



## St. Benedict

Abbot Elias Lorenzo, OSB, spoke on the Rule of St. Benedict as an administrative and spiritual guide not only for monks, but for colleges and schools, as he addressed the public



and the Benedictines of St. Peter's Abbey on the theme, "Good Zeal in Benedictine Education."

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## Marriage mentoring

"Marriage mentoring pairs you with an older couple who wants to listen to you and invest in your lives," says Brent Trickett of Family Life Canada's Marriage Mentoring Initiative. "This isn't crisis counselling, but rather an opportunity to share your story and learn from the life experience of another couple."

— page 3

## Our Lady of Fatima

Hundreds attended a vigil in Saskatoon to mark the 100th anniversary of the Virgin Mary's first appearance to three shepherd children in Portugal. Deacon Donat Davatz described the continuing need to hear the prophetic message of Our Lady, who asked for "penance, conversion of sinners, and praying the rosary to obtain peace for the world."

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## In the library

Libraries are a safe place in which to learn, to escape, to enter other worlds, and to know oneself as part of the company of friends: people friends and book friends, writes Edna Froese.

— page 12

## Double Belonging

The title of her new column, "Double Belonging," has layers of meaning, writes Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers. "The first layer of meaning refers to the fact that, after being a lifelong Roman Catholic and in active ministry for several decades in this beloved tradition, I felt called to move into the Anglican tradition."

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# Trudeau seeks apology from Pope Francis

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Canadian Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau said he asked Pope Francis to help Canadians "move forward on a real reconciliation" with the country's indigenous people "by

issuing an apology" on behalf of the Catholic Church for its role in harming their communities.

The prime minister spoke to a handful of reporters in Rome's Villa Borghese Park May 29 after having had a 36-minute private meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican.

"He reminded me that his entire life has been dedicated to supporting marginalized people in the world, fighting for them," the prime minister said, adding the pope said that "he looked forward to working with me and with the Canadian bishops to figure out a path forward together."

The 2015 report of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which focused on past treatment of the indigenous communities and concrete steps for a future of greater inclusion, included a recommendation that the pope come to Canada to apologize on behalf of the Catholic Church for its participation in the residential schools for indigenous children.

While the idea behind the

schools was to promote the greater integration of indigenous communities into modern Canadian life, the schools — many run by Catholic religious orders — led to a situation in which many children were torn from their families, lost their native language and cultures and often suffered abuse.

Trudeau told reporters he invited the pope to go to Canada "in the coming years," but added no further details about such a trip.

The Vatican meeting, Trudeau said, was an opportunity to have "a deeply personal and wide-ranging, thoughtful conversation with the leader of my own faith."

For its part, the Vatican issued a statement saying that the prime minister's meetings with the pope and with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, included "the themes of integration and reconciliation, as well as religious freedom and current ethical issues."

Trudeau, who is Catholic, and the bishops of Canada work close-

— BISHOPS, page 15



CNS/Ettore Ferrari, Reuters

**TRUDEAU VISITS POPE** — Pope Francis meets Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife Sophie Gregoire Trudeau during a private audience at the Vatican May 29.

## Canada lagging behind in aid to the world's poor

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The global economy is picking up steam, but higher global growth numbers aren't changing the out-

look at Canada's Catholic development agency.

The latest United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospectus forecasts 2.7 per cent growth in global gross product in 2017 and another 2.9 per cent uptick in 2018

— good numbers compared to just 2.3 per cent in 2016. But those numbers don't mean much in the slums and impoverished villages of the world's 48 least developed countries, and Canada still falls short in its aid commitment, said

Development and Peace — Caritas Canada advocacy and research officer Elana Wright.

"Economic recovery in South America is emerging more slowly

— GAP, page 4

## Winnipeg synod completes second major phase

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The Synod of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg is completing its second major phase as the work of the Focus Commission comes to fruition with preliminary reports now available for comment on the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website.

The nine Focus Commissions were charged with putting into words the distillation of nearly 800 responses gathered from the faithful of the archdiocese at the 13 Listening Sessions held throughout the archdiocese last fall. Responses were also received online via the archdiocesan website.

Three questions were asked at the Listening Sessions: 1) What do you appreciate most about the church in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg; especially those things that help you grow in your faith and as a disciple of the Lord? 2) Where are we going? What is your vision for the archdiocese in the coming years? 3) What is our responsibility? What do you see as the three priority areas that the archdiocese should focus on? What would you like to accomplish in these areas?

The 10-page report on the Listening Sessions' findings, created with the help of the Catholic Leadership Institute, can be found at [www.archwinnipeg.ca](http://www.archwinnipeg.ca)

From those findings priorities were identified that led to the creation of the Focus Commission under the headings of: New Evangelization and Missionary Outreach; Catechetics and Faith Development; Indigenous People; Youth and Young Adults; Marriage and Family; Sacramental Preparation, Prayer and Devotional Life; Vocations and Leadership; Governance; and Social Outreach.

With six to eight people named by Archbishop Gagnon on each commission, the groups produced preliminary reports that are open to the faithful for further opinion. The Focus Commission reports are available to read, download or print from the synod section of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website.

Those without access to a printer are asked to contact their parishes for printed copies. Respondents are asked to send their opinions, comments and feedback by email to the Synod Preparatory Commission, care of: [jcoyne@archwinnipeg.ca](mailto:jcoyne@archwinnipeg.ca) by June 15. This sec-

ond round of opinions will be gathered and forwarded to the appropriate Focus Commission, and taken into consideration in the creation of the final Focus

Commission reports.

Those reports will form the basis of study for the synod's next

— NEXT PHASE, page 15



Tim Yaworski

**MONUMENT TO THE MISSING** — A life-sized bronze monument honouring missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was recently unveiled near the main entrance of Saskatoon police headquarters. Created by artist Lionel Peyachew, the sculpture depicts Red Star Woman, a fancy dancer with her shawl as wings. The Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC), the City of Saskatoon and the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) collaborated on the construction of the statue, with funding from STC, SPS and the province of Saskatchewan.

# Trump, pope meeting ‘cordial’

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Though there are few details about what was said when Pope Francis and Donald Trump talked privately May 24, much was made online about the U.S. president’s wide smile and the pope’s more serious stance as the two posed for public photos at the Vatican.

The pope showed his trademark smile when he met the president’s accompanying family members — his wife, daughter and son-in-law — after their meeting, which was described as “cordial” by the Vatican.

But away from the cameras, in the public arena of ideas about how the world should work, the two men have clearly been at odds on a long list of subjects such as immigration, the environment, how to fight poverty, using militarization instead of diplomacy, to name a few.

“We know that His Holiness and President Trump differ strongly on a number of issues, particularly treatment of migrants and the environment, and (the pope’s) expression and body language while receiving Trump conveyed seriousness and concern,” Michele Dunne of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington told Catholic News

Service. “Still, the two leaders worked hard to hold a constructive meeting and to find common ground — which they did, particularly as regards the need for peace in the Middle East and protection of Christians there.”

Signalling some openness to the pope’s thinking, Trump is said to have uttered, “I won’t forget what you said,” as he left their private session.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, in an interview with CNN shortly after the meeting, said he wouldn’t be surprised if the pope got some of his points across to the president.

“I mean, this is a man who has come across as the greatest prophet in protection of the poor and vulnerable and marginalized throughout the world. So, that he would speak of those values and principles, I’m sure he did,” Dolan said about the pope during CNN’s New Day morning show.

The New York archbishop said the pope probably speaks about the same topics to other world leaders, but “I think he especially would to the president of the strongest, mightiest power on the face of the earth.”

“When you have these two leaders today, you got the leader of the greatest moral and spiritual authority in the world, the pope,

and you got the leader of the strongest, natural, earthly power, that the two of them would work hand-in-glove, that they would have more that brings them together than divides them, that’s good for world peace,” Dolan said. “That by the way has pretty much been the history of American relations with the Holy See and I would have hoped that would continue today in the meeting between the president and the pope.”

But others like Massimo Faggioli, a church historian and professor of theology at Villanova University in Philadelphia, said it’s also important to look at what wasn’t officially said.

“It should not surprise that some issues were not mentioned in the Holy See statement, such as the environment,” Faggioli said in an email to CNS. “Areas of disagreement are never mentioned in this kind of official final statements.”

And disagreements are plenty between the two — and quite public. Trump, while on the campaign trail, criticized the pope after the pontiff said in 2016 that “a person who thinks only of building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, isn’t Christian.” Questioning a person’s faith is “disgraceful,” Trump said in response. Trump



CNS/L’Osservatore Romano

**TRUMPS VISIT SISTINE CHAPEL — U.S. President Donald Trump and his wife, Melania, visit the Sistine Chapel after meeting Pope Francis at the Vatican May 24.**

supporters attacked the pope via Twitter by saying the Vatican had walls around it. Just days before

meeting with the pope, during a May 18 news conference, Trump said “Walls work, just ask Israel.”

## God chooses to be with the dejected, pope says

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If it seems hard to find God in this world, it is because he chooses to be with the defeated and dejected and in places where most people are loath to go, Pope Francis said.

“God does not like to be loved the way a warlord would like, dragging his people to victory, debasing them in the blood of his enemies,” the pope said May 24 at his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

The audience began just after Pope Francis had met U.S. President Donald Trump.

“Our God is a dim flame that burns on a cold and windy day, and, for as fragile as his presence seems in this world, he has chosen the place everyone disdains,” Pope Francis told the crowd in the square.

Continuing his series of talks on Christian hope, the pope looked at the Gospel of Luke’s account of the two disciples travelling on the road to Emmaus after Jesus had been crucified and buried.

In the story, the pope said, the disciples, are struggling to understand how such a fate could have befallen the man they had faith in: the son of God.

Their hope was merely human, he said, and it easily shattered after such an unforeseen defeat of God, who appeared “defenceless at the hands of the violent, incapable of offering resistance to evil.”

“How much unhappiness, how many defeats, how many failures there are in the life of every person. In essence, we are all like those two disciples,” he said. Just when life seems to be going well, “we find ourselves struck down, disappointed.”

But just as Jesus was on the road with the disciples, the pope

said, he is also walking with everyone on their journey through life.

“Jesus walks with all those who are discouraged, who walk with their head down,” so he can offer them renewed hope, he said.

But he does so discreetly, the pope said. “Our God is not an intrusive God.”

Even though he knows what is bothering the disciples, he asks them a question and listens patiently, letting them tap into the depths of their bitterness and sadness.

Whoever reads the Bible will not find stories of “easy heroism, blazing campaigns of conquest. True hope never comes cheap — it always comes through defeat.”

In fact, he added, the hope felt by those who have never suffered may not even be hope at all.

The disciples initially didn’t recognize God on the road because their hope had been in a victorious, conquering leader, the pope said. They only recognize him when he takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it to them — exactly like he did with his own life.

The church should be this way, too, Pope Francis said, by letting Jesus “take us, bless us, ‘break’ our lives — because there is no love without sacrifice — and offer it to others, offer it to everyone.”

The church needs to be just like Jesus, not staying in a “fortified fortress,” but out where everything is alive and happening — on the road.

Christ’s “therapy of hope” is that despite all appearances to the contrary, “we continue to be loved and God will never stop loving us,” the pope said. “He will walk with us always, always, even during the most painful times, even in the most terrible moments, moments of defeat. That is where the Lord is.”

## Martial law declared in Philippine region

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Gunmen claiming to have links with the Islamic State group threatened to kill hostages, including a Catholic priest, who were taken from the southern Philippine city of Marawi May 23.

President Rodrigo Duterte imposed martial law across the entire Muslim-majority region of Mindanao late May 23, but ucanews.com reported that many, including church leaders, characterized the imposition of martial law as an overreaction.

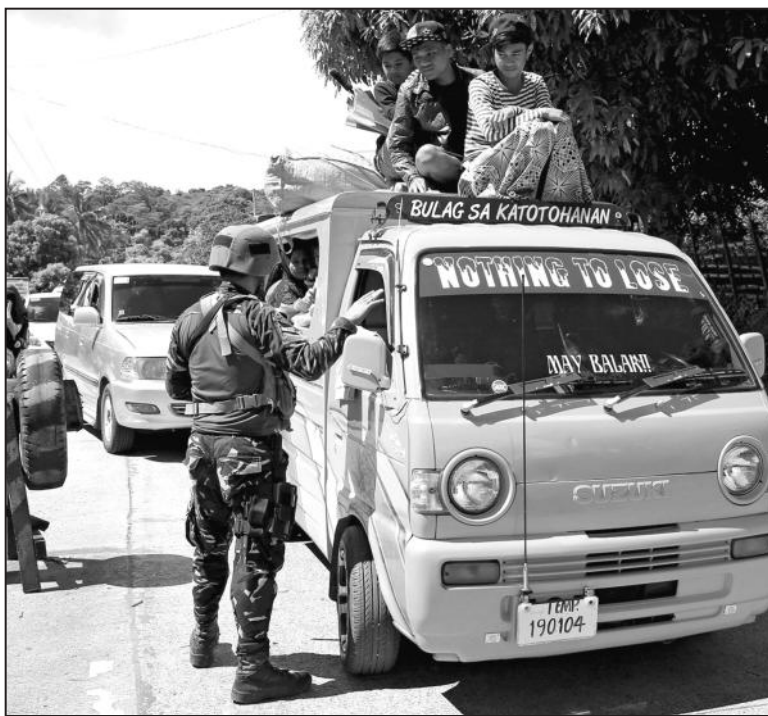
“(The terrorists) have threatened to kill the hostages if government forces pitted against them are not recalled,” said Archbishop Socrates Villegas, president of the Philippine bishops’ conference.

“As the government forces ensure that the law is upheld, we beg of them to make the safety of the hostages a primordial consideration,” he added.

Initial reports received by ucanews.com said Rev. Teresito Suganob, vicar-general of the Prelature of Marawi, and several staff of St. Mary’s Cathedral, which was set on fire, were taken hostage. The gunmen also forced their way into the residence of Bishop Edwin de la Pena of Marawi.

Pena confirmed reports that the attackers took Suganob, several of the prelature’s staff, and some churchgoers. He said he received a call from “a member of Islamic State” who used his kidnapped secretary’s phone and demanded a “unilateral ceasefire” in exchange for the life of the priest and the other hostages.

“They want a ceasefire and for the military to give them access out of Marawi,” said de la Pena. “Otherwise they will kill the hostages.”



CNS/Romeo Ranoco, Reuters

**MARTIAL LAW IN PHILIPPINES — A Philippine government soldier inspects a vehicle May 24 at a checkpoint along a main highway in Lanao del Norte province. Residents started to evacuate the town of Marawi after President Rodrigo Duterte imposed martial law across the entire Muslim-majority region of Mindanao.**

Villegas said Suganob was performing priestly duties at the time of his capture.

“He was not a combatant. He was not bearing arms. He was a threat to none. His capture and that of his companions violates every norm of civilized conflict,” said Villegas.

Fighters of the Maute group, which has vowed allegiance to the Islamic State, also burned several buildings, including the cathedral, a Protestant school and the city’s jail.

Duterte placed all of Mindanao’s 27 provinces and 33 cities, roughly a third of the country, under martial law for a period of 60 days. Mindanao is home to an

estimated 20 million people.

Duterte warned that the martial law in Mindanao “will not be any different” from the martial law declared by former dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

“I’ll be harsh,” said Duterte. “I have to do it to preserve the Republic of the Philippines,” he said, even as he assured Filipinos “not to be too scared.”

Ucanews.com reported that religious leaders and civil society groups, however, said there was no need for Duterte to put Mindanao under military rule. Filipinos have been wary of martial law since it was used by Marcos to remain in power for two decades, until his ouster in 1986.

# Kim Phuc tells story of survival and forgiveness

By Agnieszka Krawczynski  
The B.C. Catholic

VANCOUVER (CCN) — A famous photograph of a naked child running, screaming, and covered with napalm burns captured the horror of the Vietnam War 45 years ago.

That haunting image, snapped by Associated Press photographer Nick Ut, received a Pulitzer Prize and illustrated the terror of that war for the rest of the world. The girl in that photo survived, and is now a Canadian citizen, grandmother, and ambassador for peace.

Kim Phuc was the special guest at the 19th annual Focus on Life Gala, a fundraiser for pro-life efforts in Vancouver, May 15. “At nine years old, I knew nothing of pain,” she said.

