



Schools open

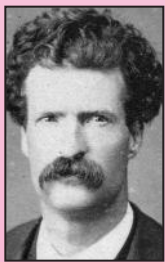
St. Nicholas Catholic School, the 18th and final school to officially open as part of a provincial joint-use schools project, was opened Oct. 19 in Saskatoon. In Regina, meanwhile, Archbishop Donald Bolen was kept busy through much of September opening and blessing three new Catholic schools in that city. — pages 6 and 7

Benedictines pass

The community of St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster, Sask., is mourning the loss of two of its long-serving members. Rev. Rudolph Novacosky, OSB, a teacher and pastor, succumbed to cancer on Thanksgiving Monday. He had joined the monastic community in 1955 and was ordained in 1962. Br. Wolfgang Thiem, OSB, who at 93 was the oldest monk at the abbey, died from complications due to organ failure a week after breaking his right femur in a fall on Oct. 9. Both monks spent their lives in service to the church and their community. — page 7

Religious doubts

Mark Twain, a.k.a. Samuel Clemens, didn't have much of anything good to say about religion, at least the organized kind. But a new PBS documentary centres on Twain's trip to Jerusalem in 1867, and the impact it had on his views about religion. — page 8



Evolution of taste

Our tastes evolve, whether with pears or one's preference in books, writes Edna Froese. "In the ripeness of time, the despised can become the necessary and even the beautiful." — page 11

Fright King

October, the month of Halloween, is a good time to get in touch with our fears and create new ones. To that end, Tom Saretsky has revisited his favourite Stephen King novels, in particular, *The Shining*. — page 13

Franciscans in Holy Land for 800 years

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Franciscans assisting the Christian minority and caring for the churches and shrines in the Holy Land are "ambassadors" of all the People of God, Pope Francis said.

Marking the 800th anniversary of the order's presence at the places where Jesus was born, lived and died, the pope sent a letter to the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, an administratively autonomous province of the Franciscan order.

The custody keeps "the Christian witness alive, studying Scripture and welcoming pilgrims," he said in the letter, dated Oct. 17, and addressed to Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, the official custodian, or custos, of the Holy Land.

The pope recalled how St. Francis of Assisi sent members of his recently founded order out on mission in 1217 to all nations on earth as witnesses of "faith, fraternity and peace."

This broadened horizon of evangelization "was the beginning of an extraordinary adventure," which brought the first Franciscans to the Holy Land 800 years ago.

Today, the congregation is dedicated to living alongside

brothers and sisters of different cultures, ethnicities and religions, "sowing peace, fraternity and respect," he said.

The pope encouraged the Franciscans to continue to: be at the service of the many pilgrims visiting the holy places; study

sacred Scripture and the faith's archeological heritage; support local church communities; help the poorest and weakest; and teach young people, "who often risk losing hope in a situation still without peace."

"You are ambassadors of the

whole People of God, who have always supported you generously, in particular through the traditional Good Friday collection" for the Holy Land and through the Vatican's Congregation for Oriental Churches, which is currently marking the centenary of its foundation.



CNS/Debbie Hill

HOLY LAND ANNIVERSARY — U.S. Franciscan Father Michael Perry, minister general of the order, centre, leads the ceremony for the opening of the celebrations of the anniversary of 800 years of Franciscan presence in the Holy Land Oct. 16 at the Church of St. Saviour in Jerusalem's Old City.

Interventions can be ordinary or extra-ordinary

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Making difficult health care decisions involves the same process we use to make other difficult decisions,



Tim Yaworski

Mary Deutscher

ethicist Mary Deutscher said at a recent diocesan "Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together" program hosted by Holy Spirit Parish in Saskatoon.

The ethicist for St. Paul's Hospital and the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan engaged her listeners in a reflection on making decisions and the

role of conscience, before addressing some specific scenarios related to artificial nutrition and hydration.

Deutscher led the crowd in brainstorming steps to take when making any difficult decision, listing such things as gathering information and facts, determining the effects on others, prayer, consultation with family and experts, weighing pros and cons, doing a "gut check" to see how you are feeling, checking your conscience, and taking a step back to reflect (as well as trying to make the decision when not under extreme stress).

All these decision-making strategies are helpful, but each person would have favourites, Deutscher noted, adding that the Catholic term we often use for this process is discernment.

Describing conscience as determining "what is it that God wants me to want," Deutscher asked those present to discuss what conscience means to them: such as determining right from wrong, empathy for others, being at peace with something, listening to God's will, and seeking a guiding light.

Deutscher then presented two excerpts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to prompt discussion about what conscience means.

CCC #1776 states, "Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to

avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment," Deutscher quoted. "His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary."

— CONSCIENCE, page 6

Canadian theologian Gregory Baum dies at 94

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

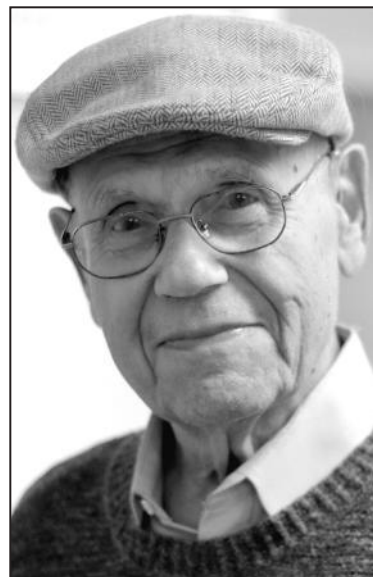
TORONTO (CNS) — Gregory Baum, one of Canada's most influential and controversial theologians and a participant in the Second Vatican Council, died Oct. 18. He was 94.

Baum was the author of the first draft of *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican II declaration that addressed the relations of the Catholic Church with non-Christian religions.

After being admitted to St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal Oct. 8, he told a friend, "I'm disappearing inside." He decided not to continue the dialysis treatment that had kept him alive for the last four years.

As a young theologian, then-Father Baum shot to prominence

— BAUM, page 5



CNS/Francois Gloutnay, Presence

CANADIAN THEOLOGIAN DIES — Renowned Canadian theologian Gregory Baum, 94, author of the first draft of the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate*, died Oct. 18 in a Montreal hospital.

Groups settle lawsuit against contraceptive mandate

By Carol Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Dozens of Catholic groups that challenged the contraceptive mandate of the Affordable Care Act have reached a settlement with the U.S. Justice Department, they announced late Oct. 16.

The groups, including the Archdiocese of Washington and the Pennsylvania dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh and Erie, were represented by the Cleveland-based law firm Jones Day.

Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl wrote an Oct. 16 letter to archdiocesan priests saying the “binding agreement” ends the litigation challenging the Health and Human Services’ mandate and provides a “level of assurance as we move into the future.”

The Washington archdiocese was one of dozens of groups challenging the mandate, which went to the Supreme Court last year in the consolidated case of *Zubik v. Burwell*. Although it was most often described as the Little Sisters of the Poor fighting against the federal government, the case before the court involved seven plaintiffs and each of these combined cases represented a group of schools, churches or church-sponsored organizations.

Pittsburgh Bishop David A. Zubik, whom the case is named

for, said he was grateful for the settlement, which he described as an “agreement with the government that secures and reaffirms the constitutional right of religious freedom.”

In an Oct. 17 statement, the bishop said the diocese’s five-year-long challenge to the mandate “has been resolved successfully” allowing Catholic Charities in the diocese and other religious organizations of different denominations to be exempt from “insurance coverage or practices that are morally unacceptable.”

He said the settlement follows the recent release of new federal regulations that provide religious organizations with a full exemption from covering items that violate their core beliefs.

On Oct. 6, the Trump administration issued interim rules expanding the exemption to the contraceptive mandate to include religious employers who object on moral grounds to covering contraceptive and abortion-inducing drugs and devices in their employee health insurance. The same day, the U.S. Department of Justice issued guidance to all administrative agencies and executive departments regarding religious liberty protections in federal law.

Wuerl said in his letter to priests that the new guidelines and regula-

tions were extremely helpful but that the “settlement of the *Zubik* litigation adds a leavening of certainty moving forward. It removes doubt where it might otherwise exist as it closes those cases.”

“The settlement adds additional assurances,” he added, “that we will not be subject to enforcement or imposition of similar regulations imposing such morally unacceptable mandates moving forward.”

The cardinal thanked the Jones Day law firm for its legal representation in the case and thanked Catholics for their prayers and support for the petitioners in the long legal fight.

Thomas Aquinas College of Santa Paula, California, one of the groups that fell under the Washington archdiocese’s challenge of the HHS mandate to the Supreme Court, similarly thanked the law firm Jones Day for representing the school pro bono.

The school’s president, Michael McLean, said in an Oct. 16 statement that as part of the settlement, the government will pay a portion of the legal costs and fees incurred by the law firm.

He said the college welcomed the broadening of the exemption from the HHS mandate by the Trump administration in early October but he similarly said the settlement of the case provides “something even better: a perma-

nent exemption from an onerous federal directive — and any similar future directive — that would require us to compromise our fundamental beliefs.”

“This is an extraordinary outcome for Thomas Aquinas College and for the cause of religious freedom,” he added.

The school’s statement said according to the terms of the settlement, the government concedes that the contraceptive mandate “imposes a substantial burden” on the plaintiffs’ exercise of religion and “cannot be legally enforced” under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.



CNS/Aaron P. Bernstein, Reuters

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT PROTEST — Activists participate in a rally in late September to protect the Affordable Care Act outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington. Dozens of Catholic groups that challenged the contraceptive mandate of the Affordable Care Act have reached a settlement with the U.S. Justice Department.

Death is a wide-open passage to new life

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians can find hope even at the hour of death, which faith teaches is not a closed door but a wide-open passage to a new life with Christ, Pope Francis said.

While all men and women are “small and helpless in front of the mystery of death,” Jesus’ victory over death assures Christians of the joy of the resurrection, the pope said Oct. 18 during his weekly general audience.

Despite chilly temperatures in Rome, thousands gathered in St. Peter’s Square to greet the pope who rode around St. Peter’s

Square in the popemobile, stopping frequently to greet pilgrims and kiss babies.

Making sure one child was kept warm, the pope pulled up the hood of the baby’s jacket before he was taken back to his parents.

Continuing his series of talks on Christian hope, Pope Francis reflected on death, which is “a reality that our modern civilization tends to eradicate” so completely that “when death comes to us or those around us, we are unprepared.”

