his blessing in the coming years. — **Karin Lotoski, West St. Paul, Man.**

A heartfelt farewell to a trusted mentor

The Editor: How do we 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 a connection with any other subscription!) I feel this loss very deeply, yet

I know that everything has it’s time. I trust and respect the decision you have made.

Thank you sincerely for all your years of delivering the Good News. And, an added thank you for continuing to send my “expired copies” from March to May. — **Mary Ann Bosworth, Moose Mountain, N.B.**

Former diocesan editor recalls history of events she covered

night guards that her baby sitter was ill, went about her work (with the kids running around as kids will do), and when she left in the morning it was with six kids instead of just five.

Peter was then secreted to a small rural orphanage, given fake baptismal papers by the parish priest and hidden by the nuns until liberated by the Russian Army in 1945.

After escaping Communist Poland in the late 1970s, he emigrated to Canada and moved to Halifax, where we worked together

for 20 years. I once asked him, “Why were so many Polish Jews members of the Communist party before the war?” “Easy,” he said. “There were two major political parties in Poland, both almost entirely Catholic (this was Poland!) and neither party would accept Jews as members.

But the Communists welcomed everyone and so, if a Jew was at all interested in politics, they joined the Communist party, because it was the only party they could join!” — **Joe Foy, Hantsport, N.S.**

The archived issues of the *Prairie Messenger*, and the liturgical music suggestions, will be available at: www.prairiemessenger.ca



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Editor: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB 306-682-1772
<pm.editor@stpeterspress.ca>
Associate editors: Maureen Weber <pm.canadian@stpeterspress.ca>, Don Ward <pm.local@stpeterspress.ca>
Layout artist: Lucille Stewart
Advertising: Gail Kleefeld 306-682-1772 <pm.ads@stpeterspress.ca>
Circulation: Gail Kleefeld 306-682-1772 <pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca>
Regina diocesan editor: Frank Flegel 306-586-7316, 306-352-1651
Saskatoon diocesan editor: Kiply Lukan Yaworski 306-242-1500, 306-651-3935
Prince Albert: Chancery Office 306-922-4747
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Saint-Boniface Chancery Office 204-237-9851



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Synodality calls for regular consultation of laity

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church needs to seek the input, commitment and talents of all of its members if it is to be truly catholic and to evangelize effectively, said a new document from the International Theological Commission.

Pope Francis has called for the church to be “synodal,” which does not just mean holding regular meetings of the world Synod of

Bishops, but constantly finding ways to live and work in the world with a greater sense of the value of the prayers, experience and advice of everyone in the church — including laypeople, the document said.

“Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church” was published in early May with the approval of Archbishop Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the authorization of

Pope Francis.

The International Theological Commission is a board of theologians, appointed by the pope, who advise the doctrinal congregation.

The new document explored Pope Francis’ frequent calls for the church to be “synodal” or characterized by “walking together” as the pilgrim people of God.

The theologians said a synodal attitude and way of being church flowed naturally from the Second Vatican Council’s description of the church as a communion and its emphasis on the responsibility of all Catholics for the church’s life and mission, although each person has been given different gifts and roles by the Holy Spirit.

The document explored ways the church already exercises synodality, including through parish councils, diocesan presbyteral councils, national bishops’ conferences, regional councils of bishops, the synods of bishops of the Eastern Catholic churches, the world Synod of Bishops and ecumenical councils, like Vatican II.

While synodality is based on the baptismal gifts and responsibilities of each Catholic, the document said, it is not a call for some form of a Catholic parliament. The pope and the bishops, assisted by their priests, still retain their decision-making authority.

But “the participation of the lay faithful is essential,” the document said. “They are the vast majority of the People of God and there is much to learn from their participation in the various expressions of the life and mission of the ecclesial community, in popular piety

and in pastoral work as a whole, as well as from their specific competence in the various spheres of cultural and social life.”

Any process of church discernment, the theologians wrote, should begin with a consultation of the laity and for that to be effective, laymen and laywomen must be given more opportunities for education in the faith and more spaces in the church where they can learn to express themselves.

Greater effectiveness also requires overcoming “a clerical mentality that risks keeping them at the margins of church life,” the document said.

Calling for “conversion for a renewed synodality,” the document emphasized the need for all church members to be better educated in “the spirituality of communion and the practice of listen-

ing, dialogue and communal discernment.”

Without a conversion of hearts and minds, it said, the existing structures of synodality will be “simple masks without heart or a face.”

Because the Holy Spirit works within all the baptized, it said, “the renewal of the synodal life of the church requires activating processes of consultation with the whole People of God,” including laymen and laywomen.

Synodality, it said, promotes the baptismal dignity and call of all Catholics, values the presence of different gifts given by the Holy Spirit and recognizes the specific ministry entrusted to pastors and bishops in communion with the pope for the preservation of the faith and the renewal of the church.