That is, until South Vietnamese planes dropped a napalm bomb on her hometown of Trang Bang, mistaking civilians for enemy soldiers June 8, 1972. The napalm badly burned Phuc’s body and the attack killed two of her cousins as well as two other villagers.

“Napalm is the most terrible burn you can imagine,” she said.



B.C. Catholic/Agnieszka Krawczynski  
**AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE — Kim Phuc gives a signed poster that shows the famous photograph to audience member Laurena Hensel.**

One journalist later described the scene, saying another child had been so badly burned in the attack that “it looked like it was clothing hanging off his body, but it was his skin.”

Photographers and local soldiers rushed Phuc and other children to the hospital.

“Unfortunately, the soldiers

who tried to help me on the road didn’t realize when they poured water on me, they made the napalm burn even deeper. I lost consciousness,” she said.

“When my parents found me three days later, I was in a hospital morgue. The doctors had done everything they could and I had been left to die.”

Phuc said it was a “miracle” when she was transferred to a burn clinic in Saigon for special treatment. She spent 14 months in hospital and had a total of 17 operations.

“The pain was unbelievable. I almost died many times,” she said. “Facing pain at an early age was harder than any challenge that should happen to a child.”

Her final operation was in 1984 in Germany. It gave Phuc the freedom to finally move her neck. She said one of her arms and her back were badly scarred and her skin was tight and itchy.

“My dream was to become a doctor. Do you know why? Because I stayed in the hospital too long!” Phuc was thrilled when she was accepted into medical school in Saigon. Unfortunately, she was about to be re-victimized.

“The Vietnamese government found me and decided to use me

as a war symbol for the state. Officers took me out of school for propaganda interviews. I said no. They didn’t care,” she said.

“I became a victim a second time. I was not a political person; I wanted peace.”

After a few years, she met the prime minister and begged him to let her finish her studies. He arranged for her to go to Cuba in 1986, where she met her fiancé.

Before leaving for Cuba, Phuc had discovered a faith that helped her cope with the acute suffering she’d experienced since she was nine years old.

“Like most Vietnamese children, I was raised in the Cao Dai faith. But something was missing. I kept looking for answers. In 1982, I found them in the Bible. I became a Christian.”

Her newfound faith taught her about forgiveness. “I was holding a lot of anger and hatred for those who dropped the bombs and those who were controlling me. I knew I didn’t want to live my life like that,” she said.

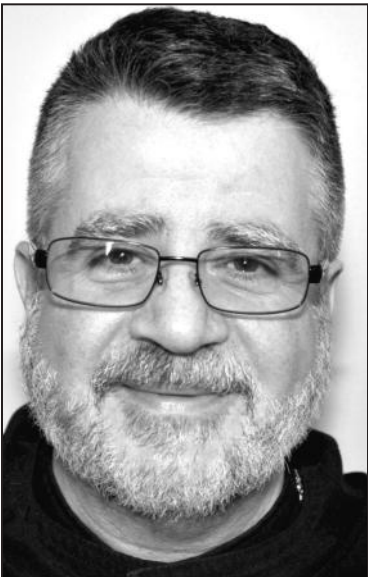
“With God’s help, I learned how to transform that bitterness into forgiveness and how to for-

— PHUC, page 5

## St. Benedict has wisdom for leadership

By Paul Paproski, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — The Rule of St. Benedict is the administrative and spiritual guide for the Order of St. Benedict and it has good advice, not only for Benedictines but for colleges and schools, said Abbot Elias Lorenzo, OSB, of St. Mary’s Abbey, New Jersey, speaking to the public and the Benedictines of St. Peter’s Abbey on the theme, “Good Zeal in Benedictine Education,” May 11.



Paul Paproski, OSB  
**Abbot Elias Lorenzo, OSB**

Many scholars believe St. Benedict became more pastoral as he gained experience as an abbot in community life. The Rule has 73 chapters, and the last five are the most pastorally sensitive. Chapter 72 has the theme, “The Good Zeal of Monks,” and it expresses the wisdom that can be used for educators to teach good leadership. Chapter 72 is the high point in the Rule. It is the “depth-dimension or key that summarizes St. Benedict’s insight into leadership. It brings everything in the Rule together.”

The chapter points out that there is a “wicked zeal of bitterness” which causes division and separa-

tion, and, conversely, a “good zeal” that builds on one another and leads to God. Quoting chapter 72, Lorenzo said, “‘No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else. To their fellow monks they show the pure love of brothers; to God, loving fear; to their abbot, unfeigned and humble love. Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ and may he bring us all together to everlasting life.’”

Education that emphasizes good zeal is the antidote to the polarization and separation that characterizes society today, Lorenzo commented. The Rule, in Chapter 72, offers good advice on building society. There are five points that flow from the chapter, he said. They include: 1) become the first to show respect to the other; 2) support one another’s weaknesses with patience; 3) compete in listening to others; 4) pursue what is best for others, not yourself; 5) give pure love with no strings attached.

Benedict believed that educators who “prefer nothing whatever to Christ” are those who build people and community. Preferring Christ to everything else is a means of opening oneself to God’s grace and one’s heart to God’s word. The grace of God nurtures listening to what others have to say. An open heart is the key to selfless service which needs to be taught by academic leaders.

Jesus identified himself in the tradition of servant leaders, Lorenzo commented. Jesus said that those who want to be first must be last and servant of all (Matthew 20:26-28). Jesus demonstrated this form of leadership by washing the feet of his disciples. He then instructed his disciples to serve others in the same way he just served them (John 13:1-15).

Service is one side of the coin of leadership; the other side is shared leadership. Leadership can be centralized and servant-orient-

ed; however, Benedictine leadership is shared. The Rule instructs the abbot to appoint assistants to help him in decision-making and to share in the administration of his monastery. Individuals are delegated to care for the sick, welcome and look after guests, manage the kitchen and monastic property.

Lorenzo pointed out some characteristics of servant leadership that have been expressed by Christians and successful business leaders. Some of these characteristics include: 1) listening skills; 2) empathy; 3) the ability to find solutions that build healthy workplaces; 4) an awareness of others’ needs; 5) persuasive decision-making, rather than authoritarianism; 6) foresight or knowledge of the past to imagine the likely outcome of a situation; 7) stewardship.

“Good leaders are able to empower others because they can admit they do not have all the answers,” Lorenzo remarked. Good leaders are capable of making decisions along with the advice of others. Good leaders understand that it takes time to find answers. Benedictines appreciate the importance of using time wisely because they think in terms of centuries.

Servant leaders invest in people, knowing that everyone is on a journey together. Leaders who follow the servant model know that they cannot solve the world’s problems alone. They are aware that we already have a saviour and there is only one saviour in the world. There will be successes and failures and all experiences have lessons to teach. A servant leader is able to pray alone and with others.

“When we reflect on these ideas about servant leaders and shared leadership, we realize all these are Benedictine values contemporary management theorists have put in other words. It may explain why Benedictine monasteries have survived 1,500 years,” Lorenzo concluded.

## Marriage mentoring open to all couples

By Darlene Polachic

SASKATOON — According to statistics from the Vanier Institute, marriages in Canada have a 59 per cent success rate. The good news is that couples who undergo marriage preparation and ongoing mentoring have a success rate of 80 to 90 per cent.

That’s where Brent Trickett comes in. Trickett is the national co-ordinator for Family Life Canada’s Marriage Mentoring Initiative.

“A mentor can always help,” he says. “Marriage mentoring pairs you with an older couple who wants to listen to you and invest in your lives. This isn’t crisis counselling, but rather an opportunity to share your story and learn from the life experience of another couple.”

The initiative was launched two years ago by Family Life Canada and has staff people across the country who train seasoned married couples to mentor new and less experienced couples.

Eligible younger couples are those who want more from their marriage, who feel they are stuck or drifting apart. Or perhaps they’re doing well, but want to strengthen their relationship.

These couples will meet with mentor couples once a month for 60 to 90 minutes. Each month they’ll have one of 14 different

conversations exploring topics of importance to strong marriages such as gratitude, showing love, money, communication, household partnership, spirituality, emotional and physical intimacy, parenting, and more.

In the month between meetings, the mentored couples will have a project they can do to actively solidify what they’ve learned. “Kind of like homework,” Trickett says, “but fun homework.”

“Mentoring is all about having conversations together. The goal is not to teach. It’s less a study and more about discussing where the couple wants to head in the future, something they decide together.”

The Marriage Mentoring Initiative works through churches and organizations that want to become a marriage mentor centre. Couples looking for mentoring can find the

— MENTORS, page 7



Darlene Polachic  
**MARRIAGE MENTORING — Brent Trickett, national co-ordinator for Family Life Canada’s Marriage Mentoring Initiative, and his wife, Celeste.**

# Apple takes a shine to teen's tech project

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — What started out as Jaden Banson's annoying hobby has evolved into a passion that is catching the eye of Apple Inc.

"When I was younger I used to take small things around the house apart," said Banson, a Grade 11 student at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Secondary School in Mississauga, Ont. "I used to take apart like TV remotes or my little RC cars to see what was inside because I always wondered how things worked. My mom would sometimes get angry at me for it, but my dad is an engineer so he was always fine with it."

That boyish enthusiasm for gadgets has advanced to the point where the 17-year-old is creating entirely new projects of his own, and one of them has caught the attention of the world's largest information technology company.

Apple has invited Banson to take part in the annual Worldwide Developers Conference, June 5 - 9 in San Jose, Calif. He's one of 350 students from around the world who earned an invitation after suitably impressing the tech giant with his program that was selected from more than 10,000 projects.

The program, called the 3D Molecular Visualizer, provides a three-dimensional rendering of specific molecules, with each image accompanied by a description, list of properties and chemical details such as bonding relations with other molecules. The program, still in the demo stage, contains five molecules: water, carbon dioxide, sulphur trifluoride, sulphur tetrafluoride and boron trichloride.

Banson said it could eventually serve as a supplement, or even replacement, to traditional chemistry textbooks.

"If I were to make it quite a bit larger it would be an alternate solution to a textbook," he said, adding that a search engine would also have to be developed. "I hope to speak to some of the really talented engineers at Apple and see how they create their software. Maybe they can take a look at it and give me some advice on how to properly structure my program for handling more data, different molecules, or building a search engine because there are some really really brilliant people at Apple."

Banson also said the program could be used to create sister software for areas such as physics and biology.

"(Textbooks) do not accurately

represent the way something might actually scientifically look and it doesn't give the proper perspective of how it should look so students might find that confusing and might become uninterested," he said. "It is just kind of boring compared to seeing something on a screen and getting to have that perspective of how things really look like."

In fact, it was boredom that gave birth to the Visualizer.

"I was in fourth period chemistry class and I was studying for this test on molecules and as I was looking at the book some of the 2D molecules were kind of overly complicated," he said. "That made the textbook really boring and un-engaging. So I said there just has to be an easier way and instead of waiting around for someone to make it why don't I just make it."

This is Banson's second year applying to the Apple-sponsored convention for a coveted scholarship, which pays for his transportation, hotel and conference fee.

"Last year I applied with a different project but I wasn't very familiar with the language so it wasn't a very good project," he said. "I was disappointed at first but I took it as a lesson and learned a lot . . . learning something does



Photo courtesy Jaden Banson

**TECH PROJECT — Jaden Banson, a Grade 11 student at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Secondary in Mississauga, has been invited to Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference in California to present his 3D Molecular Visualizer program.**

pay off. Disappointment at first turned into hard work (and) hard work turned into success."

St. Joan of Arc principal Carl Cini had praise for both Banson and his teachers.

"We are very proud of this young man and want to congratulate him on all his hard work," said Cini. "We have some incredible dedicated and energetic and enthusiastic teachers that push the envelope with the students and get them to think about technology in different ways."

The Apple conference is a magnet for software developers and it's a chance to meet with the company's engineers, as well as preview the latest technologies.

"Ever since I was in elementary school I had an iPod and I would just look at how clean it is yet how functional it was at the same time," he said. "When I look at Apple as a company I think they do a lot of great stuff and they are always trying to look for new innovative solutions."

## Growing gap between rich, poor means need for more aid

Continued from page 1

than anticipated and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is declining or stagnant in several parts of Africa," according to the UN's report on the global economy.

"Nearly 35 per cent of the population in LDCs (Least Developed Countries) may remain in extreme poverty by 2030," said a summary of the United Nations report.

"A growing gap between rich and poor translates into a need for more aid even for advancing, middle-income countries, such as Brazil," Wright said.

"Even though Brazil is a middle income country, it is in fact a country of the very rich and the very poor," she said. "It still needs assistance from us — at least the poorest of the poor (need it). That is, of course, our mandate — to work with the most vulnerable, the most excluded, the poorest of the poor."

Development and Peace is looking ahead to publication of the federal government's International Assistance Review. Postponed several times, this mandated look at Canada's contributions to global development has been promised for early in the summer.

Through the winter, Development and Peace has been encouraging its members to get in touch with their members of Parliament to remind them how far Canada needs to go to meet its own goals to help the poor worldwide. Canada's total international assistance in 2014-15 amounted to \$5.8 billion, according to Global Affairs Canada.

"The official development assistance budget has been frozen this year," said Wright. "Canada is falling short of its commitments to contribute to the fulfilment of the

Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, the official development assistance of Canada was only 0.28 per cent of its GNI (Gross National Income)."

At the urging of Lester B. Pearson, prime minister in the 1960s, the United Nations set the bar for developed nations' contributions to foreign aid at 0.7 per cent of GNI. Canada has never reached its own standard and currently ranks 13th out of 23 donor countries. In 1995 we stood in sixth place.

This poor Canadian performance comes against the backdrop of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals agreed to by Canada and 192 other nations in 2015. The 17 "Global Goals" include 169 measurable targets, including the total elimination of hunger and the end of extreme poverty by 2030.

"Getting Canada to pony up its fair share comes down to making sure politicians in Ottawa know the state of the world's poor matters to Canadians," said Wright. "We invite our Canadian members to meet with their members of Parliament and advocate for more generous ODA (Overseas Development Assistance). We are requesting a concrete strategy and timeframe for our ODA to reach 0.7 per cent of Canada's GNI."

Stable, competent, democratic governance has been the key to bringing people and countries up out of poverty.

In Brazil, a period of competent, stable, democratic governance beginning in 2002 under President Lula da Silva and then President Dilma Rousseff brought more than 40 million Brazilians up out of poverty and into the middle class. As the country has

descended into never-ending scandal and an unelected government under President Michel Temer, that progress has stopped.

"Development and Peace is working for stronger governance, for more democratic participation of citizens, for community control over natural resources," said Wright. "These are all things that would prevent more humanitarian crises in the future, or at least would reduce the incredible

tragedies that occur when a country is not prepared to look after its citizens."

The key to Development and Peace's strategy for more democracy is its partnerships with local organizations that work directly with the poor, said Wright.

"Many of those organizations are pastoral-led movements," she said. "The church is very involved with them. They are demanding justice."

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# Poet priest brings mystic sensibility to life

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

UPTERGROVE, ONT. (CCN) — Ordinary lives, however quiet or unnoticed, are a sequence of miracles, tragedies and triumphs. We all stumble into hell and are repeatedly resurrected into ultimate beauty.

But that's not the language of daily life. We talk about the weather, old times and how things have changed. We are dismayed by the news. We mutter about a narrow range of acceptable topics. But love, death, the communion of the saints, the Body of Christ, transcendence and eternity, redemption, resurrection — all of that is uncertain ground for cautious, ordinary pilgrims.

Which is why we need Rev. Pier Giorgio Di Cicco — priest, poet and essayist. Di Cicco lives inside the language of holy mysteries and understands daily life in terms of our common quest for transcendence.

"Before you're a saint, you have to become a mystic," Di Cicco tells me over fried eggs in his red brick rectory in the middle of farm country north of Lake Simcoe.

Di Cicco was Toronto's second poet laureate and held the post from 2004 to 2009. In addition to at least 20 volumes of poetry, he is the author of *Municipal Mind: Manifestos for the Creative City* — a thin volume of crystallized insights into the challenge of contemporary urban life.

Since the early 2000s he has consulted with municipal and regional governments across Canada and the United States, helping civil servants and politicians think about their jurisdictions as more than infrastructure, architecture, markets and regulations. He talks to planners, architects and geographers about what they do as a contribution to the culture of encounter.

He calls himself, "a creative cities exponent with a Gospel mandate underneath."

Di Cicco is rather proud of that bit about a Gospel mandate. With friends such as urban thinker Richard Florida, broadcasting mogul Moses Znaimer and former Toronto mayor David Crombie, Di Cicco has snuck his Gospel sensibility into conversations at the highest levels about how we live in cities.