Past civilizations, however, “had the courage to look death in the face,” he said, and viewed death not with fear but as “an

inescapable reality that forced man to live for something absolute.”

Death “shows us that our acts of pride, anger and hatred were vanity: pure vanity,” the pope said. “We realize with regret that we have not loved enough and did not look for what was essential.”

Before raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus’ mourns his friend’s death, the pope noted. Christ’s behaviour shows that despite hope in the resurrection, Christians can “feel sorrowful when a dear person passes away.”

“Christian hope draws from the approach that Jesus takes against human death: if this (death) is present in creation, it is nevertheless a gash that disfigures God’s plan of love, and the saviour wants to heal us of it,” the pope said.

In another instance, he continued, Jesus comforts Jairus after his daughter’s death because “he knew that man was tempted to react with anger and desperation.”

Jesus’ invitation to “not be afraid,” he said, is a call for all Christians to guard the “small flame” of faith within that keeps them from falling into “the precipice of fear” that comes at the moment of death.

Departing from his prepared remarks, Pope Francis asked pilgrims to close their eyes and “think about our own death and imagine the moment that will come when Jesus will take us by the hand and say, ‘Come, come with me, get up.’”

“There hope will end and it will be a reality, the reality of life,” Pope Francis said. “Jesus himself will come to each of us and take us by the hand with his tenderness, his meekness, his love.”

Ukrainian bishop sees ‘real chance of peace’ in country

By Jonathan Luxmoore

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — The Catholic bishop responsible for eastern Ukraine has backed calls for the deployment of international peacekeepers and praised “pressure from below” to end the nearly four-year war.

With the Ukrainian government ready to establish conditions for a peacekeeping force, “there are now good signs this could happen,” said Bishop Stanislav Szyrokoradiuk of Kharkiv-Zaporizhia, whose diocese includes rebel-held Donetsk and Luhansk.

“Although some politicians still hope to use this conflict for their own power interests, pressure for reconciliation is spreading up from below among the people who’ve had enough of it. This is a positive change, and it brings a real chance of peace,” he told Catholic News Service Oct. 18.

Peacekeeping proposals were being debated by European Union and UN officials in mid-October to end the conflict between the Ukrainian government and Russia-backed separatists.

Szyrokoradiuk said he has been in continual contact with people on both sides who believe pressure from the U.S. and western governments would induce Russian President Vladimir Putin to “talk and reach agreements.”

“Those whose decisions led to this war, and who saw it as a way of making dirty money, will naturally stand by policies they’ve staked their reputations on,” Szyrokoradiuk said. “But people at large are

demanding their leaders do something to end this terrible bloodshed. Peace will come sooner or later, from below if not from above.”

Ukrainian church leaders have accused western governments of ignoring continued suffering in their country, where war has left more than 10,000 dead.

Ukraine’s armed forces have been substantially rebuilt with \$857 million in “non-lethal” western military aid. Gen. Viktor Muzhenko, chief of the military’s general staff, predicted in mid-October he could recapture Donetsk and Luhansk from the separatists with defensive weaponry requested from the U.S., but only at a heavy cost in lives.

Szyrokoradiuk said his church’s Caritas-Spes charity was helping needy Ukrainians on both sides of the conflict.

However, he added, more than 100,000 displaced people, a fifth of them children, were living in industrial containers, abandoned barracks and railway sheds in Kharkiv alone as winter approached. Effective humanitarian aid would be essential to any peace process, he said.

“Ukraine cannot stand alone. It needs support, and we’re grateful to people of goodwill in Europe and the U.S. who are engaging and showing solidarity with us,” the bishop said.

“The feeling we’re not abandoned has been very important for unifying Ukraine during this war. Although opinion was once divided between pro-Russian and pro-western groups, no one now doubts our salvation lies in moving closer to the European Union,” he said.



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE GREET VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE — Pope Francis greets visually impaired people, accompanied by their dogs, during his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Oct. 18.

Schools mount plans with indigenous communities

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

Every Catholic college and university in Canada has wakened up to the call for truth and reconciliation between indigenous Canadians and the rest of us.

“I don’t really see that a university or a place of learning has a valid claim to the pursuit of truth and reason if it isn’t looking at all these factors that really have textured our society, both good and bad. . . . It would be self-evident to say that reconciliation is one of the calls of our times,” said Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities of Canada chair Gerry Turcotte. “There are very deep and hurtful legacies via the Catholic Church, but also other political and even religious organizations. How do you move forward if you don’t acknowledge those tensions, those wounds?”

Turcotte has recently compiled a 22-page report on Catholic colleges and their efforts to learn about and teach Canada’s Aboriginal heritage in partnership with Aboriginal people. The college presidents launched Turcotte’s report, “Dialogue Together With Action: Canada’s Catholic Colleges & Universities & the Road to Reconciliation,” Oct. 24 in Ottawa.

Turcotte hopes the report will inspire more partnerships with indigenous communities and linkages between Catholic institutions



Dr. Gerry Turcotte

searching for ways to address Canada’s Aboriginal reality.

“It’s an incentivizing, creative document about what more is possible,” Turcotte said.

In a long list of projects big and small, the one Saint Paul University in Ottawa is shepherding is among the most ambitious. With the help of an \$800,000 gift from

the Sisters of St. Ann, Saint Paul is partnering with St. Mark’s College in Vancouver, First Nations University of Canada in Regina and Nipissing University in North Bay, Ont., to equip native communities to deal with trauma and tragedy.

Saint Paul’s is putting its 42-year-old program in counselling, psychotherapy and spirituality to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities, helping to train people in their communities and building a network of support that can deal with suicides or addiction.

“For us it’s about expanding something that’s already there, making it more relevant to indigenous communities,” said Saint Paul rector Chantal Beauvais. “It’s exciting in a way that we are doing our best to create these spaces where people can feel whole and human.”

Saint Paul’s believes it can find ways to honour and use the traditional cultural knowledge of elders, who are often called on when communities are in crisis. Links between the university and indigenous community colleges can help equip teachers, social workers, nurses and others in remote communities, said Beauvais.

“It’s a new road for all of us at universities,” she said.

It’s a process of decolonizing

the university, according to the rector.

“To be up front and to say, ‘Yes, we have been part of the problem in the past,’ ” is the first step, Beauvais told *The Catholic Register*. “Maybe there are ways of doing things at the moment that continue to be part of the problem. But now we are genuinely looking for ways to be inclusive in a real way.”

It isn’t just the 94 “Calls to Action” from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada that has universities retooling their curricula and rethinking their relationships with native people, said University of Sudbury indigenous studies chair

Michael Hankard. Ontario’s high school curriculum has been paying attention to indigenous history and social issues since 1999. High school graduates arrive on campus looking for more.

“Students are pretty much knocking down our doors,” said Hankard, who lives on the Serpent River First Nation.

Indigenous students are looking for an open and frank acknowledgment of spiritual realities.

“There is a particular urgency and poignancy to Catholic organizations recognizing and working maybe a little bit harder (on recon-

— COLLEGES page 4

Exercise demonstrates loss of land

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Grade 7 and 8 students at St. Dominic Savio School expressed surprise at how quickly life on the prairies changed for the indigenous people after the Europeans arrived. They participated in a Blanket Exercise accompanied by a couple of short videos that said an estimated 20 million people lived on what they called Turtle Island (North America),

with their own social, commercial, cultural, and government structures.

Joanna Landry, Regina Catholic School Division co-ordinator of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education (FNMI), aided by residential school survivor Susan Beaudin, described how laws were passed that took away their land, language, and culture in an effort to solve the “Indian problem,” as it was described by politicians and

bureaucrats of the day.

Blanket Exercise participants place blankets on the floor roughly in the shape of Turtle Island, an example of which was shown on a video. With the floor completely covered, they were asked to stand on the blankets, each of which was removed as Landry and Beaudin described the laws and practices that took away the land, until participants were all standing on small patches of the remaining land that represented the reserves on which indigenous peoples were once confined; they could not leave without the Indian Agent’s approval.

In a series of narratives by Landry and Beaudin, students heard about residential schools, the “60s Scoop” and the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). One of the videos featured Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the TRC, describing the report as pointing the way toward reconciliation and healing.

The students, along with Landry and Beaudin, gathered in a talking circle to discuss their feelings about the exercise, what they had learned from it, and to ask questions. Those who spoke said the rapid loss of land as experienced during the exercise was what struck them the most. Beaudin, who had described her residential school experience, was asked if she had learned to forgive. She said taking part in the Blanket Exercise is part of her healing journey.

Landry told media that the blanket exercise was modified to be age-appropriate for the students at different grade levels. It will eventually be taken to all schools in the division.



Frank Flegel

STANDING ON TURTLE ISLAND — In an exercise designed to illustrate the rapid loss of land, language, and culture experienced by First Nations following the arrival of Europeans on Turtle Island (the indigenous term for North America), students at St. Dominic Savio School in Regina took part in a Blanket Exercise. They were asked to stand on blankets which had been placed on the floor, and once the floor was completely covered, the blankets were removed one by one — each representing an indigenous law, custom, or cultural practice — until participants were left occupying small patches of land, representing the reserves on which indigenous peoples were soon confined.



Russel Weber

ST. THOMAS MORE MEDAL — President Terrence Downey of St. Thomas More College presented the St. Thomas More Medal to the staff of the *Prairie Messenger* at the annual corporation banquet in Saskatoon Oct. 21. The medal was established to recognize and honour persons, groups, and organizations who have combined personal qualities of care, integrity and faith with significant contributions to community and public life. The medal was presented to the *Prairie Messenger* “in recognition of a century of reflecting for the church on the Prairies the whole reality of the pilgrim People of God.” Accepting the medal on behalf of the PM were, from left, associate editors Donald Ward and Maureen Weber and Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB. Missing from the photo are layout artist Lucille Stewart, circulation and advertising manager Gail Kleefeld, and pressman Randy Weber.

University of Alberta pro-life group plans appeal

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

EDMONTON (CCN) — The University of Alberta pro-life student group is planning to appeal after a provincial court ruled in favour of the university’s right to charge \$17,500 in security fees as a condition to host a public event on campus.

The decision, which was filed Oct. 11, ruled that as a registered student group, UAlberta Pro-Life remains subject to the university’s rules and policies.

“It is unfortunate that the judge didn’t seem to recognize a lot of the problems with this situation,” UAlberta Pro-Life past president Amberlee Nicol said. “We’re not taking it lying down.”