U.S. stem cell biologist appointed to science academy

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis named a pioneering U.S. scientist specializing in stem cell research to the Pontifical Academy for Sciences.

Elaine Fuchs, professor and head of the laboratory of mammalian cell biology and development at The Rockefeller University in New York, was appointed to the papal think tank, according to a Vatican press release published May 5, her birthday.

Fuchs, 68, has done groundbreaking research on the biology of skin stem cells, studying how these cells make and repair tissues, how they “communicate” with other neighbouring cells, and how the communication malfunctions in cancer and aging, according to the press release. The research is aimed

at developing therapies that enhance wound repair and impact the stem cells of tumours, it said.

Born in Hinsdale, Illinois, she earned a degree in chemistry from the University of Illinois and got her PhD in biochemistry from Princeton University. She was the first woman hired in the biochemistry department at the University of Chicago in 1980.

In addition to working at Rockefeller University, she is also an investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute — a philanthropic organization working to advance biomedical research and science education.

She is a member of many top science associations, including the National Academy of Medicine, and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the National Medal of Science.



CNS/Paul Haring

ACTORS PLAY CARDINALS IN MOVIE — An actor playing a cardinal gives his blessing as actor-cardinals return to the set while working on an upcoming Netflix movie, *The Pope*, in Rome May 7. The film focuses on the transition between Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. It is expected to be released in 2019.

Pope praises retired Pope Benedict

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — For more than 50 years, the writings of retired Pope Benedict XVI on the relationship between faith and politics have insisted that the measure of human freedom is the extent to which each person acknowledges being dependent on the love of God, Pope Francis wrote.

The future pope’s “direct experience of Nazi totalitarianism led him from the time he was a young academic to reflect on the limits of obedience to the state in favour of the freedom of obedience to God,” Pope Francis commented in the preface to a new book.

“Liberating Freedom: Faith and Politics in the Third Millennium” is a collection of essays written over the course of several decades, including during Pope Benedict’s eight years as pope. It is scheduled to be published in Italian by Cantagalli in May 11. The website Vatican Insider posted Pope Francis’ preface May 6 and Vatican News posted an English translation the next day.

Pope Francis said that when Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger worked alongside St. John Paul II, “he elaborated and proposed a Christian vision of human rights capable

of questioning on a theoretical and practical level the totalitarian claim of the Marxist state and the atheist ideology on which it was based.”

Pope Francis said the contrast Ratzinger saw between Christianity and Marxism or communism definitely was not the focus on the poor and the need to fight inequality.

“We must learn — once again, not only at the theoretical level, but in the way we think and act — that alongside the real presence of Jesus in the church and in the sacrament, there exists that other real presence of Jesus in the little ones, in the trampled of this world, in the last, in whom he wants us to find him,” Pope Francis quoted the cardinal as writing.

The key difference between Marxism and Christianity in the retired pope’s writing, he said, lies in the relationship each sees between redemption and liberation.

“Does redemption occur through liberation from all dependence or is the only way to liberation the complete dependence on love, which would then also be true freedom?” he quotes Pope Benedict as writing.

The retired pope’s insight is relevant and urgent today, Pope Francis wrote. “In fact, today more than ever there is the same tempta-

tion to refuse any dependence on love that is not a person’s love for his own ego, for ‘the I and its desires,’ and, consequently, the danger of the ‘colonization’ of consciences by an ideology that denies the basic certainty that humankind exists as male and female to whom the task of the transmission of life is assigned,” Pope Francis said.

A new set of human “rights,” Pope Francis wrote, is actually leading to the self-destruction of humanity, as Pope Benedict had pointed out. The self-destructive attitudes “have a single common denominator that consists in a single, great denial: the denial of dependence on love, the denial that man and woman are creatures of God, lovingly made by him in his image and to whom they yearn as the deer longs for running water.”

“When we deny this dependence between creature and creator, this relationship of love,” Pope Francis wrote, “we renounce the true greatness of the human being (and) the bulwark of human freedom and dignity.”

Pope Francis said reading the retired pope’s essays “can help all of us not only to understand our present and find a solid orientation for the future, but they also can be a real source of inspiration for political action that, by placing the family, solidarity and equality at the centre of its attention and planning, truly looks to the future with foresight.”



CNS/Max Rossi, Reuters

NEOCATECHUMENAL ANNIVERSARY IN ROME — Pope Francis greets people during a gathering of the Neocatechumenal Way at Tor Vergata, a field on the edge of Rome, May 5. Some 100,000 members of the movement welcomed the pope as they celebrated the 50th anniversary of the movement. Also pictured is Kiko Arguello, co-founder of the Neocatechumenal Way, playing guitar. Pope Francis told the gathering that sharing the Gospel means being a witness to love, responding to questions and patiently walking alongside people, not dictating how and when they take the next step.

Walls turned sideways are bridges.

— Angela Davis