In *Municipal Mind* Di Cicco urges civic leaders to fall in love.

"People who are not in love are irresponsible," he writes. "A town that is not in love with itself is irresponsible, and civically apt for mistakes. Responsibility is a cold duty. It inspires no one. A citizenry is incited to action by the eros of mutual care, by having a common object of love — their city."

If there's any irony in an urban thinker and poet living as resident priest at St. Columbkille Church in Uptergrove, Ont., Di Cicco doesn't acknowledge it. Surrounded by farm country about 140 kilometres north of downtown Toronto, he's more surprised to find that the area's Irish families have so easily accepted an Italian priest.

Born in Arezzo, an hour south of Florence, Italy, Di Cicco landed in Canada as a three-year-old in 1952, part of the great wave of post-war immigration. He grew up in Toronto, Montreal and Baltimore, Md., to tend bar and study literature at the University of Toronto, publishing poetry in chapbooks available in literary haunts near the campus. By 1978 the 29-year-old Di Cicco was not only an established voice in a generation of emerging poets, he was editor of a significant volume of Italian-Canadian poetry called *Roman Candles*.

We now take for granted that Canadian literature synthesizes the world. Our literary awards and

bestsellers' lists are dominated by names such as MG Vassanji, Austin Clarke, Rohinton Mistry, Yann Martel, Michael Ondaatje, Vincent Lam and Madeleine Thien. But in 1978, the business of



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

**POET PRIEST — Rev. Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, Toronto's poet laureate from 2004 - 09, calls himself "a creative cities exponent with a Gospel mandate underneath."**

English literature in Canada was largely a branch plant operation with its head office somewhere in England, but operating as an adjunct to the New York office. Di Cicco was one of the first to challenge that narrow triangle with a more global view.

And then he went away.

Di Cicco vacated his literary career in the 1980s to become an Augustinian monk. But life in the

monastery was in flux in those days and Di Cicco found himself out of tune with some of the changes. He left religious life, became an Archdiocese of Toronto diocesan priest and gradually rediscovered his lyric voice.

He also (at the age of 58) started playing trumpet, learning to improvise. A mouthpiece to keep his embouchure in shape sits in the middle of his kitchen table. In the front room of the rectory are a few of his 13 trumpets along with sheet music, LPs and unpacked boxes of books. He's only been in Uptergrove a couple of months and unpacking doesn't fit his routine.

Di Cicco's career may sound a bit too romantic for a respectable novel. Who could sell the idea of a jazz-musician, poet-priest who hobnobs with politi-

cians and academics on matters of urban philosophy while living in splendid isolation in Ontario's most famous haunted, country church? (That's right, Google "St. Columbkille in Uptergrove" and you will come up with ghost stories. "The Irish love that stuff," Di Cicco tells me.) But the reality of Di Cicco's life is tied down to the most ordinary experience of any parish priest.

A life dedicated to being with people as they face their ultimate destiny is behind his latest book of poetry, *My Life Without Me*. Available from Mansfield Press, these 60 poems face all manner of disembodied experience — from the onset of dementia to how our lives are absorbed into the Internet.

"I was never in my body, and I drifted through/others like wind through sheaves of wheat/in the exoskeleton of faith," he writes in "Lyric For The Soul's Confections."

Di Cicco can accept Alzheimer's with more equanimity than our culture's preference for the web. "The cyberworld is evacuating the physical world," he said.

He sees the empty streets of towns, villages and cities after 8 p.m. and wonders how we will ever know or experience the Body of Christ if we do not know ourselves as real people — humans who can only know themselves by knowing others. "The genius of casual encounters in the incarnate realm," are the only thing Di Cicco knows that can keep us human. As we lose our humanity, we lose Christ.

We now face "the anti-Christ in the guise of a microchip," Di Cicco told me. "We've been very naive and stupid about it."

"People still suppose that technology services them," he says and rolls his eyes. "We no longer access the web. We are the web."

His own solution is to offer up his struggles — his loneliness, his failing memory, his sense of being out of place in this world — to God. "When you offer it up to God, you shorten the grieving process," he said. "What you heal in yourself you heal in the Body of Christ."

## Phuc and her husband sought asylum in Canada

Continued from page 3

give my enemies. It wasn't easy, but I did it."

Phuc married Bui Huy Toan in 1992 and they were given permission to honeymoon in Moscow. When Phuc learned the flight would stop in Gander, Nfld., to refuel, she planned their escape.

The newlyweds got off the plane in Gander and sought political asylum. Later, Phuc became a Canadian citizen, gained honorary doctorates from six universities, and launched Kim Foundation International, a non-profit dedicated to helping child victims of war and violence. She also met a man who said he was partly to blame for the napalm attack, and personally forgave him.

"If that photograph was determined to follow me, I wanted to live a life of purpose with it, to find a way to help other children who had suffered," she said.

Her foundation helps build schools, hospitals, and orphanages as well as providing medicine and

wheelchairs to children in countries such as India, Uganda, and Tajikistan.

She praised the Archdiocese of Vancouver, the Christian Advocacy Society of Greater Vancouver, and Signal Hill, the partners behind the Focus on Life initiative, for their efforts in their communities.

"By encouraging young people to value themselves and to love and respect life and one another, you are helping to create a better world, a more joyful world."

The fundraiser was held to support the Value Project, training for teens to value themselves and each other through retreats and school activities, as well as future media efforts with medically accurate information about pregnancy and contact information for nearby crisis pregnancy centres.

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, said Phuc's story is a powerful example of forgiveness and transformation.

"We all have a mission to treasure, care for, and support the gift of human life," he said.

## Faith still a powerful personal force: poll

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — No matter how many times we hear that we live in a secular society, faith keeps popping up. An Angus Reid Institute Poll has found that a majority of Canadians don't just have a faith, they use it.

Fifty-nine per cent of Canadians told Angus Reid their faith is either "very important" or "quite important" to how they deal with major life challenges and problems. More than half, 52 per cent, say they apply their faith when thinking about public issues. A solid majority of 55 per cent say faith is important to how they conduct their day-to-day lives. A similar number, 54 per cent, say their personal identity — how they see themselves — is formed by faith.

Women were the most likely to confess the importance of faith to the pollsters. And faith is more important to Canadians as they get older. For women over the age of 55, more than two-thirds (69 per cent) said their faith is either "very" or "quite" important in dealing with major challenges and problems. For men between 18 and 34, 47 per cent said the same.

Rev. Murray Kuemper is not surprised and he is heartened by

the idea that people know who they are, what they think and how they will act because of faith.

"Faith and active engagement in faith certainly makes a difference in terms of the issues that are then spoken about," said the St. Peter's Seminary lecturer in moral theology in London, Ont. "It shows that faith still has a place in the public discourse. People of faith certainly have and need to have an involvement in the public sphere."

The Angus Reid measure of faith comes from an online poll of 2,006 adults from coast to coast conducted between March 29 and April 3. The pollsters consider a sample this size accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Individual freedom, the freedom to choose, remains a strong value for Canadians when it comes to the two issues most often associated with religious conviction — abortion and euthanasia. Four out of five Canadians (79 per cent) chose "people's freedom to choose" over "the value of preserving life," when asked which is the highest priority.

Only among the most religiously committed — one-fifth of Canadians — did a slim majority of 56 per cent choose life over the freedom to choose.

"They don't want to tell other people what to do," said Kuemper. "Very few of us want to tell people what to do. I don't want to tell people what to do."

But day-to-day experience and other polling data tells Kuemper large numbers of Canadians actually believe there should be some restrictions on abortion. A February 2016 poll by Ipsos found 43 per cent of Canadians favoured some restriction on abortion, versus 57 per cent who said it came down solely to a woman's right to choose.

"If people could get the courage to actually speak from their convictions, we might be looking at some different numbers," he said. The poll also revealed Canadians want nuance in how they speak about right and wrong. On the one hand, two-thirds of Canadians (68 per cent) say that "what is right and wrong depends on the circumstances" versus just 32 per cent who think "things are almost always either right or wrong."

But that doesn't mean Canadians are moral relativists who reject objective moral law. A similar two-thirds choose the statement "there are universal rights and wrongs that apply to the whole human race" over "answers to moral questions will be different for different cultures and people."

# St. Benedict understood the gift of listening

By Paul Paproski, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — The ability to listen to one another has failed so miserably today that society has become divisive and polarized, Abbot Elias Lorenzo, OSB, of St. Mary’s Abbey, New Jersey, told the annual retreat at St. Peter’s Abbey. The gift of listening was understood by St. Benedict, who founded the Order of St. Benedict more than 1,500 years ago, as building community life.

St. Benedict expressed his knowledge of community life in an administrative and spiritual guide known as the Rule of Benedict. The Rule illustrates both St. Benedict’s knowledge of Scripture and his profound love for the word of God that shaped his way of thinking and living. The Rule begins with the word “listen.” The first sentence reads: “Listen carefully, my son, to the master’s instructions and attend to them with the ear of your heart.”

It is no coincidence that St. Benedict chose the word “listen” to begin the Rule, the abbot said. The word “listen” appears 23 times in the Rule, urging the monk to make listening the foundation of his monastic vocation. A monk, St. Benedict insisted, is a person who listens to the Word of God, to God, to the abbot and his brothers.

References to the word “listen” are found throughout the Gospels, Lorenzo said. The Gospel of Mark begins with John the Baptist exhorting everyone to prepare for the one who will be coming soon. The

word “listen” is emphasized in the story of the transfiguration: “This is my beloved son . . . listen to him” (Mt 17:5; Lk 9:35; Mk 9:7).

Mary, in the story of the wedding feast of Cana, tells the servants to “do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). The Gospels emphasize that listening is not a passive thing. Listening is about both hearing and acting. Listening and doing are one and the same, Lorenzo said.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12), Jesus brings the ideas of listening and acting together. He affirms this notion of action throughout his parables. In the parable of the two foundations, Jesus speaks of a person who builds his house on a solid foundation as being someone who both listens and acts on his words. The person who does not act on his words is like someone who builds his house on a weak foundation that is easily destroyed when a storm comes (Luke 6:46-49).

The notion of listening and acting is expressed in prophetic literature where the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel eat God’s words. Jeremiah eats God’s words and they became the source of his joy (Jeremiah 15:16). Ezekiel eats a scroll with writing on both sides. The scroll tastes like honey and it fills his stomach (Ezekiel 3:1-11). The prophet hears what the Lord tells him and expresses the word through the heart, Lorenzo commented.

“Filling the stomach with the word really means filling the heart with the word. In both texts we

have the idea of hearing and receiving. Especially in the Old Testament, the heart is the centre of the human person. It is the seat of every emotion, thought and deed. These words come out as actions.”

Jesus says it is from the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. Filling the heart with the word of God places all the emotions, thoughts and actions under the influence of the word of God. Jesus expressed the mandate to hear and act through his obedience to God the Father. Obedience to the Father was food for Jesus. The obedience of Jesus nourished him and gave him the strength and energy to live, act and speak for the Father. The prophets, likewise, used the word of God for nourishment. The prophet draws energy from the Word of God.

“The prophet speaks, eats and fills his heart, is transformed and is taken hold of by God’s word. The prophet is under the influence and control of the Word of God,” Lorenzo said. When Jesus was tempted in the desert, he said, “One does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4).

Mary was an example of someone who filled her heart with the Word of God. The Gospel of Luke speaks of Mary as one who “pondered” after being greeted with an incredible task (Luke 1:29). She kept these inconceivable things she heard in her heart and pondered them.

Like Mary, there are many things in life we do not understand, but we cannot forget. Instead, we should treasure them in our hearts, marvel at them and ponder them again and again. This disposition centred in trust will help us to appreciate the mystery of human life and the mystery of monastic life, for many things are beyond human comprehension and the acceptance of this is great wisdom, Lorenzo commented.

The gift of listening was expressed by Mary, the sister of Martha. While Martha was distracted by household tasks, her sister sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to him (Luke 10:38-42). John the Baptist was a prophet who listened to Jesus and stood with him. Sitting or standing does not matter. What matters is closeness, for the mark of discipleship is being with Jesus. Nearness to the Son of God enables one to listen. One who is away from Jesus is not in a position to listen to him. Both John the Baptist and Mary listened to Jesus because they were close to him.

“All of this is true of the monk. The monk hears the word, receives it in his heart and fills his heart with it. We should allow ourselves to be shaped and transformed by this word. The Word is the source of all strength and energy. We are guided by the Word of God and experience joy because our hearts are filled with the Word of God.”



Derrick Kunz

## Students learn all aspects of the mass

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — The Archdiocesan Youth Liturgical Leadership graduated its second largest class on May 18. Graduates planned and participated in all aspects of the graduation mass which was held at Holy Trinity Parish.

The program is in its 16th year and, according to Miles Meyers, Catholic Education co-ordinator, the 150 Grade 6 students from 11 Catholic elementary schools is the

second largest class they have had since the program’s inception.

“They learn how to prepare a mass and how to prepare a prayer service at their school and how to prepare prayers for the school intercom.”

The students learn all the parts of the mass, act as servers, perform the readings and are taught how to greet people entering the church. At the graduation mass students greeted and welcomed guests and parishioners as they entered the

church and asked if they wished to bless themselves with holy water from a fountain by the entrance.

Meyers said the program is geared toward Grade 6 students because they then have two more years of elementary school where they can use what they have learned for the benefit of their school and carry that experience with them to high school.

“We give them a really good experience of church, they become comfortable within the church, and so they get excited about being at church, being able to help the priest or being able to do liturgical things at their own school for the two last years of their time there. A lot of them will go on and become members of the liturgy groups in high school.”

Holy Trinity pastor Rev. Ron Andree, who teaches in the program, celebrated the graduation mass. He told the graduates that the mass and graduation exercises are not the end, and he expects they will continue to grow in faith.

Andree’s homily was about the Easter story and the fact that it was still Easter time. He broke the story into the first part of Easter, which is about the passion and death of Christ, and the second part about Christ’s resurrection. Andree reminded graduates that Christ promised his disciples that he would be with them until the end of time.

“Christ is alive and still lives with us in the form of the eucharist, which is celebrated every day in the mass,” said Andree.



Diane Cote

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY —** Members of the Catholic Women’s League of St. John Bosco Parish put hammers and saws to work as part of their participation in a two-day Habitat for Humanity group build at triplexes under construction in Saskatoon. The local CWL council decided to take on this project to expand the work and profile of the CWL in the parish and to respond to the St. John Bosco Parish mission: “Love God, Love Our Neighbour, Make Disciples.” Participation in the project served to support those beyond the community and to strengthen relationships within the parish.

**CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK —** To mark Catholic Education Week students from across the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools division gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Family May 24 to hear Sister Clare Fitzgerald, SSND, who spoke about Catholic education in the Pope Francis era and how learning that God loves you is a key part of Catholic education. She described how Catholic education teaches that life is a journey home to God, that we are all called to be saints, and that service to others is an important aspect of this journey. Fitzgerald has taught at all levels of education and served as the founding director of the Catholic Leadership Program at Boston College. In 1994, she received the William H. Sadlier Dinger Award for contributions to Catholic education and leadership and, in 1998, received the C. Albert Koop Award for her commitment for excellence and scholarship in the training of Catholic education leaders.

## St. Paul’s Hospital advances patient care

By Sandhya Padmanabh

SASKATOON — Together with donors and the community, St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation (SPHF) raised \$5,279,345 in 2016 to support state-of-the art equipment advancements and education and training at the Catholic hospital in Saskatoon.

Details of \$3,474,154 in allocations were presented at the St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation Annual General Meeting on April 27. The foundation celebrated the completion of \$4.9 million in fundraising to make St. Paul’s home to the most advanced hospital operating theatres in Saskatchewan.

The grand opening of the hospital’s new David and Karen Holst Family Foundation SPECT-CT was also celebrated this year, bringing the most advanced medical imaging technologies to patients.

Other highlights included rais-

ing funds for a Nitisanak Navigator, a pilot project for an Emergency Room Navigator to provide individualized patient support and develop specialized care plans based on the unique needs of indigenous patients, their families and the community.