Nicol said she and her fellow club members are consulting their lawyers to discuss the next steps.

“I think that if this precedent is allowed to stand, it’s rather a scary precedent,” said Nicol. “It means that essentially any large enough group of students, if they decide they don’t want a certain opinion

to exist on campus, all they have to do is break the rules and make it too expensive for people to express their views on campus.”

The university first imposed the security fee as a condition for the student club to host a public demonstration on campus grounds in February 2016. The students were planning to set up a series of displays that “showed the consequences of abortion.”

Eleven days before the scheduled event, the student group received an email from the University of Alberta Protective Services (UAPS) with a security assessment and a \$17,500 bill. According to the email, the costs were to cover the UAPS officers on special duty and Edmonton police, as well as a double-perimeter fence “ensuring that sidewalks remain unobstructed.”

Unable to afford these fees, the group cancelled the event.

These security measures were drafted in consideration of a similar event that took place the previous year, which the student group claimed to have been violently shut down by pro-choice students.

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Progress made combating human trafficking

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — While some progress has been made combating human trafficking in Canada more needs to be done, especially in educating the public says former MP Joy Smith.

“There is human trafficking in Canada and it happens a block away from where you are sitting,” Smith told more than 150 people attending the screening of the feature-length documentary *Human Trafficking: Canada’s Secret Shame* produced by the Joy Smith Foundation. Smith hopes to get the documentary shown in schools and at police departments across the country.

Most human trafficking in Canada involves Canadian women and girls, and the problem disproportionately affects indigenous communities, panelists said following the presentation. In addition to luring girls at schools, shopping centres and venues where they hang out, traffickers are increasingly using social media to target and lure their victims, they said.

“It’s a growth industry and it’s

not going away,” said the founder of the Ratanak International and former RCMP forensic expert Brian McConaghy, who participated in the documentary and the panel discussion. Traffickers make between \$240,000 and \$260,000 per victim, per year, the documentary said.

While many distinguish between trafficking and legal prostitution, McConaghy told the panel that when the entry level for prostitution is 12 - 13 years old, “there’s an artificial distinction” between child and adult prostitution and how voluntary participation in the sex trade really is.

McConaghy became aware of the trafficking problem in Canada working on piecing together the remains of serial killer Robert Pickton’s many victims who were lured to his pig farm from Vancouver’s Lower East Side. The Ratanak Foundation fights trafficking in Cambodia, a society traumatized by genocide, thus making it more vulnerable to traffickers, McConaghy said.

Yet First Nations communities in Canada exhibit many of the same characteristics of trauma,

McConaghy said. He urged people to “step into the deep end” and “seek to support First Nations” in finding a solution to this crisis.

NPD MP Irene Mathysen, who co-sponsored the screening with Conservative MP Arnold Viersen, Liberal MP Robert-Falcon Ouellette and Conservative Senator Betty Unger, told the audience she had not been aware of Canada’s homegrown trafficking problem until she participated in a 2006 study of the issue by the Status of Women Committee.

Mathysen said she thought it was a problem elsewhere, perhaps tied to the fall of the Soviet Union. But when she went home to her London, Ont., riding and consulted with local police, she discovered trafficking was “in my neighbourhood.”

“All along the 401 corridor, young women and some young men are being trafficked and victimized,” she said.

The documentary featured testimony from two young women who described how they were groomed and lured by traffickers into sex slavery. They both described events that began with

people they thought were their friends or boyfriends.

Simone Bell, a recovered trafficking victim with Voicefound, a charitable agency to help victims of sexual exploitation, told the panel discussion after the documentary traffickers are using social media such as Facebook to lure victims. They target “vulnerable” young women through their online profiles, she said, and “make them think they’re in love,” and can have “a good life.”

“Kids are being fed makeup videos,” she warned, noting they feature mascara costing \$35 to \$40. These videos entice the girls to think they need these expensive items to look good, and this makes them vulnerable. “What we are teaching these kids is causing them to be trafficked,” she said.

When a trafficker posing as a boyfriend tells a young girl she is beautiful and buys her expensive things, she is lured into the sex

trade and trapped, the documentary showed.

“I can’t think of an investigation that hasn’t had a social media component,” said Constable Owen Carroll of the Ottawa police’s human trafficking unit. “Monitoring your kids’ social media is crucial.”

“The system is broken,” said Ouellette, an indigenous MP who represents the Winnipeg Centre riding, one of the poorest in Canada. He told of finding young indigenous girls “crying by the roadside,” desperate to get away from their traffickers, but because of addiction issues, not finding it easy to find a place that will take them in on short notice. “The system has a lots of cracks and people fall through them.”

“Traffickers know where the shelters are,” Carroll said. “All it could take is ‘the look’ to get them back. They will re-associate themselves with all that control.”

Youth prepare for synod

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Canadian bishops heard it loud and clear. Young people are looking for accompaniment as the Canadian Catholic Church prepares for the 2018 Synod on Young People.

Diocesan youth offices across the country are submitting final reports based on months of consultation for the 15th ordinary general assembly of the synod of bishops — titled “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment” — to take place in October next year.

In a *Catholic Register* survey of six dioceses across the country — Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Hamilton, Regina and St. Boniface, Man. — the message from the consultations was clear: young people are demanding more pastoral presence from their church.

“They are just coming of age and bumping into what would be the external Google search of the church,” said Rev. Frank Portelli, director of Toronto’s Office of Catholic Youth. “So what I would think the bishops are encountering is how do we make the information more accessible and . . . when you Google Catholic Church, who is controlling that message?”

Portelli, who authored the synod report for the archdiocese, said many points raised in the listening sessions so far have been concerns that the archdiocese’s youth office has heard for many years. Cardinal Thomas Collins, along with his four auxiliary bishops, heard young people’s concerns with building youth-friendly parish communities and more education in Catholic teaching.

“I think one of the biggest pieces of learning that came from the young people was that everyone was talking about the spirit of accompaniment,” said Christina Mines, youth ministry director in the Hamilton diocese in Ontario.

Mines spearheaded information gathering for Hamilton. In April she launched a streamlined version of the Vatican’s synod questionnaire. She also organized forums

with focus groups in local parishes.

Hamilton young people, Mines said, named many concerns about secular issues and “tensions of faith.” She said the youth have a desire to be more educated about what the church teaches in issues about the sanctity of life, human rights for LGBT people and respecting the dignity of Aboriginal people.

Many dioceses approached consultations in a combination of one or all three methods: online surveys based on the Vatican’s synod questionnaire, consultations with key groups and open town-hall meetings for the general public.

“Specifically talking about the town hall, that was something that as we were running it, Michelle (Braden) and I kind of looked at each other and said, ‘Why haven’t we done this before,’ ” said Braden Kuntz, one half of the youth leadership team in the Archdiocese of Regina. “The town halls are something that we want to continue doing, not just in youth ministry, but really in all aspects of the diocese.”

Many of the concerns raised, like fewer people considering religious vocations, are nothing new, said Kuntz. But in every consultation, he said, young people consistently reminded leaders “don’t give up on us.”

In most diocesan consultations, youth directors are finding most of their respondents within the Catholic community. Although Pope Francis has commissioned dioceses to consult “the entire People of God,” Canada’s youth directors still find it difficult to reach people who are not in the pews.

Clayton Imoo, from the Archdiocese of Vancouver, said finding non-Catholic respondents meant that someone from the Catholic community sent them a link to the online survey. And so, he said, examining the “entry point” in which these non-Catholics were reached might become the key to their evangelization.

“With a lot of (non-Catholics), there’s definitely a lot of intrigue about Pope Francis, in just how

— YOUTH, page 5



Photo courtesy Mount Saint Vincent University

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE — A drum circle is just one of the many activities at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax that focuses on Aboriginal heritage.

Colleges work hard to build relationships

Continued from page 3

ciliation) — saying this is not set in stone; change can happen,” said Turcotte, who is president of St. Mary’s University in Calgary.

Turcotte and the St. Mary’s administration has worked hard to build relationships with Alberta Aboriginal communities, earning the right to carry a teepee which can be erected several times per year on campus and host teaching by native elders.

From Métis sash graduation ceremonies to nights spent on campus in the teepee, which must never be left unoccupied, Aboriginal students at St. Mary’s are the first to feel the effects of their university’s efforts at reconciliation.

“We had many Catholic First Nations students for whom this was a healing of great consequence — to see this kind of dialogue on campus,” Turcotte said. “It does matter, not just morally

but I think psychologically. It’s just a good thing to be doing.”

New courses

Canada’s 22 Catholic colleges and universities are reaching out to indigenous Canadians with new courses, new student services and new community partnerships. Some examples:

- St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon: A new course on the relationship between Catholicism and indigenous peoples; an endowed chair in Indigenous Spirituality and Reconciliation.

- St. Mary’s University, Calgary: A full-time director of indigenous initiatives; a teepee on campus where elders teach traditional knowledge.

- Campion College, Regina: An advisory circle on indigenous relations in collaboration with First Nations University of Canada.

- Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia: A special

adviser to the president on Aboriginal affairs.

- University of Sudbury, Ont.: A new \$140,000 sacred fire arbour that operates as an outdoor classroom and a focal point for Aboriginal ceremonies.

- Regis College, Ontario: A graduate course in Injustices in Canada Today; year-round consultation with an elder.

- St. Mark’s College, Vancouver: Two courses in First Nations Studies, Social Justice and Peace Studies.

- King’s University College, London, Ont.: A course in contemporary First Nations issues; the *Gaudium et Spes* Award scholarship for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students established with a \$25,000 gift from the Diocese of London.

- St. Joseph College, Edmonton: A course entitled “Interaction between indigenous spiritual traditions and Christianity” taught by Métis scholar Sharon Pasula.

Moral leadership of *Laudato Si'* now more evident

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — As more than 40 Catholic institutions announced they would no longer invest in fossil fuel companies, a former United Nations chief climate negotiator said the pope’s environmental vision laid out in *Laudato Si'* is becoming even more relevant.

“There’s always a need for moral leadership,” said Christiana Figueres. “If anything I think the need and the urgency for moral leadership has actually increased.”

Figueres is the former executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. She was responsible for getting the world’s countries to sign the December 2015

Paris climate accord — a key goal of Pope Francis when *Laudato Si'* was released.