During the AGM, SPHF also appointed officers to its volunteer board of directors: Chris Boychuk (chair), Neil Weber (vice-chair), John Agioritis (past chair), Darlene Cooper (secretary), and Alan Koop (treasurer). Members of the board are Bob Kirkpatrick (chair), Colleen Cameron-Bergan, Arlene Jorgenson, Dr. Arne Paus-Jenssen, Mercedes Montgomery, Jean Morrison (SPH president and CEO), Dr. Vivian Walker, and new inductees Candace Wasacase-Lafferty and Shari Watson.

St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation has allocated more than \$59,953,000 to the hospital since it was formed in 1982.

# Fatima message highlighted at anniversary vigil

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The message of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children was highlighted May 12 - 13 in Saskatoon, marking the 100th anniversary of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s first appearance in the Cova da Iria, Portugal.

Hundreds attended a candle-light vigil and outdoor procession at Holy Family Cathedral May 12 led by diocesan administrator Kevin McGee and Deacon Donat Davatz, who gave the homily. Davatz described the continuing need to hear the prophetic message of Our Lady of Fatima, who asked for “penance, conversion of sinners, and praying of the rosary in order to obtain peace for the world.”

On May 13, the anniversary date itself, some 650 attended a Saturday afternoon mass at St. Mary’s Parish in Saskatoon, concelebrated by McGee and Rev. Ciro Perez, with participation from parishes, Catholic organizations, cultural groups, the Catholic Women’s League and the Knights of Columbus. Prayers written by students from Greater Saskatoon

Catholic Schools were brought forward during the prayers of intention and placed near the altar.

At both celebrations, participants heard the story of Our Lady of Fatima summarized by event organizer Jennifer Nunes:

“On May 13, 1917, while tending their flock of sheep in a small Portuguese village called Fatima, three shepherd children — Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta — were startled by a flash of light from the heavens that they believed to be lightning coming from a clear sky. Moments later their fears were subdued by the appearance of ‘a lady dressed all in white, more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light, clear and stronger than a crystal glass filled with the most sparkling water.’” Nunes recounted.

Six times in the next six months, the “beautiful and tender lady” appeared to Lucia (the eldest, aged 10) and her two younger cousins — Jacinta, seven, and Francisco, eight.

“On the last of the visits — Oct. 13, 1917, in the presence of 80,000 - 100,000 pilgrims — she performed the miracle of the sun so that all might believe what the chil-

dren had seen and heard. During this last visit in the Cova de Iria, the lady revealed herself as the Lady of the Most Holy Rosary.”

A basilica and chapel have been built in Fatima, and millions of pilgrims from every corner of the globe have visited the sanctuary, and “time after time Our Lady has come to the aide of those who ask for her intercessions,” she said, noting that Pope John Paul II attributed his survival from an assassination attempt to the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima: “The bullet which struck Pope John Paul II was given to the sanctuary and now permanently resides within the gold crown of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima.”

The 100th anniversary was celebrated by Pope Francis in Fatima, Portugal, and included the canonization of the two youngest children: St. Jacinta Marto, who died in 1920 at the age of nine, and St. Francisco Marto, who died in 1919 at the age of 10. Lucia Santos grew up to become a Carmelite sister who died in 2005 at the age of 97.

Three local children participating in the Saskatoon celebrations

were dressed as the children to whom Mary appeared: Jacinta Leyne as St. Jacinta Marto, Christopher Nunes as St. Francisco Marto, and Ana Coghlan as Servant of God Lucia dos Santos.

A group of other children were dressed as angels for the anniversary mass, which included a children’s liturgy, which was followed by a procession through Saskatoon’s core neighbourhood.

McGee invited the children to hear and follow Our Lady’s message — to not be afraid and “to pray for those who need it.”

The anniversary mass included crowning the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, with Maria Silveira (who donated the statue to the parish many years ago after a visit to Fatima) brought up the crown, along with her daughter Eduina Nunes, and her granddaughter Jennifer Nunes carrying a great-grandchild.

McGee stressed that the message of Fatima is not one of doom, but an invitation to turn back to the mercy of God.

“Mary’s apparition is first and foremost the revelation of God’s mercy,” McGee said. “Mary reveals to the children that their

prayers, especially their praying of the rosary, and by acts of reparation, (they) can indeed help bring conversion into the hearts of others, so that others will know the mercy of God in his Son.”

He noted that the words of Our Lady in the first apparition are a challenge to all of us: “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the suffering he wills to send you as an act of reparation for the conversion of sinners?”

McGee continued: “Francisco was eight, Jacinta was seven, Lucia was 10 — still at this very young age, these children responded whole-heartedly to the call, they allowed God to work through their lives in order that others would know God’s mercy. It all begins with saying yes.”

We are also challenged to be open to God’s will as the children were, and as Mary herself was, said McGee. The message of Fatima invites us to love others unconditionally “and to participate in the mission of Jesus Christ.”

McGee noted that the name Fatima evokes the memory of one

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# Mentors help couples make decisions about the future

Continued from page 3

nearest centre by going to MarriageMentoringInitiative.com and plugging in their postal code or city.

“If there isn’t a centre nearby, directions are on the website for a church to get set up to train marriage mentors,” Trickett says.

The marriage mentoring centre is generally located at a church, but the program is not limited to church people. It is open to all couples, both church and not-church. The conversational sessions can take place at home, at the coffee shop, or wherever the participants feel most comfortable.

There are several marriage mentoring centres in Saskatoon, each one with trained mentors available. They are part of the Saskatoon Marriage Network, which recently hosted a Weekend of Impact with Dr. Dave and Donalyn Currie, founder and president of Doing Family Right. Local churches of a number of denominations were involved, including the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

“We’re just coming off the conference where we had lots of opportunity to learn about marriage,” Trickett says. “However, information by itself rarely changes a person. It’s relationships and habits built that do. In a mentoring relationship, mentors help couples make decisions about where they want to go in the future, then help them do it.”

Training mentor couples is a big part of the Marriage Mentoring Initiative. Trickett says mentor couples are people who have good and stable marriages. They also have a heart for others, a desire to listen, a willingness to share their life and their story, and 90 minutes a month for a conver-

sation with another couple.

“They don’t have to be perfect, just willing to share their story. What’s interesting is that mentor couples are often the ones who grow the most as they talk about the pertinent issues and topics with the couple they’re mentoring.

Marriage mentoring isn’t a Bible study, he adds; the questions are non-threatening. “The most important take-away is that we don’t want any married couple to feel like they’re alone.

“It is also not crisis counselling. The marriage mentoring program is not for marriage where adultery, addictions or abuse exist. If these are issues, proper counselling is needed.”

On the other hand, he says, a marriage need not be in trouble to benefit from mentoring. Any marriage can become better.

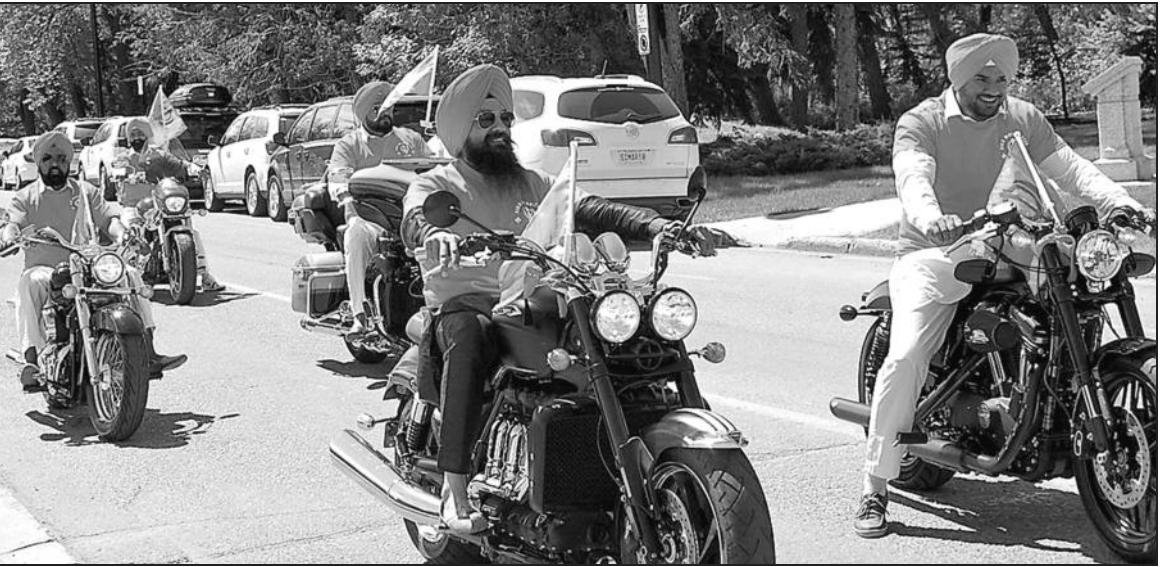
“Most people today still want to get married, and still plan on having a great marriage, but they don’t always know how to make that happen. That’s why we need people to come alongside us.

“Great marriages have a better chance of producing great families. Great marriages create stability which is good for children, and generally results in longer life for the couple.”

The Marriage Mentoring Initiative regularly holds mentor training events for couples who would like to become mentors. For information on the next training session, visit [www.saskatoon-marriagenetwork.ca](http://www.saskatoon-marriagenetwork.ca) or contact Trickett at [brent@familylifecanada.com](mailto:brent@familylifecanada.com).

The cost for the mentoring program? Sixty to 90 minutes of time out of each month for one year — a bargain no matter how you look at it.

*This article previously appeared in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix.*



Frank Flegel

**PARADE —** Sikhs in Regina took to the streets May 20, parading from their Gurudwara (temple) to the legislative building grounds, celebrating the festival of Vaisakhi, which marks the founding of the Sikh community. Sikh men riding Harley Davidsons occasionally gunned their engines to attract attention.

# Sikhs celebrate festival of Vaisakhi

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Sikhs in Regina took to the streets May 20, parading from their Gurudwara (temple) to the legislative building grounds. Regina City Police vehicles with lights flashing blocked side streets as the parade made its way down Regina Avenue, the main road to the airport, then briefly onto Albert Street, a main north/south artery before entering the legislative building grounds. A secondary road to the grounds had to be used, as the main entrance road is undergoing reconstruction.

This wasn’t another demonstration against government policy, but a celebration of the Sikh festival of Vaisakhi. It celebrates the founding of the Sikh community (the Khalsa). It is marked by people in festive garments, singing, dancing, and food.

A colourful trailer contained male singers and drummers surrounding the Sikh holy book *Guru Granth Sahib*, the central religious

scripture. Loudspeakers carried the voices of female singers. A small troop of RCMP officers in red serge and one wearing a turban rather than the traditional Stetson hat escorted the trailer.

Several Sikh men riding Harley Davidson bikes preceded the trailer, occasionally roaring their engines and attracting attention to that part of the parade. Children carried a large banner promoting their Punjabi school and a group of adults supported another large banner promoting basic Sikh beliefs and practices. Lines of people, all wearing colourful costume — men in turbans, women in graceful, flowing gowns — walked on the sidewalks in front of the legislative building and greeted the parade as it entered the grounds.

The parade itself was made up mostly of people in costume, many carrying banners and flags.

Several food tents were set up east of the legislature and all food and cold drinks were offered free of charge. Several Sikh men

roamed the grounds and offered food and bottled fruit drinks to anyone attending the celebration, bystanders and participants alike. Sharing is one of Sikhism’s tenets.

There were no formal speeches or greetings; it was simply party time for any and all who wandered around the grounds on a warm and sunny spring day. Several people of note, however, were taking part in the festivities: Interim Saskatchewan NDP Opposition Leader Trent Wotherspoon, member of Parliament and Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale, and Senator Pana Merchant with husband Tony were among the politicians mingling with the crowd.

According to the Internet, Sikhism is the ninth largest monotheistic religion in the world. Regina’s Sikh community has grown exponentially over the years to the point that their community is large and active enough to successfully carry out a large celebration and parade. This year’s effort was only their second annual celebration.

# ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ a scary re-spin of Genesis

By Jeffrey Salkin  
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If you’re looking for me these days, you can find me sitting in front of my TV, binge-watching *The Handmaid’s Tale*, which has just been released on Hulu.

I cannot break away.

*The Handmaid’s Tale* is an adaptation of the 1985 novel by Margaret Atwood.

It is a dystopian story, set in a near-future America.

Right-wing fundamentalists have staged a coup in the United States and have established the tyrannical, theocratic Republic of Gilead (note the biblical name).

The poisoning of the environment has resulted in a dramatic drop in fertility.

The regime has, therefore, enslaved fertile women, forcing them to become slaves within privileged households. They are the handmaids (there are other classes of oppressed women as well).

The handmaids have lost their names; instead, their names have become the patronymic of the men that they serve. So, Offred is the property “of Fred.”

Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin is the spiritual leader of Temple Solel in Hollywood, Fla. He writes the “Martini Judaism” column for RNS.



George Kraychyk/Hulu

**THE HANDMAID’S TALE** — Alexis Bledel stars in the 10-episode television series based on Margaret Atwood’s book *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

Because the elite women are infertile, the handmaids must undergo a monthly impregnation ceremony with their commanders in order to bear a child for the commander and his wife.

It doesn’t take a graduate degree in political science to see *The Handmaid’s Tale* as a warning about the dangers of religious fundamentalism and totalitarian government.

Some see it as a prophetic outcry against the assault on women’s health care and the removal of women’s rights, especially at the

hands of those who would do so in the name of religion — both in the United States and in Israel.

Yes, *The Handmaid’s Tale* is about fascism and misogyny.

But it is about far more than that.

*The Handmaid’s Tale* is a dark midrash (or commentary) on the patriarchal tales of Genesis.

I have been teaching Torah for almost four decades. I have edited and written several books on the Bible (consider my latest, the *JPS B’nai Mitzvah Torah Commentary*, which just came out).

## Small things reap the biggest harvests

### Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



There is a propensity to forget the gifts we’ve been given from one birthday or Christmas to the next. Whatever it was for which we simply couldn’t wait can be long forgotten in a matter of weeks, yet, how someone made us feel years earlier tends never to be forgotten. The late Maya Angelou said it best: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

We tend not to forget the negative things people say to us. It is even easy to forget small acts of kindness shown to us and instead hang on to acts of cruelty. Think of the tragedies around the world — the Manchester massacre in England, for example, will eventually have its share of personal heroic stories. What will remain forever cemented in our minds, however, will be the horror felt for those involved in the tragedy.

I’m a high school teacher

Saretsky is a teacher and chaplain at Holy Cross High School in Saskatoon. He and his wife, Norma, have two children, Nathan and Jenna.

chaplain. One of the best parts of my position is visiting with a student or groups of students and listening to the stories they share about their lives. Not long ago I had a conversation with a group of Grade 12 students, and they declared that the high school experience, whether positive or negative, will leave an indelible mark on them, perhaps more so than experiences at any other juncture in life. For most of them the experience will be positive. For others, the high school experience will be best forgotten.

I asked my visitors how they would want to be remembered, challenging them to think and consider carefully, because their last word, action, behaviour, and treatment of someone else will not easily be forgotten.

In the 1990 movie *Flatliners*, five medical students experiment with medically induced death (“flatlining”) in order to discover what is beyond life. After some time in “death,” they are resuscitated. This experiment wasn’t positive as they discovered the degree of damage their cruelty had on others earlier in their younger lives. Those experiences haunt them with regret, and after being resuscitated, the medical

students try, in vain, to repair the past damage with those they hurt. Unfortunately their efforts weren’t well-received.

There are lessons in how our small acts of cruelty can leave their effects long after the events have passed. Jesus taught that the kingdom is like a mustard seed. In Jesus’ time the mustard seed was considered the smallest of seeds, yet this small seed could produce a large tree. In other words, the small, seemingly unimportant things, in the long run, are the big things.

We are urged to think big and to be careless about small things played out on the smaller stage of our personal lives — in our families, in our schools, in our workplaces and even in our neighbourhoods. We can even delude ourselves into thinking that what we do and say now should have little to no consequence to anyone later on, because we can excuse ourselves as being young and immature.

The little insults, the betrayals, the little acts of selfishness — these are deemed to be insignificant. But in the end, the only thing we may remember from a given year is some small mustard seed of cruelty that was sown.

Planting small seeds of kindness and acceptance, compassion and gentleness, grow the biggest trees and produce the most life-protecting shade. I challenged my students to be careful in the kinds of seeds they plant today, and to think about the kind of harvest they expect to reap in the years ahead. Perhaps this is a lesson for all of us to take seriously.

And, with all that, I am embarrassed that I had not seen — in a deep way — the utter dysfunction that lies beneath the surface of the patriarchal stories.

The whole barrenness/fertility thing. The whole idea that if God favours it, God would open your womb (which is the standard greeting in *The Handmaid’s Tale* — “May God open . . .”)

The whole “your wife is infertile, so use the help” thing.

In biblical times, it was legitimate to use a handmaid as a surrogate mother, particularly if the wife was infertile.

Sometimes Genesis is clear about the pain and humiliation this system could produce.

Sarah was angry and threatened by the presence of the nubile Hagar, pregnant with her husband’s child.

Out Hagar goes — not once, but twice.

The second time, with the kid, Ishmael.

But, sometimes the Bible is a little bit more reticent about how the participants in this domestic drama must have felt.

For example: The handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah bear children for the matriarchs Leah and Rachel.

Any word — in the Bible, midrash and classic commentaries — about how Bilhah and Zilpah must have felt about that arrangement?

If there is any, I haven’t seen it.

And, as for any shoutout to Bilhah and Zilpah in the prayer that mentions the matriarchs — zilch, or in Hebrew “efes.”

Another example: When Pharaoh’s daughter finds and adopts the infant Moses, she hires Yocheved, the biological mother of Moses, to nurse the foundling.

Anything in classical Jewish literature about how Yocheved felt at having her child torn away from her — on a daily basis?

I would welcome such comments. It would make the whole thing seem much more real.

Some years ago, Phyllis Trible

wrote “Texts of Terror,” about certain biblical stories, in which women are the victims of abuse and violence.

But, really, almost every story about a biblical woman — with notable, laudable exceptions — is a text of terror.

Ever pay close attention to the reading of Esther during the raucous holiday of Purim?

It’s about how a jackass of a king, Ahasuerus, basically sexually abuses one wife, Vashti, throws her out of the palace (whatever happens to her?) and then takes a Jewish woman into his harem.

Yeah, yeah, I know what you are saying: You have to put these stories into their ancient Middle Eastern context.

I have been doing that for decades. I have read the most authoritative books by the world’s most erudite biblical scholars.

And yet, what did it take to finally open my eyes to the violence that has always existed in the white spaces between the black letters of the Torah scroll?

Right. A show on Hulu.

Because, only when I saw how the Genesis stories would translate into our time, or the near future, did I really get it.

Remember that old commercial for Mennen Skin Bracer, in which the (much younger) John Goodman says: “Thanks. I needed that.”

Sometimes you need a textual slap in the face — to see what was there all along.

This is precisely why we need feminist biblical criticism, new commentaries, new midrashim, new ways of viewing the texts.

Perhaps the entire purpose of these stories is to warn us that this is not the way, that if you put pain into a family system, it can only resurface over the centuries.

Perhaps these stories really are the primal trauma of the Jewish people.

Which is precisely why you need to see *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

It’s about us — and about the stories we tell.

## Many cultures participated

Continued from page 7

of the daughters of Mohammad who was named Fatima, which means shining one. “We are called to have great love and respect for our Muslim brothers and sisters and people of all faiths,” he said.

He also pointed out that in different places and in different centuries Mary has appeared arrayed in the dress and customs of other cultures; for instance, as Our Lady of Guadalupe, she appeared as an indigenous woman and left her image on the tilma of St. Juan Diego, a humble indigenous man. Our Lady of Guadalupe is a reminder “to build and strengthen our relationships with our First Nations brothers and sisters” as part of the “conversion call to open our hearts to all,” said McGee.

“May the message of Our Lady of Fatima, rooted in the Gospel call of conversion, inspire and direct us and guide us ever

more deeply; may we learn to let go of the prejudices and judgments and fears that separate us so that with the help of Our Lady, we may be artisans and workers of peace; and through the intercession of St. Jacinta and St. Francisco and their cousin Lucia may we always be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ which proclaims the good news of the mercy of God.”

The outdoor procession following mass included representatives of many cultures from around the world that honour Mary walking together and praying the rosary. Many were carrying national flags and banners, others were wearing traditional clothing. The procession also included representatives of parishes and schools, the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, the Knights of Columbus and CWL councils.

A social gathering in the hall included a potluck lunch and entertainment representing many different countries and cultures.

# Tribeca: a spotlight on 20th century’s first genocide

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Among the strong documentaries presented by the Tribeca film festival, about which more next month, one especially stood out. *Intent to Destroy* by award-winning director Joe Berlinger is both a masterful look at the making of the period romantic drama *The Promise*, set during the Armenian genocide, which began in 1915, and a deep exploration of the issues surrounding this seminal wartime tragedy and its aftermath, which Turkish authorities still adamantly deny was a genocide. Indeed Turkey has actively worked to suppress any such internal or international recognition, including in Hollywood movies. That concerted manipulation of history is suggested by the documentary’s subtitle, “Death, Denial & Depiction,” and its dedication to “the estimated 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide, and to all victims of mass slaughter around the world. May their suffering never be forgotten.”

Intent to Destroy

(U.S. 2017)

The Promise

(U.S./Spain 2016)

The title is taken from the wording of the 1948 UN Convention on the “Prevention and Punishment of Genocide” which defines “genocide” (a legal term coined by Raphael Lemkin) as “acts committed *with intent to destroy*, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” The two million Christian Armenians living in what was then the Ottoman Empire at the time of the First World War certainly fit that description. Beyond another purely historical investigation of what happened, what makes Berlinger’s work so compelling is its cinematic approach. As he explains: “The fact that a film like *The Promise* was finally being made gave me the unique position of both examining the appalling and intricate history of the Armenian Genocide along with Turkey’s manoeuvres to control the narrative, while also presenting the unfolding contemporary drama of bringing this long-ignored chapter of human cruelty to the big screen, providing the documentary with a present-tense feel to this deep dive into contested history.”

*Intent to Destroy* alternates between a penetrating analysis of that historical narrative — beginning and ending with moving testimony from an elderly genocide survivor — and a candid camera behind-the-scenes observation of the process of making *The Promise*, an expensive international production directed and co-written by Terry George (*Hotel Rwanda*) and financed by the late Armenian-American billionaire Kirk Kerkorian’s Survival Pictures. Given Turkey’s hostility to any film on the subject, that independent source of funds was obviously key to getting the 72-day shoot off the ground with locations in Portugal, Spain and Malta. Symbolically significant, the first read through of the script for *The Promise* took place on April 24, 2015, the 100th anniversary of the start of the genocide. Able to embed with the crew of *The Promise*, Berlinger’s team had remarkable access to the filming as we see the setup of the early scenes when the protagonist, the small-town Armenian apothecary Mikael Boghosian, comes to Constantinople (Istanbul) to pursue medical studies. Armenians and other Christian minorities within the Ottoman Empire had been viewed with suspicion even before the genocide. (The Armenian nation had been the first, before Rome and Byzantium, to embrace Christianity as an official religion.) Indeed there had been massacres of Armenian “infidels” in the 19th century. The outbreak of the First World War, in which the Ottomans sided with Germany and the axis powers, intensified that situation through an upsurge of pan-Turkish nationalism in which Enver Pasha, a leader of the Young Turks revolution, was a military driving force. Decisions were taken that amounted to ethnic cleansing. Those not killed as Armenian villages were attacked and destroyed were deported en masse into the desert toward Syria and Iraq. It was a death march for many. A German soldier and medic, Armin Wegner, courageously took forbidden photos documenting this genocidal policy. (Berlinger also inserts several striking images of the current perilous refugee exodus from the Middle East toward Turkey and Europe as a reminder of millions caught up in today’s civil wars, forced to leave their



Gerald Schmitz

**WORLD PREMIERE** — The Tribeca world premiere panel on *Intent to Destroy* took place April 25, 2017, with Armenian actor Eric Bogosian and director Joe Berlinger. *Intent to Destroy*, by award-winning director Joe Berlinger, is both a masterful look at the making of the period romantic drama *The Promise*, set during the Armenian genocide which began in 1915, and a deep exploration of the issues surrounding this seminal wartime tragedy and its aftermath.

homes and sometimes dying en route.) The genocide was not a secret to the outside world. There were numerous articles on it in major newspapers like The New York Times. But the U.S. never declared war on Turkey, and as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated by war’s end, the page was turned on its crimes against humanity. The modern Turkish state would become an ally of the West and later a member of NATO. The geopolitics of that strategic alliance were a factor in killing movie projects showing the genocide. A key scene in *The Promise* is of the desperate stand made by Armenian deportees on the mountain of Musa Dagh. In the mid-1930s a Hollywood screen adaptation of the novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* was announced but Turkish pressure on the U.S. State Department succeeded in getting MGM boss Louis B. Mayer to scrap the project. (An eponymous low-budget 1982 movie was little seen.) Berlinger also has Canadian-Armenian director Atom Egoyan relate the many difficulties and threats encountered in the making and distribution of his 2002 drama *Ararat*. Berlinger mentions a 2006 hour-long television documentary, “The Armenian Genocide,” broadcast on PBS, which attempted to give a “balanced” perspective. He also gives some time to several contrarian historians who accept that millions died, including Muslims, during the war but dispute that there was an organized genocide. Still, the overwhelming burden of evidence points to genocidal intent, as documented in a 2006 letter to Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Erdogan from the International Association of Genocide Scholars. Unlike countries including Canada, the European Parliament and the Catholic Church, the U.S. federal government still avoids using the term “genocide” out of deference to ties with Turkey. Indeed after making outspoken references, the U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, was dismissed by the Bush administration in 2006. (Not mentioned by the Berlinger documentary is that Israel also does not officially recognize the genocide.) Evans was part of a panel that followed the Tribeca world pre-

miere screening on April 25, moderated by Sarah Whitson of Human Rights Watch, that included Berlinger, Armenian-American actor Eric Bogosian, historian Peter Balakian, *The Promise* producer Carla Garabedian, and Eric Esrailian representing the Kirk Kerkorian Foundation which is supporting creation of The Promise Institute of Human Rights in the UCLA School of Law. History shows that denial and silence are an invitation to impunity. Remember what Hitler infamously said before invading Poland in 1939: “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?” In the words of Bogosian: “The reason we must memorialize and understand the genocide is that anonymous death compounds the tragedy.” Berlinger has observed that, “history forgotten is often history repeated,” seeing “an even greater relevance in this Donald Trump alternative-facts era because of the film’s themes of the obfuscation of truth, freedom of speech and xenophobia.” Evans put it pointedly during the panel: “The denial of the Armenian genocide is the worst case of ‘alternative facts’ in the last 100 years.”

\* \* \*

How does Terry George’s fictionalized drama *The Promise* (<http://www.survivalpictures.org/the-promise/>) measure up? The main elements of the story are as follows. In the village of Siroun, Mikael Boghosian (Oscar Isaac) is betrothed to Maral (Angela Sarafyan) before leaving to pursue studies in Constantinople where he stays with the family of a wealthy uncle and aunt. At the medical school Mikael is befriended by an influential Turkish Ottoman’s son, Emre Ogan (Marwan Kenzari), who helps him obtain a medical exemption from military service when war breaks out. But as latent anti-Armenian prejudice explodes into violence — they are regarded as a fifth column — the uncle is among the elite targeted for elimination. In the midst of this turmoil Mikael falls for the beautiful Armenian wife Ana Khesarian (Charlotte Le Bon) of intrepid Associated Press reporter Chris Myers (Christian Bale) who is determined to tell the world as atrocities spread.

The war swallows up Mikael and Emre. Mikael is pressed into slave labour, building the Berlin to Baghdad railway, but will escape and make his way back to Siroun where his mother, Marta (Shohreh Aghdashloo), forces him to marry Maral and hide out. Emre faces a grimmer fate for his role in an intervention by U.S. ambassador Morgenthau (James Cromwell) that saves Chris, who has been arrested and accused of being a spy. The fortunate Mikael is away when the genocide reaches Siroun. Coming upon the bodies of massacred villagers, he manages to save his mother and a niece. Eventually Mikael, Ana and Chris are reunited in a flight of survivors with a group of orphans. After a bloody but determined resistance at Musa Dagh they reach the coast where a French naval ship comes to the rescue. Mikael and others emigrate to America seeking a new life. Unfortunately the romantic melodrama of Mikael and Ana as lovers tends to take precedence over the terrible history which, despite the movie’s 133-minute runtime, often seems sketchy. Also, in another concession to Hollywoodization, everyone speaks English with varying accents. (There are two brief exceptions: a hostile German officer early on, and a closing wedding celebration where the Americanized Mikael speaks a line of Armenian.) That dispenses with subtitles, no doubt aiming for a mainstream anglophone audience, but takes away from the sense of authenticity and dramatic realism. Movie scenes don’t have the same visceral impact when one is reminded they are being staged. That said, *The Promise* is worth seeing. It has unduly suffered on ratings aggregator sites like imdb.com from organized campaigns to drive them down. A century on, recognizing the Armenian genocide on screen still hits a nerve.



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# Our real legacy is in the quality of our lives

## Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



I pull out the stained and dog-eared coiled booklet to use once again. It's a standby in my kitchen: a self-printed cookbook from my Aunt Helen. It's filled with beloved family recipes, clever quotes and personal anecdotes from her life. Many years ago, in a collaboration with her daughters, she produced this little

*Prather, BEd, MTh, is a teacher and facilitator in the areas of faith and spirituality. She was executive director at Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert, Alta., for 21 years and resides in Sherwood Park with her husband, Bob. They are blessed with four children and 10 grandchildren.*

gem and distributed it to the family. It has always had a special place in my heart and home but now that she has passed on, it stands as something more: it is part of her legacy to me. Its deepest significance lies not in the delicious recipes, handwritten notes and homespun wisdom that fill its pages, but in the life that shines through them. My aunt, faith-filled, compassionate, funny, generous and wise, was a blessing in my life and her memory, touches me each time I bring out the cookbook, bringing joy. That, more than the book itself, is her true legacy to me.

We all leave a legacy behind us, whether we intend to or not. Contrary to popular belief, however, it is not the wealth, property



Design Pics

**CONSIDERING OUR LEGACY — Legacy is fashioned throughout our lives, in the entirety of our lives. "It consists of our encounters with others and the quality of our relationships. It lies in the goodness others have known at our hands, the values they have seen us uphold, the attitudes we have expressed, and the generosity, compassion and warmth with which we have welcomed them."**

or valuables we bequeath to people. Our real legacy, as Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister points out in her book *The Gift of Years* is the quality of our lives.

People, she notes, will remember us for what we meant to them, how we influenced them and touched their hearts, for good or for ill. "What we have been will be stamped on the hearts of those who survive us for years to come," she writes, and I have found that to be true.

I have seen legacies both good and ill. I saw the good a few months ago when attending the funeral of a friend who had died suddenly and too young. His adult son gave the eulogy and instead of listing a string of his father's accomplishments, this young man spoke of his father's character. He described his dad's generosity and compassion, his fidelity through the years as husband, father and eventually grandfather, and of his deep faith that was translated into service. Speaking of these things and more, he ended by explaining how knowing his dad had made him into a better person, husband and father. That, I thought, is a true legacy!

I've also seen the second, the ill, and it is a heart-wrenching thing. Years ago I knew a man whose abusive behaviour toward his wife and children poisoned their home and left them all broken. When he died there was genuine grief, but it was intermingled with anger, resentment and pain. Years later, an adult son wept while describing specific episodes of violence he had experienced at the hands of his father. The wounds were still fresh and his father's legacy was a bitter one.

Legacy, we see, is fashioned throughout our lives, in the entirety of our lives. It consists of our encounters with others and the quality of our relationships. It lies in the goodness others have known at our hands, the values they have seen us uphold, the attitudes we have expressed, and the generosity, compassion and warmth with which we have welcomed them.

It is a sobering thought: profound questions will arise when we pause to consider our own legacy. What are we leaving behind in the hearts of others? How will we be remembered by those closest to us, by those we

have served? Is it a legacy of love or of pain? Have we been grace and blessing in people's lives or will we be remembered as trial and tribulation?

These are serious and perhaps hard questions we ask ourselves, especially if, in honesty, we judge our legacy to be a negative one. More likely, for most of us, it will be mixed. We long to be grace and blessing to people but, in truth, painfully, we acknowledge that our attitudes, actions and encounters have left wounds and scars for which we are sorry.