“I’m not Catholic, but I think the huge value-add of the pope is that he — obviously, he’s the head of the Catholic Church — but he also uses his moral voice, which goes above any religion. He speaks directly to that moral responsibility we all have as human beings,” said the Costa Rican diplomat.

Figueres was in Toronto just days after the “Season of Creation,” a month-long movement to pray and care for the environment endorsed by Pope Francis, came to a conclusion on the feast of St. Francis with the largest-ever Catholic divestment announcement in St. Francis’ hometown of Assisi.

The 40 institutions pulled their money out of climate-warming entities in response to Pope Francis’ call in *Laudato Si'* to be proactive to protect the environment and make investments that promote a carbon-neutral environment.

“Church institution divestments are very important,” Figueres said. “They don’t add up to trillions, but they have a very important exemplary role. They take moral responsibility to the next level. You can’t have moral responsibility that is just abstract. There has to be a consequence to that moral responsibility.”

Figueres gave a speech to the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships about the need for new, more robust infrastructure to withstand more frequent and violent hurricanes, tornadoes and other effects of climate change. She swept into Toronto in the wake of four massive hurricanes which displaced 100,000 people and caused \$400 billion in damage in the United States alone.

looking at a curve that goes down,” she said.

While China makes massive investments in solar, wind and nuclear power, western countries, including Canada, are subsidizing fossil fuel exploration and delivery to the tune of \$5.3 trillion per year — six per cent of global GDP — said Figueres. Canada is part of a 35-nation group at the United Nations looking for co-ordinated ways to cut fossil fuel subsidies.

“We as humanity, we have to know we are facing a crossroads. . . . Sometimes we just have to stand up to reality,” Figueres said.



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

MORAL LEADERSHIP — Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Youth seek change in church

Continued from page 4

approachable and responsive he seems,” he said.

“There’s also intrigue I think about how or if the church is going to change its teachings on different issues.”

However, like in many other dioceses across the country, resources for youth offices are limited.

In the Vancouver archdiocese, Imoo is the former youth director. His title recently changed to associate director of Ministries and Outreach office after an amalgamation of ministry offices. Imoo assured that all youth programs and youth office staff have been retained, but their duties now also include family ministry and general outreach.

“Everybody keeps saying we want training and formation. And

then, we’re also faced with the reality of the lack of resources,” said Isabel Correa, director of the Montreal archdiocese’s *Mission Jeunesse* office.

A position was recently cut from the *Jeunesse* office’s four-person team. Correa said the consultations and the synod itself is an opportunity to keep these issues on the mind of the Canadian church.

“That’s been brought up in the synods a lot, the scarcity of our multipliers,” said Correa. “The busyness of people who work with young people and their lack of time to just be present. . . . It keeps it on the dialogue table.”

All Canadian dioceses’ reports, along with reports from around the world, will contribute to the Vatican’s preparatory document to be published early 2018.

“All of this is actually interrelated and it all ends up in incredible suffering for which we will never have a number,” Figueres told her audience of bankers, engineers and insurance executives. “It’s irrelevant if you believe in climate change, just as it is irrelevant whether you believe in gravity.”

Redirecting investment away from carbon and toward sustainable energy and infrastructure will be key to actually meeting the Paris accord goals, including net year-over-year declines in greenhouse gases, she said.

“By 2020 we need to completely reverse the trajectory of greenhouse gases. We need to be

The moral argument about climate change is not about abstract, academic theorizing, said Figueres. This year’s hurricane season in the Caribbean is only a small taste of what will happen if the carbon content in the Earth’s atmosphere does not decline, she said.

Baum attended Vatican II

Continued from page 1

in the early days of Vatican II. He was mentored by Cardinal Augustin Bea, then-president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. An ally of St. John XXIII, Bea went looking for credible Catholic experts on Catholic-Jewish relations and found his man in Baum.

Gregory Baum was born to a Jewish mother and Protestant father in Berlin in 1923. At 17, in 1940, he came to Canada as a war refugee after a brief stay in England. Among the many Jewish refugees in camps in Quebec were young intellectuals who set up classes for the younger refugees, which Baum attended.

He became a Catholic during the war years and joined the Augustinian order in 1947. He was ordained a priest in 1954. He studied theology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland and published *That They May Be One*, an influential book about Catholic ecumenism, in 1958.

His involvement in the Second Vatican Council began even before the world’s bishops met in Rome, as Vatican officials were planning the church’s first truly global meeting.

“I remember the first session I attended was in November 1960,” Baum told *The Catholic Register* in 2012. “I was at the first session of the secretariat in Rome. We had the first meeting with Cardinal Bea and Msgr. (later Cardinal Johannes) Willebrands, and this was all about ecumenism. At the end of the meeting Cardinal Bea said, ‘I just saw the pope and he said to us, he said that he wants the secretariat to prepare a statement to rethink the church’s relationship to the Jews.’”

St. John XXIII’s concern about the six million Jews killed in the heart of Europe during the Second World War largely drove the

Second Vatican Council. Baum had already begun publishing in academic journals about Catholic-Jewish relations.

Baum attended all three sessions of the council as a peritus, or theological expert, consulting on *Nostra Aetate*; the Decree on Ecumenism; and the Declaration on Religious Freedom.

After the council, Baum taught theology and ethics at the University of St. Michael’s College in the University of Toronto. He left the priesthood in 1974 and married. He studied sociology at the New School for Social Theory in New York and, in the 1980s, taught in the religious studies department at McGill University in Montreal.

Baum was a frequent target of conservative campaigners in English Canada and the United States. Msgr. Vincent Foy, a Canadian theologian, published frequent articles condemning Baum as a “Marxist . . . ex-priest.” Foy popularized a theory that Baum had excommunicated himself by marrying before his laicization was formally recognized by the Vatican. Baum’s opinions on ordination of women and gay marriage drew frequent criticism.

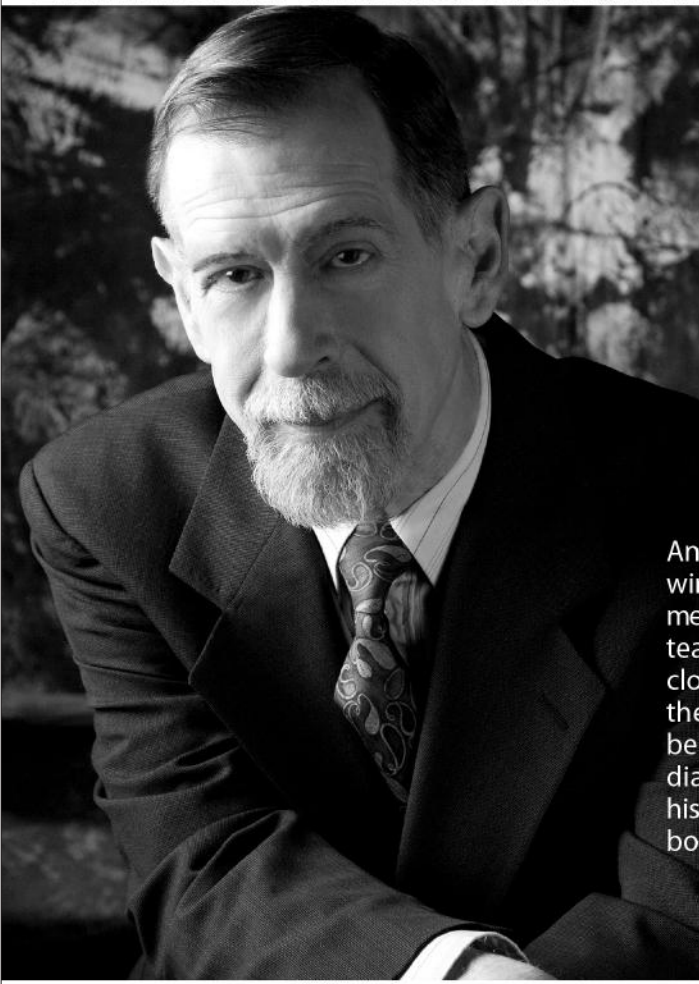
Baum’s critics were further incensed when he published his 2016 autobiography, *The Oil Has Not Run Dry*, in which he spoke of his first homosexual experience, at the age of 40.

The author of more than 20 books, Baum said he was never worried by the criticism.

“I live in a dream world in Quebec,” he told *The Catholic Register*. “I still belong to a wide network of progressive Catholics. I never meet any conservatives.”

He was founder and editor of the influential journal *The Ecumenist* from 1962 to 2004. The journal highlighted connections between theology and sociology, politics and culture.


29th Annual **Michael Keenan Memorial Lecture**



2017 GUEST LECTURER:
Dr. Eric McLuhan
B.Sc., M.A., Ph.D.

**Catholicism and Communication:
*The Sensus Communis,
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St. Nicholas Catholic School opens

SASKATOON — Students and staff in Saskatoon's Evergreen community joined the provincial education minister, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) leaders, and Cathedral of the Holy Family parish representatives to officially open St. Nicholas Catholic School Oct. 19.

This is the 18th and final school to officially open as part of a provincial joint-use schools project.

"Our government is proud to join with the students and staff of St. Nicholas Catholic School to celebrate the grand opening of this beautiful new school and officially mark the completion of the largest school-building project in Saskatchewan history," education minister Bronwyn Eyre said.

"The growth in northeast Saskatoon has increased over the past decade, and as with the other 18 schools we've opened, St. Nicholas responds to that growth and future development."

GSCS board chair Diane

Boyko also spoke at the opening. "We're proud that the people of Saskatoon, and all of Saskatchewan, want Catholic education for their children," Boyko said. "We're humbled that parents entrust us with the task of educating their children and building faithful disciples of Christ."

St. Nicholas Catholic School can accommodate some 600 students from Kindergarten to Grade 8 at full capacity.

"St. Nicholas is right in the heart of Evergreen, which is appropriate since the building will be the heart of this unique and vibrant community," principal Rick Garman said. "The staff are excited to help shape a strong, faith-filled school community with our students and families. It's really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

St. Nicholas Catholic School is one half of a joint-use facility that shares space with Sylvia Fedoruk Public School. The joint-use facility also contains a 90-space child-care centre and space available to



Derrick Kunz

ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL OPENS — A ribbon was cut Oct. 19 to officially open St. Nicholas Catholic School in the Evergreen neighbourhood of Saskatoon — the last of 18 new schools officially opened this year as part of a provincial joint-use schools project.

the community. It is part of the P3 Joint-Use Schools Project that includes 18 publicly owned elementary schools built on nine joint-use sites in Saskatoon, Martensville, Warman and Regina.