Fortunately, there is hope. Awareness is the first step in making changes and if, in considering our relationships, we recognize that our legacy is less than we want it to be, we have time to change it. It means, almost certainly, that we will need to do things differently. Scrutinizing our behaviour, we note where we have been wrong, judgmental or hard-hearted. Assessing relationships, we choose to let go of grudges, make amends where necessary, and seek reconciliation where possible. We critically consider our attitudes and prejudices, seeking genuine wisdom and gentleness of spirit in all we do. We pray for the grace to be grace in other peoples' lives and to have that be our legacy.

My Aunt Helen was never materially rich. She didn't have jewels, property or money to hand on to her descendants. Humbly, she offered what she had: great cooking, a hospitable and welcoming home, a warm and loving heart. In doing so, she gave us so much more. We were all the grateful recipients of a life well lived. Her generosity of spirit left us a legacy of love. What could be better than that?

We celebrate both Mother's and Father's Day this time of the year. Considering them, I feel challenged to reflect on the legacies I am leaving as mother and grandmother: gift and grace or wound and curse? I know I can always do better. Helen serves as my inspiration to be as life-giving as she was. When I think about it, what could be better or more important than that?

## 'Love command' is the guide to our lives

## Confessions of a Night Owl

Alisha Pomazon



Confession: When I was 19, I fell totally, completely, flat on my face in love.

You never forget your first love. It was at Campion College at the University of Regina. The course was Modern Jewish Thought and his name was Franz Rosenzweig. He was German, and Jewish, and oh so fascinating. He worked on Jewish-Christian relations. Franz opened up my world, and said everything my soul was searching for. He was perfect. He died in 1929.

Up until that point I was a pre-journalism major. After that point I became a religious studies major. Well, perhaps, that's not quite true, because I fell in love for the second time shortly thereafter. This time it was in the Classroom Building at the University of Regina while taking a course — Jesus of Nazareth. A particularly contentious argument between a guest speaker and a student was smoothed out by one of my favourite profs. The topic was Jesus in Islam, the guest speaker was Muslim, the student was enraged.

You see, Jesus holds a special place in Islam as a prophet and a messenger, and is mentioned more times in the Qur'an than any other person. My fellow student, however, did not want to hear this. She stood up, crying, pointing her fin-

ger at him, screaming "What do you know about my Jesus?"

I was shocked, and not a little terrified. The professor stepped in and, through his gentle yet firm handling of the situation, defused it and taught us all about the importance of respect for the other, for another religion's belief system, and how to speak to the person directly in front of us.

I will ever be grateful for that moment because it revealed to me what was to become my vocation. I remember thinking: "That will never happen again in my presence. I will do what needs to be done to stop that!" It was then that I made the decision to switch to a religious studies major.

I have devoted my life and my studies to knowing and teaching others about the importance of one's faith to oneself, others, and to the world in general. If Franz Rosenzweig was the content of my love, then religious studies was its form. If my prof was the example of what to do in the face of religious prejudice, then I was going to do that.

The story helped form my religious identity. The professor and priest, Rev. Don Bolen (now archbishop), taught us not only with his words, but with his presence. It was not just his words that helped us understand why it is important to treat other religious faiths with reverence, but also his presence, his admiration for the speaker in front of us, and his respect for the speaker's tradition and beliefs that clearly

showed how someone of one faith can love someone of another.

I have tried to model my teaching, my faith and my inter-faith journey on his as well.

I study "the neighbour" in biblical and Jewish texts. I study how "we" treat our neighbours, our "others," our world, and ourselves in accordance with Leviticus 19:18, Isaiah 49:6, and 1 Kings 8:41-43. These verses focus on the "love command," the concept of universal salvation, and the responsibility to foreigners in one's land and houses of worship. When taken together, these verses show us the shape of God's love for humanity and call us to not only recognize that love, but feel it ourselves.

The "love command" is the command to love. The verse that first states this command, Leviticus 19:18, however, is not simply just the command to love. It reads: "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love our neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD."

I have been studying this one verse for 13 years now, and every time I look at it I am struck by a new thought, a new image, a new possibility. But one thing always remains the same — this verse is God's command to love the other in the midst of difficulty with the other. It is about love, difficulty, the other, and God; and yet it is mostly about our own selves in the face of the other (this shows in the Hebrew — "you shall love your neighbour as you love yourself").

To me, this love is about respect — the respect I have for you because I have respect for myself, and because I have respect for myself, I have respect for you.

I try, with hope, anger, failed attempts, and woeful inadequacy to live this verse in my life and in my work. Loving is difficult, but it's why I do what I do. How about you?

*Pomazon is assistant professor in the Department of Religion and Culture at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.*

# God in Trinity is revealed as intimate relationship



## Liturgy and Life

Sylvain Lavoie, OMI

Some years ago I was privileged to tour a Hindu temple in Chennai, India, with a brother Oblate stationed there. Made of solid rock 1,500 years before Christ, this ornate structure towered pyramid-like at least 12 storeys into the heavens. It, and the devotional activity within its bowels, spoke strongly of humanity’s age-old quest to communicate with the deities, to communicate with God.

Trinity Sunday flips that around and speaks of how God communicated with us: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

Today we are invited to put our total faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, so we can enjoy even now that eternal life our Triune God wants to share with us.

All of the world’s great religions, as well as the more primitive religions, can be seen as humanity’s attempts to connect with a spiritual power in the heavens. The Muslims speak of God as Allah, who is a majestic absolute master. The Hindu religion seeks to arrive at Nirvana, an experience of nothingness. The Buddhist’s strive for Detachment is a final goal. The First Nations of our own country speak of a Creator who is Great Spirit. The Twelve Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous

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speaks of a Higher Power. The Judaism of Jesus’ time and even today uses only the consonants YHWH to indicate God, considering God’s name too holy to be spoken out loud.

Within this context of humanity wanting to reach up to God, the first reading presents us with a significant high point in the theology of Judaism. Moses is a great prophet, a friend of God, one we are told conversed with God in person. In this story Moses asks to see God’s face. God responds by telling him that no one can see the face of God and live.

God’s energy is too overpowering for a human to experience. However, God tells Moses that he will pass before him, and Moses will see God from behind. Thus even Moses, the great lawgiver, the dispenser of the Torah, can only catch a glimpse of God from behind, so to speak.

Turning to the gospel now, we find Nicodemus, a high-ranking Jew, an elder, well-versed in the teachings and tenets of the Jewish faith, conversing with Jesus. Though steeped in Judaism, he is restless; thirsting for more; searching; inquisitive; questioning. He comes to visit Jesus by night, for fear of his contemporaries, looking

Trinity Sunday	Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9 Psalm (Daniel 3) 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 John 3:16-18
June 11, 2017	

for answers to his unrest.

He has come to the right person, for in Jesus we do not have someone who like Moses only glimpses God. We have someone who in himself *is* God, is with the Father and the Father is in him. In Jesus Nicodemus found someone who constantly sees the Father’s face, who is always with the Father and who can reveal to him who the Father is.

The answer Jesus gives Nicodemus points to the intervention of God in the history of the world, the sending of God’s own Son, who alone can give the fullness of life through belief in him. The Father, who is love, sent his own Son out of love for the world, to redeem and heal the world, through the power of the Holy Spirit who raised

him up from the dead.

The second reading puts our belief in the Trinity, our relational God, in liturgical form: the grace or power of the Lord Jesus Christ; the love of God the Father, and the communion or presence of the Holy Spirit, is with us, is with all those who believe the Father sent the Son among us.

Our task is simply to respond in faith and love. We are to believe in Jesus, the Son of God, and keep his commandment to love one another as he has loved us. We are invited to enter into a life-giving communion with our loving God who is relationship, family and intimacy.

En route to India I was seated next to a young Hindu computer programmer on the flight. We entered into a lively conversation that was a rich experience of inter-religious dialogue. Here was my first opportunity to learn about Hinduism from someone who grew up with it. The programmer shared his experience of the way his family lived out their Hindu faith, the temples they frequented, the gods they worshipped and to whom they offered sacrifices and offerings.

When I asked him what kind of a relationship he had with these various gods, the man said the concept of a relationship with these gods wasn’t a factor. They were there when they were needed, as objects of petitionary prayer.

I shared with my fellow passenger my experience of living my own faith in a Triune God, who was for me very personal, a God who was Trinity, family, intimate relationship, and how my relationship with this relational God helped me to be reconciled with my father two years before his passing, and is helping me live life to the full. It was an invigorating experience for me to share my faith with him.

The eucharist always gathers us in the name of the Trinity. We celebrate the Father’s love revealed in Jesus and made present through the power of the Holy Spirit. And we are empowered by that same Spirit to go out to proclaim that love to the whole world.

So, to enjoy even now the eternal life Jesus speaks about, let us put our complete faith in Jesus who reveals God as relationship, family, even intimacy, and live his commandment of love.

# For many who no longer go to church, faith remains firm

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



When Friedrich Nietzsche declared that “God is dead,” he added a question: *What kind of a sponge does it take to wipe away a whole horizon?*

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I often ask that question because just in my own lifetime there has been an unprecedented decline in the number of people who go to church regularly and, more recently, an equally unprecedented spike in the number of people who claim to have lost their faith completely and are now classified under a religious category called, “None.”

This latter group (persons who when asked about their religious affiliation on a census form answer with the word, *None*) has

essentially doubled in the last 20 years and today in Canada and the U.S. make up over 30 per cent of the population. The numbers are much the same for western Europe and other secularized parts of the world.

But have these individuals really lost their faith? When they use the word “None” to refer to their religious beliefs they generally explain that with phrases to this effect: *I just no longer believe. It doesn’t make sense to me anymore. I’ve lost faith in religion and the church. I can’t pretend any longer. I’ve lost my faith in those beliefs. I’m not sure whether or not I believe in God.*

What’s common among all these phrases is the concept of “believing” or “belief”: “I just don’t believe it anymore!” But is ceasing to believe in something the same thing as losing one’s faith? Not necessarily. It can be one thing to no longer believe in something, but it can be something quite different to lose one’s faith. To cease believing in a set of faith propositions doesn’t necessarily equate with losing one’s faith. Indeed, the loss of one’s belief system is often the condition for a purified faith.

How is belief different from faith? In normal everyday parlance to say we believe something to be true means that we are able to square that truth with our imagination, that is, we are able to somehow circumscribe it imaginatively so that it makes sense to us. Conversely, if we cannot pic-

ture how something might make sense, then it is a short step to say it isn’t true. Our beliefs are predicated on what we can square with our imagination and our thinking.

But many of the objects of our faith are, in essence and by definition, unimaginable, ineffable, and beyond conceptualization. Hence in the area of faith, to say that I can’t believe this or that is generally more an indication of the limitation of our imagination and our rational powers than it is indicative of the loss of faith. I believe we are much more agnostic about our beliefs than we are agnostic about God, and this isn’t a loss of faith.

Faith is deeper than belief, and it is not always something we can picture imaginatively inside our minds. Take, for instance, a number of articles in the Apostles’ Creed. It is impossible to imagine them as true in terms of picturing them as real. They are real, but our images of them are only icons. That is true too of many articles within our Christian creed and many of our written doctrines of faith. As expressed, they are merely images and words that point us toward something we cannot imagine because it is beyond imagination.

For example: the first thing, always, that needs to be said about God is that God is ineffable, that is, God is beyond all conceptualization, beyond all imaginings, beyond being pictured, and beyond being captured in any adequate way by lan-

guage. This is also true for our understanding of Christ as the second person in the Trinity. Jesus was God’s son, but how can that be imagined or pictured? It can’t be. How can God, who is one, be three? This isn’t mathematics; it’s mystery, something that cannot be imaginatively circumscribed. Yet, we believe it and millions and millions of people for 2,000 years have risked their lives and their souls on its truth without being able to picture it imaginatively. Faith is a knowing of something which, because of its magnitude and infinity, cannot be adequately pictured in terms of an imaginative construct. Our words about it express our beliefs and those words point to the reality, but they are not the reality.

To reject a specific piece of art does not mean we reject beauty. So when someone says, *I can no longer believe this*, that person is in effect rejecting a set of propositions, a set of particular icons and a theory of art (a theology), rather than actually rejecting belief in God, and it is being rejected precisely because the person cannot imaginatively picture something that in fact cannot be pictured.

It has been said that an atheist is just another name for someone who cannot get metaphor. Perhaps that’s too simple, but it does suggest that rejecting a set of theological propositions is not the same thing as losing one’s faith.

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# Beauty of libraries: in the company of my book friends

By Edna Froese

In the midst of the recent brouhaha concerning provincial funding for libraries, I visited the Frances Morrison Library in downtown Saskatoon to return a video, ordinarily a routine errand. Now it felt like a pilgrimage — and a privilege. In memory of my long history with this library, I chose to linger.

*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.*

I was just a farm girl when my mother bought me a big-city library card that changed my life. Each week I climbed the huge stone staircase, pulled open the heavy old doors, then scampered up the stairs to the children’s department. There, waiting for me, was my sanctuary. Near the back of the room was a story corner: small benches, low book shelves filled with picture books and occasional stuffed animals, a box of alphabet blocks, large windows overlooking the alley (not lovely, but abundant natural lighting warmed the whole room). I didn’t care that I was too big for the benches. It was a secluded corner. While my parents did their shopping and other errands, I could

read undisturbed for hours. No teasing schoolmates here to mock me. No one to call me to do tedious chores or rebuke me for some failure of duty. It was the safest place I knew. I could slip into other worlds, keep company with animals, make friends with book children from other cultures. I could be someone else entirely — until heavy bongs from the City Hall clock announced the end of my freedom. Still, I could take an armload of books with me to devour (with delicious popcorn) on a Sunday afternoon or to read secretly when I should have been doing homework. Eventually I promoted myself to the young adult section on the main floor. I loved that front room,

with its tall windows and comfy big chairs. Love, death, jobs, art, beauty, travel — teenage protagonists guided me through it all. On days when I felt truly daring, I wandered into the adult stacks, and discovered Thomas Hardy (I could wallow in bleakness without having to own it), shelves full of photography books that showed me the art of seeing, and sex education books I’d never have found in our small school library. In the midst of the lonely unhappiness of my teen years, that blessed, beautiful library offered me a safe place, where I could make friends with books and learn to love their authors. This was an egalitarian world without snobbishness or bullying. Ignorance and naiveté mattered nothing because I could choose what and how much information to absorb. By the time I became a wife and then a mother, the beloved old brick building had been replaced by the current Frances Morrison Library, where I regularly took our three sons for story

time in Pooh Corner, using my brief freedom to browse the shelves for as many books as our four library cards would permit us to sign out. By now I knew also that librarians are as essential as books — we had many happy conversations about favourite books and special reading places. Before those years, though, the Murray Library at the U of S had become my chief sanctuary; it still is that. So many long hours I spent in tiny carrels in the literature section. Just being near the long stacks was comforting. In the light of the slanting winter sun, during some of the most difficult emotional struggles of my life, I wrote love letters, diary entries, essays, and I read novels, poetry, philosophy, history. It’s not a surprise my automatic response to seasons of despondency is to seek the company of my book friends. And I have had the pleasure of building my own library, beginning with two six-foot planks — LIBRARIES, page 13



Image A-1167; A-1168 courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library — Local History. A BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY — This is an exterior front view of the Saskatoon Public Library building on 23rd Street, opposite City Hall, circa 1945-55. A wide staircase, sheltered by white portico and pillars, formally welcomed passersby into the building which served Saskatonians as their “main library” from 1928 to 1965. The Bessborough Hotel can be seen in the background to the left.

## Never take good fortune for granted



### Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

... because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord (2 Kings 22:19).

Let me confess that I am someone who tends to wear his clothes until they virtually fall apart. My favourite pair of shoes is over 10 years old, and my sweaters weren’t much younger, with most pitted with an assortment of tears, holes and other character-defining features. In fact, it wasn’t until I had a business meeting and noticed one of the attendees fixated on my shredded sleeve that I decided, finally, to replace them.