The other new GSCS schools are Holy Trinity Catholic School in Warman, École Holy Mary Catholic School in Martensville, and three Saskatoon schools: St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic School

in the Stonebridge neighbourhood, St. Lorenzo Ruiz Catholic School in the Hampton Village neighbourhood, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic School in the Rosewood neighbourhood.

One of the many innovative features integrated into the joint-use schools is technology such as interactive touch-screen televisions that allow students to learn about energy consumption, data ports

throughout common areas, tablets, smart boards and LCD screens. These devices provide students with the tools that will help them learn and grow in the 21st century.

Since 2007, the Government of Saskatchewan has committed approximately \$1.5 billion toward 67 major school capital projects and numerous smaller projects such as portable classrooms and preventative maintenance and renewal.

Conscience not just something that makes you feel guilty

Continued from page 1

There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths," states the catechism.

Deutscher described conscience as a calling: "It is not something that just makes you feel guilty after the fact, but it is a guide."

The catechism also addresses the formation of conscience, stating in CCC #1784: "The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. The education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart."

The church holds that a person's conscience must be formed and educated. It is not always enough to rely on our "gut feeling," said Deutscher. Then, in making a decision in conformity with an educated conscience, that "peace of heart" can be experienced.

Health care decisions often happen in a whirlwind, in a time of stress and confusion, fear or trauma. "You need to try and take a step back, and ask for as much time as you can, to try and find that peace of heart, and make an educated and informed decision," said Deutscher.

It was noted that thinking about such decisions beforehand — such as in an advanced care directive — means discernment happens apart from the pressures of being in the midst of a health care crisis. The Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS) has published "A Faith-Based Advance Directive For Health Care" as a tool to assist with such discernment.

Using the example of artificial nutrition and hydration — often

referred to as a "feeding tube" — Deutscher explored decision-making factors that would help determine whether a treatment is deemed ordinary or beyond-the-ordinary, a benefit or a burden.

Intravenous (IV), Nasal Gastric (NG), Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG), and Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) are among the methods for artificially providing hydration and nutrition — and each method has its own particular applications, benefits and risks. Some methods are used as a short intervention, to assist someone in getting healthier, while others are more long-term.

Making a decision about continuing or terminating a particular form of artificial hydration or nutrition would involve a similar discernment to other kinds of decisions, said Deutscher.

She also provided excerpts from church documents examining the provision of food and drink to patients, and when it might be morally acceptable to withdraw what is usually deemed to be ordinary care.

As early as the 16th century the question came up as to whether a dying man is committing suicide if he refuses to eat. "Many people stop being interested in food when they are dying; they stopped wanting to eat," Deutscher said. "They noticed this and took the time to seriously think about it."

One theologian, Francisco de Vitoria (1483 - 1546), maintained that, if a dying person refused food and drink, "it was because he was now focusing on non-earthly things, and should not be considered suicidal," Deutscher related.

De Vitoria wrote: "If a sick person is able to take nourishment, the hope of life, he has an obligation to take it, just as he must be given it, if he is not able to do so himself. However, if the decline of the spirit is so great, and the alteration of appetite is so

much so that the infirm is able to take nourishment only with great trouble and an almost certain torment, then it can be considered an impossibility and one is excused from sin . . . especially if there is little or no hope for life."

The statement recognizes that food ordinarily is a good thing, and if someone is simply sick and needs food, we have a moral obligation to provide it, said Deutscher. "But he also says that in certain circumstances it might not be what the person needs."

She also referred to the 1957 words of Pope Pius XII about ventilators, in which he made a distinction between ordinary and extra-ordinary measures, putting ventilators into the "extra-ordinary camp" as something that were good to use if they help a person, but that there was no obligation to keep people on ventilators. It is not that the treatment is "good or bad" but whether it is proportionate or disproportionate, said Deutscher.

"When it comes to medical interventions, there are things that are ordinary and expected, and you also have things that are outside that 'ordinary' box that you accept — it doesn't mean that they (the 'extra-ordinary') are good or bad, it is just not what you might normally expect."

Medical interventions such as ventilators and feeding tubes are not good or evil in themselves, they are tools, she said. "It's like asking if a hammer is good or evil," she said. "It depends on the circumstances, and how you use a tool that makes it good or bad."

The group then discussed what treatments in our society are considered ordinary and which might be deemed extra-ordinary. For instance, a cast is ordinary treatment in this time and place. However, something like chemotherapy might go into either category, depending on circumstances.

Food is usually concerned

ordinary care or treatment, but at the same time, "there might be circumstances in which food might make the jump to being something extra-ordinary," Deutscher noted.

She then explored the Terry Schiavo case: a woman with an acquired brain injury who was in a persistent vegetative state, whose husband argued she would not want to have been kept on prolonged life support, and decided to remove her feeding tube. Schiavo's parents disputed his decision, and there were seven years of legal challenges before the tube was removed. The focus of the case was on who had the right to act as her proxy decision-maker, with the courts ultimately deciding it was her husband.

"So on March 18, 2005, Terry Schiavo's feeding tube was removed. She died on March 31, 13 days later. Her parents and her brother described it as death by starvation, and the Catholic Church agreed," Deutscher said. "This led to a lot of confusion for a lot of people, and many asked the question, 'Is the church saying that feeding tubes are mandatory now?'"

The bishops of the United States wrote the Vatican and asked them to clarify the position on the case and on feeding tubes. In the first part of the response, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith described food as a basic requirement of life.

"In the case of Terry Schiavo, she wasn't dying — she was still processing food, food was still doing its designed end, keeping her alive. It really didn't matter how brain damaged or not that she was — she was still a human being and had a fundamental right to receive food," Deutscher summarized.

"But it didn't stop there. They (the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith) did not want people to simply think that feeding tubes were mandatory, that everyone has

to have a feeding tube, so after six and a half pages of saying why food is ordinary, they give some circumstances where food might be considered extra-ordinary," she said.

The 2007 Commentary on Artificial Nutrition and Hydration acknowledged that in remote places or in situations of extreme poverty, the artificial provision of food and water may be physically impossible, and no one is held to the impossible.

The congregation also wrote: "Nor is the possibility excluded that, due to emerging complications, a patient may be unable to assimilate food and liquids, so that their provision becomes altogether useless."

For instance, artificial feeding would not be a benefit if a person is nearing the end of life, and their organs have shut down, and they are not processing anything, described Deutscher. "Or someone who is dying may be swelling a lot — that may be a sign that their body is retaining that water, and if you keep pumping it into them it is not going to get the job done" and may make their suffering greater.

Finally, the congregation addressed the possibility that providing food might in some cases be more burdensome than beneficial, saying, "The possibility is not absolutely excluded that, in some rare cases, artificial nourishment and hydration may be excessively burdensome for the patient or may cause significant physical discomfort, for example resulting from complications in the use of the means employed."

Deutscher then led the gathering in a discussion of three scenarios involving artificial nutrition and hydration, weighing the burdens and the benefits to determine if the care would be considered ordinary or extra-ordinary, and whether artificial nutrition and hydration might be morally and ethically withdrawn.

Archbishop blesses three new Regina schools

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Archbishop Donald Bolen was kept busy in September blessing three new schools that officially opened for the 2017 - 2018 school year.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha School was blessed Sept. 19, St. Elizabeth School Sept. 20 and St. Nicholas School Sept. 22. Each of these new Catholic schools is partnered with a public school as part of the Saskatchewan Government’s joint-use schools dictum that saw 18 new schools built throughout the province — in Regina, Saskatoon, Warman and Martensville. All were built under the Public-Private Partnership (P3) model.

The archbishop spoke briefly at each school prior to the blessing, giving a bit of history of the saint each school is named for. The ceremony began with students processing into the gymnasium with the school’s cross, which they placed in front of the podium. Then the archbishop and Deacon Joe Lang began the blessing ceremony.

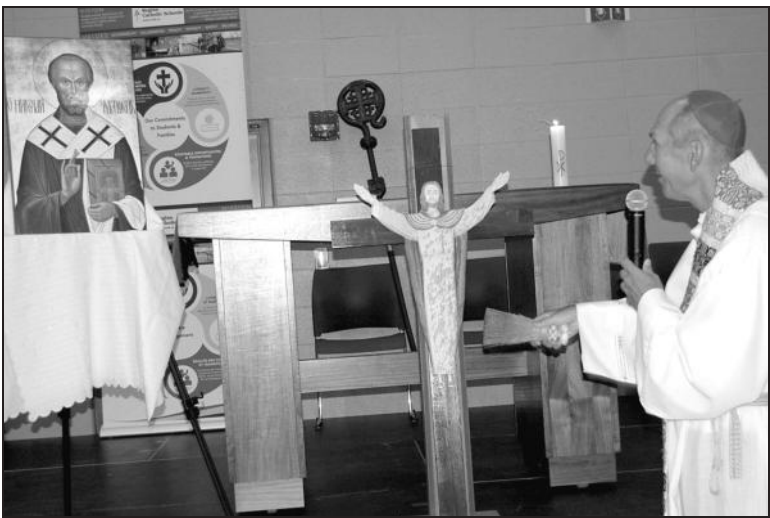
At St. Kateri Tekakwitha School, the archbishop told the

students that St. Kateri had a difficult life. “Her parents died when she was very young and she suffered from smallpox that disfigured her face. When she became a Christian, she wasn’t wholly in her indigenous community and not wholly in the mission community, so she lived in two worlds and that was not easy. So, St. Kateri knows what it is to have a bad day.” Bolen advised the students that if they have a bad day, St. Kateri is a good person to pray to because she understands.

“As an indigenous person, St. Kateri teaches us about reconciliation; she teaches us how to live together,” said Bolen. “She teaches us a new way to live together, to love each other.”

St. Kateri is a dual-track school, teaching in both English and French, and is located in the Harbour Landing neighbourhood of southwest Regina. The archbishop used both languages in his pre-blessing talk and his opening prayer for the school.

St. Elizabeth is a French immersion school in the newly developed east side of the city, and the archbishop’s initial remarks were in French. Students



Frank Flegel

SCHOOL BLESSING — Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen blesses one of three schools recently opened in the Archdiocese of Regina.

learned that, while St. Elizabeth is a common name among archdiocesan schools and churches, most are named after St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

“Your school is named after St. Elizabeth, who had a special relationship with Jesus; they were cousins.”