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

My first thought for the fate of my trusty companions was a quick burial in the bin. But as the mercury fell dramatically it occurred to me that perhaps a faded or well-worn sweater was better than none, and so I dropped them in the local charity bin. I won’t lie. My heart skipped a little at seeing my trusty steeds put out to pasture, but at least, I reasoned, it was a noble retirement. As is often the way, however, I thought of those clothes going out into the community and wondered whose home they would join. Would they find their way to a cool retro-hunter keen to show off his thrift-shop chic? Would they be part of a workman’s casual wear, perfect for odd jobs around the house? Or would the charity determine that they

weren’t fit for duty after all? Recently, while volunteering at a soup kitchen, a remarkable situation occurred. As I was moving through the crowded hall I noticed an older gentleman shuffling forward. He set himself up at a crowded table and wriggled out of his threadbare jacket. To my surprise I saw that he was wearing one of my recently discarded sweaters. I recognized the torn sleeve, the holes peeking out beneath the armpits, and the frayed edges all around. I couldn’t help but move toward him, and when he saw me he smiled. “Check out my new threads,” he said, rubbing his sleeves happily. “Looking good,” I answered, humbled and abashed. “Yes,” he laughed emphatically, “yes I do.” If there are such things as life-defining moments, then that was surely one of them. I will never again take my good fortune for granted, and I will always remember that all gifts matter, be they large or small. More importantly, I know that I must go out into the world to offer service. Not just to render good to others, but because my soul needs feeding, and there is no greater meal.



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# Layers of ‘double meaning’ will become clear in time



*“True ecumenism goes beyond theological dialogue; it touches our spiritual lives and our common witness. As our dialogue has developed, many Catholics and Anglicans have found in each other a love for Christ which invites us into practical co-operation and service.”*  
— Joint declaration by Archbishop Rowan Williams and Pope Benedict XVI (2006)

It is with gratitude and joy that I begin this new column. The title “Double Belonging” will likely evoke a smile in some and puzzled looks in others. I hope the layers of meaning in this title will become clear over time.

The first layer of meaning refers to the fact that, after being a lifelong Roman Catholic and in

active ministry for several decades in this beloved tradition, I felt called to move into the Anglican tradition. I use the term called quite deliberately. A call arises from a deeper place than just a superficial desire or a “well, I just felt like it one day.” A genuine call pulsates with the promise of fullness of life and is

therefore harder to resist or ignore. Feeling “called” usually brings more positive than negative connotations, and is characterized over time by a movement toward rather than a turning away from something.

Jesus himself said, “In my Father’s house there are many rooms” (Jn 14:2). My denominational transition was a move from one room in the Father’s house to another. By no means did it entail leaving the Father’s house! If this remains hard to grasp, then I wonder if our ecumenical dialogues and agreements of the past 50 years have been for naught. My transition was not caused by a weakening of faith, but rather its opposite: it was driven by a deepening and an expanding of faith.

Having said this I do not intend in any way to make light

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of this decision; it is in many respects monumental and comes at a cost. While many responses were surprisingly supportive, I foster special gratitude for those who honestly expressed a struggle, disapproval even, in accepting the path I have now chosen. I knew not everyone would “get this” and not everyone needs to. In fact, it’s those who disagreed who taught me the most. The more life decisions are grounded in a deep personal experience of faith and church, the harder it can be for others to “get it.” We ought not be surprised at all that some will look on in bewilderment, even shaking their heads.

Certainly it stings when a dear friend says disapprovingly, “You’re jumping the mother ship; how can I possibly support that?” Apart from the limited definition of the “mother ship” (according to Vatican II’s Decree on Ecumenism significant elements of the “mother ship” exist beyond the Roman Catholic Church) I am called to honour this person, deeply honour her.

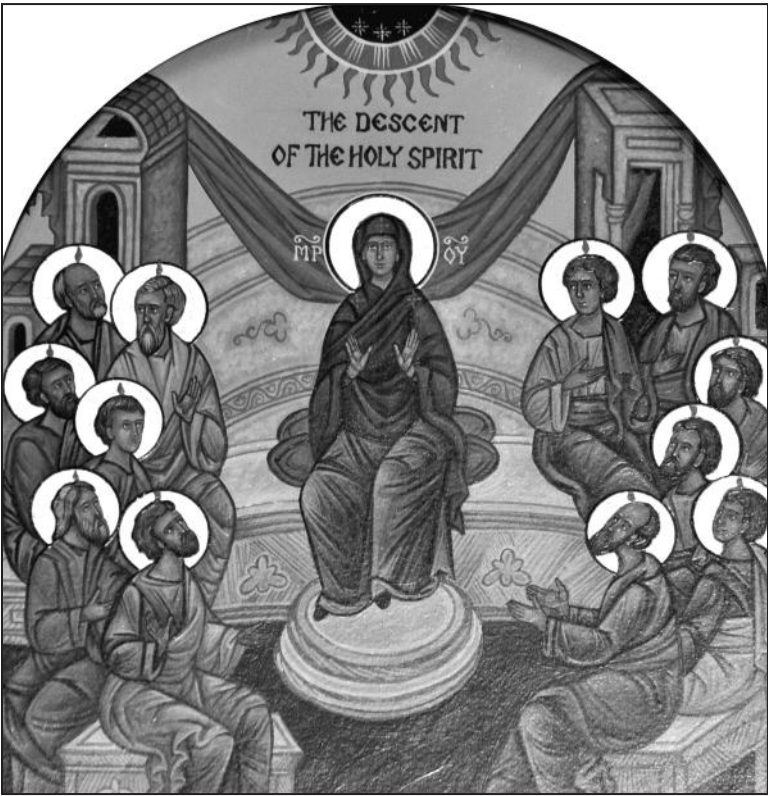
Recognizing the spiritual challenge is crucial and, if engaged with honesty and humility, it can be a grace-filled exercise. This spiritual challenge already moves me to respond from within an Anglican ethos of mutual affection while standing in different places and seeing different things,

yet making loving space for one another.

I made my transition public in the hope it could serve the greater good of the church catholic. My commitment to ecumenism and Christian unity has gone with me and is already finding new creative expressions.

Before finalizing this ecclesial move I asked a wise spiritual mentor if this type of denominational move could in fact serve Christian unity. He replied yes, but added that the reason it often doesn’t is because the move is not done well or not done for the right reasons. So I vowed to God, my church and my bishops (Anglican and Roman Catholic) to live my new church belonging in the service of Christian unity. It is, as I see it, part of our call as Christians to heal and restore our churches into one Body.

I hope and pray that we will continue to grow together to see first our unity in God in Jesus Christ before stumbling over our divisions: “We must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another. This means that we must have sincere trust in our fellow pilgrims, putting aside all suspicion or mistrust, and turn our gaze to what we are all seeking: the radiant peace of God’s face” (par. 244, “The Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis).



**PENTECOST SUNDAY** — “Almighty God, on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Pentecost this year is celebrated June 4.)

## Libraries are still safe places in which to learn

Continued from page 12

held up by bricks, in a tiny one-bedroom apartment, back in my undergraduate days. How I envied my professors with their elegant, book-stuffed offices. Thanks to second-hand book stores and sales, those two shelves and a few bricks have given way to expansive bookcases in almost every room of our house. In whatever bedroom I have ever slept, I wanted a bookcase nearby; failing that, I piled books on the floor beside the bed.

When I returned to the university to earn another degree and then to teach, whatever cubbyhole I was granted for an office quickly became my home by virtue of the books I gathered around me. Publishers sup-

ply free textbooks, and conferences have book tables, with discounts. Eventually, in my office in St. Thomas More College, I was surrounded by books that I had long loved, that I hoped to read, that I bought to give away to students.

On that day in the Frances Morrison library, as I sat in the sun, remembering, I overheard a heart-warming conversation. A patient librarian was helping an elderly gentleman with his iPod, how to borrow e-books, learn about library events, and search the Internet safely. She listened to his stories and smiled at his jests. Libraries are still a safe place in which to learn, to escape, to enter other worlds, and to know oneself as part of the company of friends: people friends and book friends.

## In our very being we are deeply relational

### Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



*“A total restructuring of our knowledge is required once you accept this new definition of a person: A person is a relationship of which the other is infinite. What will the Psychology Department make of that?”*  
— Dom Sebastian Moore

My vocational mission includes what psychology departments will make of personhood, when the person is understood to be more than the sum of physical, emotional, mental, and even spiritual parts. Moore’s new definition has long been my favourite quotation, and I’ve always been fascinated by his use of the preposition “of” rather than the grammatically more suitable “in” within the line, “A person is a relationship of which the other is infinite.” It not only implies that in our very being, we are deeply relational. It also points toward experiencing ourselves differently, without self-ownership.

Given the intimate link with the infinite (which we are given

in baptism), our minds are being thought through; our hearts are being loved through; our lips are being spoken through; and “laying on of hands” is made possible when we offer our helping and healing hands as a channel of Christ’s mercy. Applying this to psychology involves recovering the original meaning of the term — psyche (soul)-ology (knowledge) — in other words, *soul knowledge*. And knowing ourselves on that level comes from all the ways in which we are being known, moment to moment, by that which we call God, the very source of our created-ness.

This “total restructuring,” of course, changes all our other personal relationships, because it starts from a place of unconditional love and belonging. It frees us from the compulsion to depend on others for our sense of self-worth, as much as that may be damaged or enhanced in our human involvements. When we are worthy by definition (good in God’s sight) then we can exercise the three Cs in relationship: courage

(to be vulnerable and imperfect), compassion (to be kind, turning a soft gaze upon flaws and faults), and true connection (replacing a trade-off of needs with whole-hearted self-giving).

The relatively new movement of positive psychology makes room for all this. In a nutshell, it’s more about what’s right with people than what’s wrong with them. I was once in a holistic health clinic filling out their intake form, and since the questionnaire didn’t have a lot of soul, so to speak, I did my best to hold onto mine when answering (bracketed below):

- *Do you have any recurring emotional states?* (love & joy)
- *Is there any situation suppressing you?* (the human condition)
- *Are there any areas in your life that are problematic?* (focusing on problems)
- *What do you worry about the most?* (straying from my destined path)

Compare that approach with what would be the kind of intake questions assessing the soul knowledge of therapy clients needing to learn more of their deepest values and purpose:

- *In what moments do you usually feel most at peace within yourself?*
- *How do you best connect with others; what do they love about you?*
- *What book, piece of music, movie, or artwork touched your heart? Why?*
- *What personal qualities have equipped you to overcome obstacles and resolve problems in the past? What specific strengths have brought you this far?*

Good news stories

The recent suicide bombing in Manchester, England, has dominated news coverage in the past week. It is an example of the steady diet of “bad news” we are fed every day.

However, the world is also filled with a lot of “good news” that doesn’t attract as much attention. But they are what make life worth living.

A cursory glance through this week’s PM highlights some of them.

The last page features the story of a high school senior in Ohio who noticed many teens couldn’t afford dresses for their prom. She celebrated her 18th birthday by collecting prom gowns. She called her project Prom Me Please.

Despite being told that it was a “dumb idea,” she went ahead and made their day for more than 200 graduates. Others caught her enthusiasm. Volunteer seamstresses made on-site alterations and the girls received free consultations with hair stylists and makeup artists.

The 18-year-old said compliments from the teens made her feel that “they blessed me more than I

blessed them.”

In another story, a Congolese priest is changing the culture in his country through medicine. A mother thought her daughter suffered from “evil spirits,” but the priest encouraged them to see a psychiatrist. They discovered that the evil spirits that plagued the girl came from post-traumatic stress from witnessing her father’s murder, witnessing and experiencing rape and facing other types of violence. The Congo has few clinicians to help people who have experienced extreme violence. He will be the only neuropsychologist in his country of almost 68 million people.

Ever since Pope John XXIII prayed for a new Pentecost for the church in the 1960s, many people experienced a revival of their faith through the charismatic renewal movement. The renewal will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in Rome this coming week.

A page one story notes that Prime Minister Trudeau met Pope Francis after his G7 meeting in Taormina, Sicily. A priority for Trudeau was to follow up on the 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which focused on past treatment of indigenous communities, especially the forced

removal of children to residential schools. One of the commission’s recommendations was to have Pope Francis come to Canada to apologize for the role of Catholics in harming their communities and pursuing a policy of eliminating their language and culture. If this removes a major stumbling block from future reconciliation with our indigenous people, that would indeed be good news.

A picture caption on page one notes that a life-sized monument honouring missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was recently unveiled near the main entrance of Saskatoon police headquarters. This is a reminder of a sad legacy that is currently under investigation and being criticized for undue delays.

And a commentary on this page takes issue with the push in Canada for doctor-assisted suicide. The author raises questions about what makes for a good death — providing a choice to die or providing people with a chance to tie up some loose ends in their lives.

This is but a start of making a list. Readers will find many other stories to give them their “good news fix” for the day. — PWN

Preparing for death needs to focus on the completion of living

By Ray Pennings, Ottawa

“Death is inevitable. A bad death is not,” blares the headline of the April 29 edition of The Economist. The feature repeats the arguments why more palliative care is needed and why “honest and open conversations about dying should be as much a part of modern medicine as prescribing drugs or fixing broken bones.”

The coming first anniversary of the legalization of doctor-assisted suicide in Canada easily muddies the discussion-of-death waters. The mistaken premise of this debate is the affirmation that the choice to die is what makes for a good death. Autonomy does not transform something that is inherently bad into something good.

Preparing for death needs to focus on the completion of living. Still, in spite of medicine’s progress, 100 per cent of us die. True, for most, death will typically come three decades later than it

would have in 1900, but infinitely forestalling death remains the domain of science fiction.

Approximately 10 per cent of us will die suddenly, without warning and without a chance to say goodbye to those who are near to us. For the remaining 90 per cent or so, at some point we’ll receive the news that while the precise time can’t be pinpointed, it will likely be a matter of years/weeks/days when we can expect our passing. Sure, we may be able to choose from among a medical intervention or three, which may (or may not) extend that timeline marginally, but the inevitable is near.

I wonder if the question surrounding a good death involves less medicine and more of how we prioritize the remaining time. For most of us, these priorities are likely to fall into some combination of five categories. By happy coincidence, they are congruent with Dr. Ira Byock’s The Four Things That Matter Most: A Book About Living, although I had not read his 2004 book when I came up with my own list.

— There is someone to whom we need to say, “I love you.” Whatever our status or wealth, death is an equalizer. The value of

intimacy and our closest relationships are highlighted at these times and the need to say, with words and deeds, “I love you” to those who we really love becomes the most important item on our agenda.

— There is also, for most of us, someone to whom we need to say, “I’m sorry.” Living with broken relationships is a plight too common but there is nothing like the urgency of a deadline to resolve things that need to be resolved.

— “Thank you” is another priority for those who have a finite number of words and visits to share. There are important people in each of our lives, and the reality of the final deadline focuses the mind on who helped us become who we are and contributed to our successes.

— Depending on our station in life, some may feel the impact of our death, not just in terms of our absence but also from the loss of our care. “You will be okay and taken care of” are words that need to be shared with those who depend on us, with the appropriate arrangements made to back up those words after we are gone.

— “I, too, will be OK” are the final words our loved ones need to hear from us. The content and character of this statement will differ significantly depending on your understanding of life and death. Whatever debates we may have about such matters while we’re alive, these matters take on an urgency when the inevitability of death is near.

equation. Tying up the loose ends in life must be part of the equation, too.

Done well, preparing for death will result in a better life, right to our last breath.

Truth will triumph but not without our help

By Gerry Chidiac, Prince George

“Truthfulness alone constitutes the spiritual discipline of the Kali Yuga,” the Hindu tell us.

As we study the beliefs of our sisters and brothers, we realize how much we have in common — and how universal wisdom always points to truth.

The Kali Yuga, the age of the goddess Kali, is a time of death and destruction, but also a time of rebirth and renewal. As we embrace the truth of humanity’s most horrific actions, hateful lies lose their power. We become enlightened and the path to a better world becomes clear.

This can be seen very clearly when we study genocide. Those who create conflict always teach that there’s an “us” and a “them.” The genocidal message is: “They are a threat to us. Their ways must be destroyed. They must be destroyed.”

When we actually look at the words of those who preach hate, they often seem ludicrous. In discussing her first reaction to “Hutu Power” rhetoric on the radio, Rwandan genocide survivor Immaculée Ilibagiza said, “The broadcasts were so ridiculously juvenile that they were almost funny. It is hard to believe that anyone could take the infantile and outlandish threats seriously.”

Even more frightening are lies disguised as intellectual discourse. Historian Deborah Lipstadt was sued for libel by historical writer and Holocaust denier David Irving for claims she made in her book, Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory. In a British court, Lipstadt had to demonstrate how the supposed “research” Irving had done was a

purposeful manipulation of facts. Names, dates and other details were changed in the sources he cited in order to make his case. Lipstadt was eventually exonerated by the court and Irving was exposed.