He related the story of how Mary, pregnant with Jesus, went to visit Elizabeth. “Mary was not married and her community wasn’t so sure about that.” But Elizabeth welcomed Mary and made her feel at home.

“So Elizabeth is a person who welcomes, she welcomes everyone,” said Bolen, but she also recognizes that Jesus is present in Mary. “When we build community, we do well to try to be nice to people, but also recognize that Jesus is present in every person we meet.”

It was at St. Elizabeth that the archbishop first introduced Maurille Hammond and his wife, Alice. Hammond hand-sculpted three crosses, each from a single block of wood, each about one metre high, featuring the risen Christ. He donated a cross to each new school. At St. Nicholas school, Bolen showed off the bishop’s staff, also crafted by Hammond and given as a gift.

St. Nicholas is a single-track English-language school located in the northwest area of Regina. Here the archbishop engaged the students about what they thought

about St. Nicholas. Students quickly identified him as Santa Claus; Bolen replied that St. Nicholas was certainly connected to Santa Claus, but was not Santa.

Bolen said he liked Nicholas because he was a great bishop, and Nicholas was the first name of the archbishop’s grandfather. He went on: “Nicholas is about giving, sharing the gifts that he has been given. He is a helper in his community and you, too, can be helpers, sharing the gifts God has given you and helping in the community.”

The format was similar at each school: the archbishop began by briefly explaining what Jesus is teaching in the day’s



John Lahey-Wiggs

CHEW ON THIS — As part of a national “Chew On This!” campaign calling for a Canadian poverty reduction strategy, members of the Justice and Peace Committee at St. Anne’s Parish in Saskatoon handed out materials after every mass on the weekend of Oct. 14 - 15, at the start of Poverty Awareness Week. The “Chew On This!” bags contained an apple, a fridge magnet and a postcard addressed to MP Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Children, Families and Social Development, calling for a federal action plan to reduce poverty. Citizens for Public Justices and Canada Without Poverty organize the cross-country event in conjunction with World Food Day Oct. 17. It’s one part of the Dignity for All campaign for a poverty-free Canada. For more information see <http://dignityforall.ca>

Benedictine pastor will be missed

MUENSTER, Sask — After spending 21 years as parish priest at Annaheim, the parishioners gave Rev. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB, a farewell plaque which read: “Fr. Rudolph, thanks for being the pillar of morality in our community from 1987 to 2008. We thank you and we will miss you.”

It was fitting, then, that the former pastor died on Thanksgiving Monday in St. Paul’s Hospital, Saskatoon. He died due to organ failure resulting from cancer of the bladder. The community was thankful that he was finally freed of pain and also thankful for the many gifts he brought to the community.

Born to Joseph and Anne Novecosky of Burr, Sask., on Oct. 27, 1936, he joined the monastic community of St. Peter’s Abbey in 1955. After studies at St. John’s

Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., he was ordained on June 9, 1962. He taught at St. Peter’s College High School from 1963 until 1972, when it closed. Having a love for



OSB

Rev. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB

sports, Novecosky served as sports director at St. Peter’s.

In 1972, he began doing pastoral work in St. Gregor and Muenster. Starting in 1987 he became pastor, residing in Annaheim for 21 years and serving the neighbouring parishes of St. Gregor and Naicam. He was always supportive of church and community events. While serving as pastor he developed an expertise in wine making. He retired to the abbey in 2008, where he served as prior, treasurer and novice master.

In 2008 he published *Homilies for Everyday Life*, a collection of his homilies over the years. The book was well received.

Novecosky suffered a life-changing accident on Nov. 3, 1977, when he was injured in his back by his own shotgun while hunting ducks. He spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

Oldest monk at St. Peter’s Abbey dies at 93

MUENSTER, Sask. — For more than three decades, the monks and guests at St. Peter’s Abbey looked forward to savouring the greenhouse tomatoes grown by Br. Wolfgang Thiem each spring. He planted them early in his monastic room and then transferred them to the greenhouse he had built. It is a tradition that will be sorely missed.

Thiem was born on April 28, 1924 in Schwab Gmund, southcentral Germany. The Second World War was devastating Europe when he graduated from high school.

At the age of 18 he was drafted into the air force and then transferred to an anti-aircraft unit in Germany. He attended a driving school, learning the mechanics and function of motorcycles, cars, trucks and tractors. Thiem was taken prisoner by the Americans on Christmas Eve, 1945. He had served two-and-a-half years in the military and was to spend another three-and-a-half years as a prisoner of war on a farm in France.

Thiem came to Canada in 1953 and joined *Voluntas Dei*, a secular institute founded by an Oblate priest in Trois-Rivières, Que. He worked as a bricklayer in the summer, and in the winter he did carpentry work.

In 1971, Thiem spent a few months at the Trappist monastery in Manitoba. That summer he decided to visit St. Peter’s Abbey, which he had read about in the *Prairie Messenger*. He had helped the Trappists with haying and found himself doing the same



OSB

Br. Wolfgang Thiem, OSB

work at the abbey. He soon entered the novitiate, making his profession of vows on March 21, 1973.

Thiem served many roles at the abbey. His talents kept him busy in carpentry, masonry, gardening, and as a cantor at Divine Office. During his final years, he grew sunflowers and harvested the seeds to feed the chickadees in the winter. He enjoyed listening to international news and reading about news events on his computer. His favourite winter recreation was cross-country skiing.

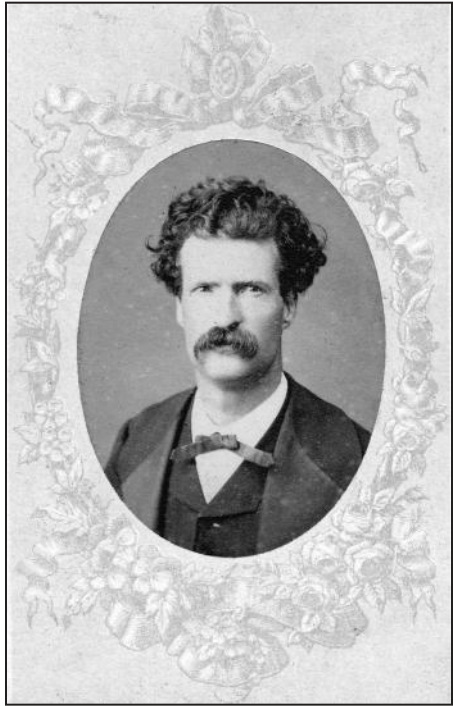
On Oct. 9 he fell outside his room and broke his right femur. He was taken to Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon for an operation and died a week later from complications due to failure of his heart, lungs and kidneys.

At 93, he was the oldest monk at St. Peter’s Abbey.

Film on Mark Twain highlights his religious doubts

By Kimberly Winston
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Mark Twain, a.k.a. Samuel Clemens, didn't have much of anything good to say about religion, at least the organized kind.



TWAIN PORTRAIT — This portrait of Mark Twain was taken in Istanbul in 1867, during his historic trip.

"I have a religion — but you will call it blasphemy," he wrote in a letter in 1865. "It is that there is a God for the rich man but none for the poor. . . . Perhaps your religion will sustain you, will feed you — I place no dependence in mine. Our religions are alike, though, in one respect — neither

can make a man happy when he is out of luck."

But it was a trip to the Holy Land in 1867 that launched him from local journalist to international satirist with *Innocents Abroad: Or, the New Pilgrim's Progress*, a book based on the journey. That pivotal trip, and its impact on Twain's views on religion, are the subject of "Mark Twain's Journey to Jerusalem: Dreamland," which begins airing this month on PBS stations.

"Samuel Clemens had a constant, lifelong sort of jilted love affair with the Bible," Twain biographer and historian Ron Powers says in the introduction to the hourlong film. "He wanted to believe, but he couldn't believe."

Twain's journey to Jerusalem started with a demand. "Send me \$1,200 at once," he telegraphed his editors at the *Alta California*, a San Francisco newspaper. "I want to go abroad."

Amazingly, the editors did and Twain booked passage on *The Quaker City*, America's first cruise ship. The other passengers were religious pilgrims and rich young men looking to acquire a little sophistication before settling down. Twain embedded himself in both groups and began sending back to the paper what would be more than 50 "dispatches."

The five-month trip was a disappointment to Twain from the start. In Europe, he lamented the fatness of the priests and the scrawniness of the poor, marvelled at the shabbiness of religious attractions like DaVinci's "The Last Supper" and wondered at the dullness of the locals.

He found the religious pilgrims he travelled with — men and women from small-town America who had never been abroad before — narrow-minded and hypocritical. They held nightly prayer meetings on-board the ship but ignored the suffering they saw among the poor everywhere they went.

None of that changed when the travellers entered the Holy Land, the last stop on their 12,000-kilometre journey. The pilgrims cry crocodile tears at the supposed site of the crucifixion, they chisel off souvenirs from the walls of temples, they haggle with impoverished locals charging a few dollars for a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus is supposed to have walked on water.

"What fascinates Mark Twain most as he enters the Holy Land is not so much the Holy Land itself, and its various relics and temples," Ann M. Ryan, a Twain scholar, says in the film, "but the hugely artificial response of the pilgrims he is travelling with . . . he sees it as a desecration."

Twain, a Presbyterian

steeped in the bare bones approach of Calvinism, was also scandalized by the amount of decoration — crosses, candlesticks, mosaics, statues, etc. — found in Jerusalem.

"He sees it as a kind of theme park," Powers says.

He is especially critical of the Holy Sepulchre, a fourth-century site that is supposed to contain the "tombs" of both Adam and Jesus.

"How touching it was, here in a land of strangers," Twain wrote of Adam's tomb, "thus to discover the grave of a blood relation. True a distant one, but still a relation."

But Twain had at least one experience that seems to have gen-

uinely affected him. The last stop in the Holy Sepulchre is the site where the crucifixion is supposed to have taken place.

"I could not believe the three holes in the top of the rock were the actual ones the crosses stood in," he wrote. "But I felt satisfied that those crosses had stood so near the place now occupied by them that the few feet of possible difference were a matter of no consequence."

Laura Skandera Trombley, former president of the Huntington Library, hones in on this moment. "The experience Twain has at the site of the crucifixion is really

— SKEPTICISM, page 9



PBS

JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM — Actor Jeffrey Weissman portrays Mark Twain in "Mark Twain's Journey to Jerusalem: Dreamland."