Truth remains under assault. Scientific research, for example, has presented irrefutable evidence of global warming. American intellectual Noam Chomsky has thus referred to the Republican party as “the most dangerous organization in human history.” He points out that to gain fossil-fuel industry support, the Republicans have put human survival in jeopardy, by denying the truth of climate change and even passing policies that accelerate the process.

Fake news has taken on a life of its own. Some current affairs television programs are hosted by people who appear to believe that when they speak loudly and emphatically, anything they say becomes truth. Those who wish to propagate lies have learned that if you repeat a message over and over, people begin to accept it as truth.

We need to be vigilant media consumers. It’s important to take the time to check the details we’re told. It’s also very clear that teaching critical thinking in our schools is even more vital now.

We need to remember that truth is powerful. History proves that truth may be masked but it will always reveal itself.

Truth does set us free. When we embrace it, we can clearly see the wrongs that have been done and the challenge of healing that lies before us.

Those who hold fast to lies end up destroying themselves. Look at Adolf Hitler and other cruel dictators.

So what can we do to heal the world?

By being aware and living with integrity, we challenge our leaders to do the same. We’re a powerful force, working together with truth, leading our world into peace and enlightenment.



CNS/Darren Staples, Reuters

**MANCHESTER MEMORIAL** — A Muslim man and Jewish woman pray next to a makeshift memorial in Manchester, England, May 24 for the victims of the terrorist attack at Manchester Arena. At least 22 people, including children, were killed and dozens wounded after an explosion the evening of May 22 at the concert venue. Authorities said it was Britain’s deadliest case of terrorism since 2005.

A new ecumenical opportunity presents itself for media

**The Editor:** It is rather ironic that, in the age of a pope with a strong commitment to fearless dialogue and encounter, the *Prairie Messenger* with its noble near-century history of dialogue and debate is now preparing its own funeral.

Yes, church print publications are facing huge financial challenges. They are becoming obsolete due to virtual information feeds.

At the same time the Internet seems to be replacing thoughtful reporting in print media with unrestrained vitriol and growing divisions. This is crisis time for all with a passion for sound church reporting and robust theological conversations.

We will shed our tears over the *Prairie Messenger's* closure and so we ought; such mourning reveals the depth of our affection, gratitude and love for the many years of faithful service to the faith community.

But while we weep and wail, can we begin to muse what could be the "new opportunity" concealed in this profound loss? What can take its

place in ways that can build on the PM's inspiring legacy and respond to the signs of the times?

In the footsteps of our fearless leader and champion for Christian unity, Pope Francis, can we explore the pooling of ecumenical resources? Is it possible to create new avenues for the sharing of our denominational gifts and conversations through joint communication efforts? Let the brainstorming and dreaming begin. — **Jim Ternier and Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers, Humboldt**

Peace needed first before we seek development

**The Editor:** In your May 3 editorial you refer to Pope Paul VI's phrase "Development is the new name for peace" which has, as you say, become a mantra for people working for global justice.

When Pope Paul wrote those words, it was a time of hope and optimism. It was widely believed that the poor countries of the Global South would "develop," i.e., improve their lives through hard work and with aid from the developed world. Then peace would follow.

Fifty years later, it is clear that despite the huge efforts made by people in those countries, with the support of international institutions and NGOs, development has not brought peace to many of the countries of the Global South. Today, many of those countries for whom the future looked bright in 1967 are ravaged by war, terrorism, internal oppression and corruption, which make development impossible.

Now it is more important than ever that the international commu-

nity work for peace worldwide. When that has been achieved, development will surely follow: "Peace first, then development." — **Michael Murphy, Saskatoon**

Note of gratitude

**The Editor:** I just received the May 17 edition of the *Prairie Messenger* and I am so sad. I loved your paper. I was an informed Catholic because of what I read. I was so inspired by so many of the columnists.

I know life must go on, but there will be a big hole in my life next year when you close. Thank you so much for your excellent paper. — **Marilyn Paul, Moosomin, Sask.**

Bishops have different goals

Continued from page 1

ly on fighting climate change and on welcoming and assisting refugees, especially from Syria. However, the bishops have sharp differences with the prime minister over a variety of issues related to the sanctity of human life and the family.

In early March Trudeau's government announced it would "invest" \$650 million over three years to provide abortion and other services in the developing world. The president of the bishops' conference, Bishop Douglas Crosby of Hamilton, reacted by calling the policy "a reprehensible example of western cultural imperialism."

The bishops also have been working diligently to promote palliative care and a recognition of the sacredness of life of those who are dying as well as the right of medical personnel to conscientiously object to participating in practices they oppose on religious grounds. The Canadian Supreme Court ruled unanimously in 2015 that people who are "grievously and irremediably ill" have a right to medical assistance in dying.

the early history of the country. He also gave the pope framed samples of a Jesuit's dictionary of *Montagnais Innu*, the language of an indigenous community in Canada.

Pope Francis, appreciating the gift, told the prime minister, "it was a custom of the Jesuits" to compile such dictionaries when they began missions in new lands.

The pope gave Trudeau the gold medallion minted for the fourth year of his pontificate (2016 - 17), which features an "embrace" as "a symbol of forgiveness, joy and mutual acceptance," according to the Vatican's description. It also refers to the passage from Matthew 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

Pope Francis is aware of the current situation in Canada and the concerns of the bishops on all the issues mentioned by Trudeau to the press and in the Vatican communiqué. From March to May Pope Francis spent hours listening to the bishops, who made their *ad limina* visits to the Vatican in four groups.

While all the bishops of Canada have not formally invited the pope to Canada, during the *ad limina* visits several of the groups explained the situation of Canada's indigenous peoples, the history of the residential schools and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

After the closed-door meeting, Trudeau introduced his wife, Sophie Gregoire, and his delegation to the pope before exchanging gifts with him.

Trudeau gave the pope an edition of the six-volume "*Relations des Jesuites de la Nouvelle-France*," a collection of 17th-century reports from Jesuit missionaries in what is now Canada. Trudeau told the Jesuit pope the volumes are an "essential tool for historians" in understanding

Some of the bishops said they were told Pope Francis would consider a trip in 2018 or 2019. A final decision would require input from the whole Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in dialogue with the Vatican.

Prairie Messenger nurtured and inspired readers

**The Editor:** I felt great shock and sadness, when I read in the May 17 issue of the *Prairie Messenger* that the paper will cease publication in May 2018. That will be such a huge loss to the Catholic and Christian community. Your paper has provided us with up-to-date information on our faith and our holy church. We have been inspired and educated by the various writers and their views on our faith.

I cannot imagine how I will fill the loss of the knowledge and spiritual guidance that I receive from the *Prairie Messenger*. How



Alma Barkman

Deliverance

Long overdue  
the pregnant clouds  
bulge low on the horizon.  
Rumbles of anticipation  
give way to thundering contractions.  
With lightning speed  
the water breaks  
and mother earth  
gives birth  
to spring.  
O Lord, I love  
new life You bring!

By Alma Barkman

unfortunate that many of our Catholic families have chosen not to subscribe to your most excellent paper. Surely there are more than 4,000 Catholic families in Saskatchewan who could subscribe to the *Prairie Messenger* and benefit by the articles.

The demise of this paper will be a disaster of which the consequences will be felt for years among our Catholic families. How many of our younger families actually access Catholic material through the Internet and other electronic media? I suspect that very few have Catholic infor-

mation coming into their homes.

Yet we allow ourselves and our families to be bombarded by the secular media. This line of communication forms our thinking and takes away our Catholic mindset.

We lose our direction and find it ever more difficult to understand our Catholic teaching.

Is there not any way that we can keep the *Prairie Messenger* publication for many more years into the future? I would be willing to pay double the subscription rate if that would help. — **Naden Hewko, Macklin, Sask.**

Next phase to begin in November

Continued from page 1

phase, the General Sessions, to begin in November. The General Sessions will bring together clergy and lay delegates from all parishes and communities of the archdiocese to discuss the issues raised by the Focus Commission reports. The General Sessions will be composed of members appointed by Archbishop Gagnon plus parishioners nominated from our 88 parishes and missions. These delegates will vote on the propositions presented to help determine the final priorities for the archbishop's approval. The synod is to conclude on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 2018.

Each Focus Commission was led by two co-chairs. Susan Cosens, a parishioner at St. John Vianney Parish in Teulon, Man., was a co-chair of the Focus Commission examining governance.

"I found the process to be an exercise in community building," she said, "and we worked well together as a team. With the Holy Spirit active during our meetings, discussions were creative, productive and joyous. It was a rewarding experience for all of us."

At the outset of the synod one year ago, the archbishop said the question that the Winnipeg synod is being called to answer is discipleship: "How are we to be disciples and how are we to live out

our discipleship during these current and very challenging times?"

"The word 'synod' means to walk together," Gagnon said. "As we walk together and share our experiences, we can ask ourselves: How well do we walk together? How are we doing in living out our faith today? What are the blessings that we see in our lives and what are the challenges we face? How well do we pass on the gift of faith? How do we worship together?"

"A synod is an exercise in living our faith together. It is an experience of communion, of unity, of what is known as *koinonia*," the archbishop said: "the communion among us that comes from our relationship with Christ."

# High school senior makes prom dreams come true

By Jerri Donohue

CLEVELAND (CNS) — Ashley Wilson beamed at the array of sequined and beaded gowns in pink, purple, red, blue and black. But she wouldn't wear any of them to her prom the following evening.

The senior graduating from Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School in Cleveland had gathered the collection for Prom Me Please, her effort to give prom dresses to girls who couldn't afford to buy them.

"A lot of people told me this was a really dumb idea, that girls didn't need prom dresses," Wilson told Catholic News Service. "And I gave away 200! So it definitely is something that is needed."

Last fall, Wilson decided to celebrate her 18th birthday by collecting and distributing prom gowns. She thinks all teenagers should have a chance to experience prom, a sometimes prohibitively expensive tradition.

David Csank, principal of Villa Angela-St. Joseph, permitted the teen to use the school as a collection point.

"It's really something we preach to these students all the time," Csank said. "You look out for others. You take care of others. That's what we believe we are called by God to do."

School personnel helped Wilson publicize Prom Me Please through social media and on local television and in the newspaper. They also notified alumni of her project.

As a result, on a Saturday in November, women brought almost 100 formal dresses to the school.

When donations continued to arrive, Wilson's relatives bought her three clothing racks that proved inadequate for the fashion deluge. The overflow inconvenienced Wilson's mother.

"She's a saint," Wilson told CNS. "I had 400 dresses in the living room, in my room, right in the middle of holiday time."

Strangers soon caught Wilson's enthusiasm. She held her first giveaway in late February in a space lent by a non-profit group. That day, prom-goers received free consultations with hair stylists and a makeup artist. Volunteer seamstresses made on-site alterations.

Girls scheduled appointments to shop, but Wilson welcomed walk-ins, too. To qualify, shoppers showed their student ID or report cards.

Wilson's friends set up a donation jar for those who wanted to contribute. Many girls dropped change or dollar bills in the jar.

"They don't have money for a prom dress," Wilson said. "But they still give me money when I'm offering it to them for free!"

Wilson used the funds to send dresses to 10 prom-goers in New York, New Jersey and Georgia who discovered Prom Me Please on Instagram.

"It's pretty pricey," the teen said. "A lot of the girls ask at the last minute and I have to rush ship it."



CNS/Jerri Donohue

**TEEN DONATES PROM DRESSES** — Ashley Wilson, a senior at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School in Cleveland, displays some of the prom gowns that she collected for girls who were unable to afford one.

Wilson held two additional dress giveaways in the spring, ultimately enabling more than 200 girls to attend prom. Most of the gown recipients later sent her photos snapped at their dances.

"Being around all those girls,

getting to know them, that was the most rewarding part," Wilson said. "They were very appreciative. They were the sweetest people I've ever met. I think they blessed me more than I blessed them, to be honest."

## U.S. bishops restructure communications focus

By Chaz Muth

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chief communications officer for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Department of Communications announced a restructuring that will shift the focus of its operation from a traditional print structure to a digital model.

"It's an exercise in enculturation," said James Rogers, USCCB chief communications officer. "If you're going to evangelize, you need to reach people where they are."

The communications department was built when print and newspapers were the dominant force in media. The landscape has been dramatically transitioning in recent years to a digital platform, where information is frequently sought and shared in real time, Rogers told Catholic News Service.

Though print content will continue to be generated, more resources will be directed toward visual media, digital content and social media dissemination, Rogers said.

The restructuring involves the elimination of 12 jobs and the creation of 10 new positions.

Employees whose jobs were eliminated will be considered for the newly created positions if they have the required skills to do the work, Rogers said.

Planning for the restructuring began in 2014 with the commission of two different studies from

independent communications consulting groups.

The consultants were charged with examining the department's operation and recommending how to best reach the USCCB's targeted audiences.

The only area not directly impacted by the communications restructuring was Catholic News Service, which will retain its current staff and remain editorially independent of the USCCB.

"A part of the review was to look at the position of Catholic News Service within, for the lack of a better word, the space of the dialogue that takes place," Rogers said. "Catholic News Service is very well-respected. When we did the survey of clients and customers, we found its position of trust is on par with, or higher than that of any other Catholic news outlet that you could compare CNS to."

"The reason you are not seeing change, in terms of the core structure of Catholic News Service, is because of the tremendous content creation capacity that is there," he said. "It's a well-respected, well-known brand."

In addition to retooling how the communications department markets CNS, the reorganization also will build a dedicated digital team and provide episcopal resources to help bishops throughout the U.S. share national and international news of the church to their audiences.

## Congolese priest finds 'evil spirits' in science

By Andrew Nelson

DECATUR, Ga. (CNS) — Religion and science have intertwined in Divine Word Father Jean Ikanga's life and it began with a fearful mother.

The woman in his native Congo desperately wanted help for her nine-year-old daughter who she said was sick with "evil spirits." Concerned by her story, Ikanga provided prayer and pastoral counselling, but he also asked the woman and her daughter to meet with a psychiatrist at the University of Kinshasa.

Through this collaboration, the "spirits" that plagued the child were revealed to be post-traumatic stress from witnessing her father's murder, witnessing and experiencing rape and facing other types of violence.

This was Ikanga's first exposure to the mystery of the brain and how it processes what goes on inside the body.

"That story changed my life," he said.

Ikanga said he felt he needed more knowledge to use science and medicine in service of the Gospel which set him on a path to Emory University in Atlanta where he is currently a neuropsychologist and a fellow.

He has found that faith and science build on each other.

"I came to a faith understand-

ing that to look at the human body and not believe in God is impossible," he said.

The priest said he has surprised colleagues by telling them he is probing the unknown areas of dementia but that he is also a priest celebrating mass on weekends.

"They could not imagine a priest becoming one of them. For them, the priest is in the sacristy and at the altar, not in the lab. They are bewildered a priest can be a colleague," Ikanga said.

He responds by saying he is surprised a scientist can balance the demands of research and parenthood.

When he's not assisting at parishes, Ikanga, 45, sees patients at the Emory University School of Medicine. He has studied in the U.S. since 2006, starting at Regis University in Denver, where he earned a bachelor of science degree while serving at a local parish. He earned his doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Detroit Mercy. His internship and residency for the past three years brought him to Emory. His residence is at Atlanta's Holy Spirit Parish.

In Congo, there are few clinicians to aid people living with the aftermath of violence. Ikanga believes he will be the only neuropsychologist in the country of 67.5 million people, 50 per cent of

whom are Catholic, when he returns. The Congo is Africa's most Catholic country, about one-quarter the size of the United States.

Parts of the Congo though have suffered through war for decades. An estimated six million people died in conflicts there from 1996 to 2003. The United Nations has 19,000 troops deployed there which is its costliest peacekeeping operation.

Ikanga's goal is to lay a foundation for a new program in neuropsychology at the Catholic University of St. Augustine in Kinshasa. While in Detroit, he also attended physician assistant training so that he can assist people with ailments when a nurse or doctor is not available.

He believes it is God's mandate that fuels science. He reads the story in Genesis of God's command to "subdue the world" as an instruction to push the boundaries of knowledge.

God gave us the responsibility to "be co-creators and continue the work of creation," he said.

Ikanga confronts the heartbreak that comes from brain afflictions in his practice. His area of expertise is dementia that robs a person of memory.

"Dementia is a Good Friday in our life," he said. "I know there will be an Easter Sunday when suffering is over. And we will be face to face with God."



CNS/Catholic Charismatic Renewal

**CHARISMATIC RENEWAL** — This is the logo for the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to be held in Rome May 31 to June 4.

When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.

— Viktor Frankl