Hashtag campaign reveals how widespread sexual harassment really is

By Caitlin Ward

It's something that's been going around social media this week in the wake of the revelation that movie mogul Harvey Weinstein is a serial abuser. Primarily women, but also some men, have been posting that hashtag, or that simple statement, on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The idea is this: we need to let people know how widespread this problem is. People need to know how many women, and also men, have been sexually harassed or sexually assaulted. We need to be able to speak openly about what has happened to us, and we need to feel supported when we do. We need to have a conversation about this.

I didn't write "me, too" on Twitter or Facebook or Instagram. But it's not because I haven't had that experience.

I don't know if the problem is as widespread as social media sites would have us believe, but then I also don't know many women over the age of 12 who haven't been sexually assaulted or harassed. It might have been a

one-off incident in the street or at a bar. It might have been an ongoing problem with a colleague, a boss, or a fellow student. It might have been a friend. Or a boyfriend. A husband. An uncle. Or in my case, several of those things, at different times, in different situations, with different men.

Latch
Sam Smith

But I chose not to write "me, too." It's not because I thought it was a bad idea. I saw a number of women and men on my Facebook who posted it. I thought it was brave to disclose that, and in a certain way I thought it was kind, as well. They were willing to reveal that about themselves so others would know this is an issue that needs to be addressed. It allows us to start and also continue conversations that need to happen in various ways and with various people.

But still. I chose not to write "me, too." I don't want to say it without getting into the specifics of what has happened to me. I'm not far enough away from the circumstances or the people involved to be able to do so without being at the very least nervous, and possibly even scared. The trouble with any of these conversations is that we can talk about it in the abstract with relative ease. It's when we get into

the specifics that things become sticky. It's when you point the finger at a particular person who has done a particular thing to you that it becomes hard to discuss.

In the case of someone like Weinstein, it became easy to point the finger at him and call him a monster after the dam broke. Dozens of people have come forward with allegations. But I do wonder how helpful it is to point at him when we're discussing the broader issue. I worry it reinforces the idea that harassment and assault are only perpetrated by a handful of monstrous people.

If the #metoo hashtag teaches us anything, it's that the issue is far too widespread only to be at the hands of a few heinous individuals. Rapists are not creatures from the black lagoon. We live in a culture that tacitly accepts, and often even romanticizes this kind of behaviour. The words we use to describe love and the words we use to describe obsession or ownership of a person are frighteningly close, sometimes. The journey from objectifying women on the street to denying their autonomy on a date is shorter and more slippery than many of us realize. Things that seem cute in romantic comedies would be terrifying in real life.

I chose "Latch" by Sam Smith for this column not because I thought it was particularly bad or creepy or because I think Sam

Smith must be guilty of something. I chose it because it's a pretty normal song that has a questionable undercurrent in it. As many songs do.

Ultimately, we need to come to terms with the fact that people who are generally good can do horrible things. And what's more, we need to recognize that people are not only the bad things they've done. We need to make space for remorse and reconciliation, and dig deep to the heart of where these toxic attitudes and behaviours come from so we can change hearts and minds. In some ways it doesn't seem fair, I know, but it is near impossible to admit fault if you know you will be completely ostracized if you do. It's hard to come to terms with the fact that someone might have done some of these things if it means that that person is irredeemably horrible for having done so.

I think it's important to note, too, that I say this not as someone who doesn't understand the trauma that results from this behaviour, but as someone who understands it intimately. But I also understand that as Catholics, we have to be willing to recognize that we are sinners capable of

redeeming ourselves and of being redeemed by Christ. We must also be willing to recognize that every sinner, regardless of the sin, can be redeemed.

You lift my heart up
When the rest of me is down
You, you enchant me
Even when you're not around
If there are boundaries
I will try to knock them down

I'm latching on, babe
Now I know what I have found
I feel we're close enough
I wanna lock in your love
I think we're close enough
Could I lock in your love, baby?

Now I've got you in my space
I won't let go of you
Got you shackled in my embrace
I'm latching on to you

I'm so enraptured
Got me wrapped up in your touch
Feel so enamoured
Hold me tight within your clutch
How do you do it?

You got me losing every breath
What did you give me
To make my heart beat out my chest?
I feel we're close enough
I wanna lock in your love
I think we're close enough
Could I lock in your love, baby?

#metoo
Or, "me, too."

Ward is a Saskatoon-based freelance writer who spends her days (and most nights) working at a small Catholic college. Her less eloquent thoughts can be found at www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings

Focus on doc highlights from Toronto festival

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Although documentaries have not been TIFF's strongest suit, the 2017 slate delivered some high-quality features that bear noting even if I didn't manage to see *Faces, Places* (Villages, Visages) by renowned French veteran Agnès Varda, which took the audience award for documentary, runner-up *Long Time Running* about the iconic last tour of the Canadian rock band The Tragically Hip, or several other Canadian docs on indigenous themes — master filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin's *Our People Will Be Healed* and Alan Zweig's *There is a House Here*.

- The Final Year (U.S.)

The China Hustle (U.S.)

Makala (France)

Jane (U.S.)

One year ago Hillary Clinton, President Obama's former Secretary of State, was still the odds-on favourite to win the White House. No one in the foreign-policy echelons wanted to imagine how a repulsive renegade Trump regime would go about dismantling the Obama legacy and wrecking what remains of America's reputation abroad. (More on what lies behind the Trump phenomenon in power in my next columns.) That unexpected turn adds a timely and troubling significance to Greg Barker's *The Final Year*, a revealing behind-the-scenes look at

Obama administration internal debates over international issues during its last year in office. "There was going to be this friendly handoff of power," says Barker of the intention as filming started, "and then we'd see more of the accomplishments solidified." Well we know what happened with the result that, as the *Los Angeles Times* puts it, the finished film "offers an urgent ideological rebuttal to Trump's presidency."

Barker's candid camera follows three figures in particular: Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power, a former scholar and human rights activist; Secretary of State John Kerry; and Deputy National Security Adviser and go-to speech writer Ben Rhodes, whom National Security Adviser Susan Rice describes as being in a "mind meld" with Obama. One of his best lines: "The last thing the world needs is more walls." Rhodes shunned the spotlight and was uncomfortable when a lengthy profile of him ran in the *New York Times Magazine*.

We follow these principals as they accompany the president on major foreign travels, often involving difficult contexts and sensitivities as in Vietnam, Hiroshima, and Cuba; engaging on complex contentious issues — climate change, terrorism, the refugee crisis. We go behind closed doors where the most challenging questions are debated, such as how to respond to Syria's escalating civil war where Power's argument for earlier and stronger action against the Assad dictatorship did not prevail over Obama's and Rhodes' cautions.

What impresses is the deep seriousness and thoughtfulness that characterizes these deliberations. As compelling is the human side of that diplomacy and the revealing personal moments — from home to office to in the field. These are people who poured their heart and soul into their work and their palpable dismay over Trump's election last November is understandable as they contemplate years of effort being undermined or undone.

At the TIFF world premiere where Rhodes and Power received a standing ovation, she said what she found most distressing was the uncaring and careless approach of the new administration. The dedicated officials who remain must try to hold on as best they can.

That's not to say that Obama's foreign policies were without flaws and weak spots in articulation and execution. There's nothing on the ramping up of drone warfare, the aggressive prosecution of whistle blowers, the failure to close Guantanamo and the like; nothing indeed on Hillary Clinton's tenure at the State Department or stances on foreign affairs during her ill-fated campaign. The film is not a critical

appraisal, but an attempt to peer behind the curtain at how at the highest level a responsible global superpower formulates international policy and conducts diplomacy. In that respect it succeeds admirably.

There were many losers and victims in the 2007 - 2008 financial meltdown, but also conditions that provided opportunities for gain by financial tricksters and brazen opportunists as explored in documentaries like *Inside Job*, *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*, and fictional dramas like *Margin Call* and *The Big Short*. Director Jed Rothstein exposes another layer of financial manipulation and malfeasance in *The China Hustle*, which draws on information put together by a financial participant observer, Dan David, vice-president of Geo Investing based in the small town of Skippack, Pennsylvania. David, who was present at the world premiere, candidly admits: "There are no good guys in this story, including me."

David's firm specializes in short selling, which the film describes in a neat animated sequence "the short on shorts." Dan Glassman's review in *POV magazine* gives a succinct description of how it's done: "investors figure out that stocks are overvalued: they borrow shares in the company in question, sell them at the current rate, release a report showing that the company is overvalued, watch as the company's value plummets, and pay for the shares they'd borrowed at the newly tanked cost, pocketing almost all the money they made in the initial sale as profit."

China became the big play because it could still be promoted to investors as an attractive high-growth market. Dubious Chinese



operations were able to get listed on U.S. stock markets through "reverse mergers" with defunct but still registered U.S. firms, giving them a veneer of legitimacy and audit oversight. Many of these were shell games with companies boasting huge dollar evaluations that were discovered by on-site investigations in China to be corporate frauds. To project respectability, such companies might recruit figurehead VIPs to their boards (for example, in the film the case of high-ranking former army general and presidential aspirant Wesley Clark, who reacts with obvious unease and chagrin). While the Chinese government turned a blind eye, in the U.S. ratings agencies and regulatory bodies dropped the ball.

David proves a compelling witness as he spills the goods on the short sellers, brokers, lawyers and other market dealers profiting from the transactions related to these scams in which unwitting buyers would be enticed by rising share prices only to be taken for suckers when the house of cards



Gerald Schmitz

CHINA HUSTLE — *China Hustle* director Jed Rothstein, executive producer Alex Gibney, and Dan David, financial whistleblower, speak after the Sept. 9 premiere of the film at the Toronto International Film Festival.

collapsed. What is perhaps most worrying are the warnings from a range of experts interviewed about the vulnerabilities that persist in the financial system. As expressed by Alex Gibney, who directed *Enron* and is an executive producer: "The biggest lie on Wall Street is, this time it's different." *The China Hustle* sounds a timely alarm given Trump's promises of financial deregulation that can only make matters worse.

Emmanuel Gras' *Makala*, which received the Critics' Week Grand Prize at Cannes, depicts the back-breaking labour and struggle for subsistence that is the lot of so many in the Global South. Accompanied by a Congolese journalist, Gras' camera followed 28-year-old Kabwita Kasongo as he chops a huge tree into logs to begin an arduous process of making charcoal, an oversized load of which he will then strap to a bicycle and transport day and night some 50 kilometres along crowded dusty roads to try to sell in the city. He hopes to earn enough to support his wife and obtain medicine for his sick child.

The journey is full of hazards: a transport truck that knocks over his ramshackle load; police extortion to let him pass; customers demanding steep discounts. An exhausted Kasongo finds brief respite at a sister-in-law's place and seeks another kind of relief at a makeshift evangelical service at which he prays: "Father, come rescue me." Discussing the film, the images from which are as agonizing as they are astonishing and deeply moving, Gras emphasized the deep religious faith of the Congolese people notwithstanding the daily ordeal many face. The contract with Kasongo to allow such an intimate filming was to help him build a house. In showing a poor man's reality so starkly, beyond the value of empathetic awareness, it's good to know that the subject of it has benefited directly.

The National Geographic Studio's production of *Jane*, directed by Brett Morgen, goes into deepest Africa, but has nothing to

do with any companion of Tarzan. The Jane of the title is of course Jane Goodall who was a 26-year-old secretary with no academic science credentials when in 1957 Dr. Louis Leakey chose her to accompany him on groundbreaking field research in the Gombe region of British-controlled Tanganyika (renamed Tanzania in 1964 after achieving independence in 1964). What Goodall had was a passion for animals, a sense of adventure and a determined spirit. She would also go on to earn a doctorate from Cambridge in 1966.

At the time very little was known about primate behaviour in the wild. Her pioneering work with chimpanzees from the early 1960s yielded fascinating details on how chimps communicate with each other and express emotion, on their habits, family and community relationships, hierarchies and sometimes aggressive clashes. Goodall got closer to them than any other human had, and as empathetic as were these remarkable interactions — captured on film by ace photographer Hugo van Lawick whom she would marry — their purpose was rigorously to advance our understanding of our closest relatives in the animal kingdom; nothing Disneyfied about it. Goodall's work became world renowned, but not without her share of professional and personal trials. She and Hugo had a son, Grub, born in 1967. In 1971 the couple separated, but remained close until Hugo's death in 2002.

Morgan's film became possible when over 100 hours of historical footage thought lost was recovered in 2014. He has mined it for rare insights enriched by contemporary interviews with his subject. I found the swelling score by the maestro Philip Glass over-loud, but that is a minor quibble. With so many species threatened, there's never been a better time to draw attention to Goodall's contribution that includes her globetrotting advocacy as a UN Messenger of Peace and the work of the Institute (<http://www.janegoodall.org/>) that bears her name.

Skepticism lasted a lifetime

Continued from page 8

profound for him and meaningful," she says. "He recognizes that this may have happened and gains some understanding into why religion is so powerful."

Twain put all of his disdain and disappointment — leavened with a hearty dose of humour — into *The Innocents Abroad*. It was the most successful of his works during his lifetime.

Twain's skepticism about religion lasted all of his life. He had a personal faith — he said he believed in God, attended church and donated money for the construction of a church. But he skewered religious hypocrisy wherever he found it.

"Man is without any doubt the most interesting fool there is," he wrote in "Letters from the Earth," a commentary on Bible stories written in 1909, one year before his death.

"Also the most eccentric," Twain added.

"He hasn't a single written law, in his Bible or out of it, which has any but just one purpose and intention — to limit or defeat the law of God."

Faith in action should lift burdens, not add to them

Liturgy and Life

Catherine Ecker



As we begin the month of November a more barren landscape reminds us the days of summer have gone and the colours of autumn are beginning to fade. We are in the final weeks of the liturgical year and this month begins with the celebration of the solemnity of All Saints and All Souls day. For many, this month is filled with memories of family and friends who have died within the last year, or in years gone by. More than any other month, November can be filled with sadness and grief. It is a month that yearns for sunshine and good news.

Amidst this backdrop we gather to celebrate the Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time and hear the prophet Malachai condemning behaviour that has led us away from God. In the Gospel Jesus warns against leaders who

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do not practise what they teach, and place heavy burdens on the shoulders of others. A burden on my shoulder conjures up memories of deep muscle pain — not an image of “good news.”

As I reflected on the Scripture for this Sunday, the image of a heavy burden caught my attention and imagination. Jesus is cautioning us against leaders who do not practise what they teach. He is condemning the scribes and Pharisees who place burdens on others by what they teach, but are not inclined to live by those directives themselves.

It is easy to point a finger at leaders and excuse our own actions. As a wife, parent, grandmother and catechist, I wonder what burdens I place on those I share life with and those I am called to serve. In my own pastoral setting, place of work, classroom or home, do I place expectations on others and neglect to assist them? Each of us can reflect on what we teach, and determine if our lives reflect what we ask others to do. Years ago my son taught me that my words, my facial expressions and my actions need to match for my message to be credible. If our words and actions do not match, we risk placing burdens upon others or proclaiming Good News we have not yet embraced.

Jesus reminds his disciples and us that we are to be students of Christ and we are to serve others. The words of Jesus are echoed in the letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. St. Paul’s image of proclaiming the Good

News and being as gentle as a nurse caring for her children is in sharp contrast to a heavy burden being placed on our shoulders. St. Paul acknowledges that being a follower of Christ has demands, yet God does not want us to be burdened.

As I prepared to write this reflection, my days were shaped by the rhythm of hospital time as I was with a family member recovering from surgery. It was easy for me to let the burden of illness, surgery, waiting for doctors, anxiety and fear to take hold of my thoughts. It was the words of Psalm 131 that challenged me to let them go: “In you, Lord, I have found my peace.” As I prayed the words I was reminded of Jesus’ words in St. Matthew’s Gospel, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” When we learn to rely on God, we may be surprised at how our burden is eased.

We have a tendency to let the difficulties of daily life shape our thoughts. St. Paul reminds us that we are called to accept the Word of God and to live in a way that the Good News shapes our lives. We become a reflection of the Good News when we allow our lives to be a reflection of what we believe.

On Sundays we gather to hear God’s Word. In our assembly, the diversity of experiences, circumstances and family constellations are evident. Often the Word we hear proclaimed is markedly different from the messages we may hear at home, school or work. As we listen, may we ask the Spirit to open our hearts so we may be nourished, free to surrender our burdens to God.

May God’s Word lead us to give praise and thanks for all that we have been given and to be open to the gift of dining together at the Lord’s table where we become more fully who we are: the Body of Christ for the life of the world.

Thirty-first Sunday
in Ordinary Time
November 5, 2017

Malachi 1:14 — 2:2, 8 -10
Psalm 131
1 Thessalonians 2:7-9,13
Matthew 23:1-12

Our mission as disciples of Jesus is to close the distance, not the gate

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Nobel Prizing-winning author Toni Morrison, assessing the times, asks this question: “Why should we want to know a stranger when it is easier to estrange another? Why should we want to close the distance when we can close the gate?” Except this isn’t a question, it’s a judgment.

It’s a negative judgment on both our society and our churches. Where are our hearts really at? Are we trying more to close the distance between us and what’s foreign, or are we into closing gates to keep strangers estranged?

In fairness, it might be pointed out that this has always been a struggle. There hasn’t been a golden age within which people wholeheartedly welcomed the stranger. There have been golden individuals and even golden communities who were welcoming, but never society or church as a whole.

Much as this issue is so front and centre in our politics today, as countries everywhere struggle with their immigration policies and with what to do with millions of refugees and migrants wanting to enter their country, I want to

take Morrison’s challenge, to close the distance rather than close the gate, to our churches: Are we inviting in the stranger? Or, are we content to let the estranged remain outside?

There is a challenging motif within Jesus’ parable of the over-generous vineyard owner which can easily be missed because of the overall lesson within the story. It concerns the question that the vineyard owner asks the last group of workers, those who will work for only one hour. Unlike the first group, he doesn’t ask them: “Do you want to work in my vineyard?” Rather he asks them: “Why aren’t you working?” Their answer: “Because no one has hired us!” Notice they don’t answer by saying that their non-employment is because they are lazy, incompetent, or disinterested. Neither does the vineyard owner’s question imply that. They aren’t working simply because no one has given them the invitation to work!

Sadly, I believe this is the case for many people who are seemingly cold or indifferent to religion and our churches. Nobody has invited them in! And that was true too at the time of Jesus. Whole groups of people were seen as being indifferent and hostile to religion and were deemed simply as sinners. This included prostitutes, tax collectors, foreigners, and criminals. Jesus invited them in and many of them responded with sincerity, contrition, and de-

votion that shamed those who considered themselves true believers. For the so-called sinners, all that stood between them and entry into the kingdom was a genuine invitation.

Why aren’t you practising a faith? *No one has invited us!*

Just in my own, admittedly limited, pastoral experience, I have seen a number of individuals who from childhood to early or late mid-life were indifferent to, and even somewhat paranoid about, religion and church. It was a world from which they had always felt excluded. But, thanks to some gracious person or fortunate circumstance, at a moment, they felt invited in and they gave themselves over to their new religious family with a disarming warmth, fervour, and gratitude, often taking a fierce pride in their new identity. Witnessing this several times, I now understand why the prostitutes and tax collectors, more than the church people at the time, believed in Jesus. He was the first religious person to truly invite them in.

Sadly, too, there’s a reverse side to this where, all too often, in all religious sincerity, we not only don’t invite certain others in, we positively close the gates on them. We see that, for example, a

number of times in the gospels where those around Jesus block others from having access to him, as is the case in that colourful story where some people are trying to bring a paralytic to Jesus but are blocked by the crowds surrounding him, and consequently have to make a hole in the roof in order to lower the paralytic into Jesus’ presence.

Too frequently, unknowingly, sincerely, but blindly, we are that crowd around Jesus, blocking access to him by our presence. This is an occupational danger especially for all of us who are in ministry. We easily, in all sincerity, in the name of Christ, in the name of orthodox theology, and in the name of sound pastoral prac-

tice, set ourselves up as gatekeepers, as guardians of our churches, through whom others must pass in order to have access to God. We need to more clearly remember that Christ *is* the gatekeeper, and the only gatekeeper, and we need to refresh ourselves on what that means by looking at why Jesus chased the moneychangers out of the temple in John’s Gospel. They, the moneychangers, had set themselves up as a medium through which people had to pass in order to offer worship to God. Jesus would have none of it.

Our mission as disciples of Jesus is not to be gatekeepers. We need instead to work at closing the distance rather than closing the gate.

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Of pears and memoirs: the evolution of taste

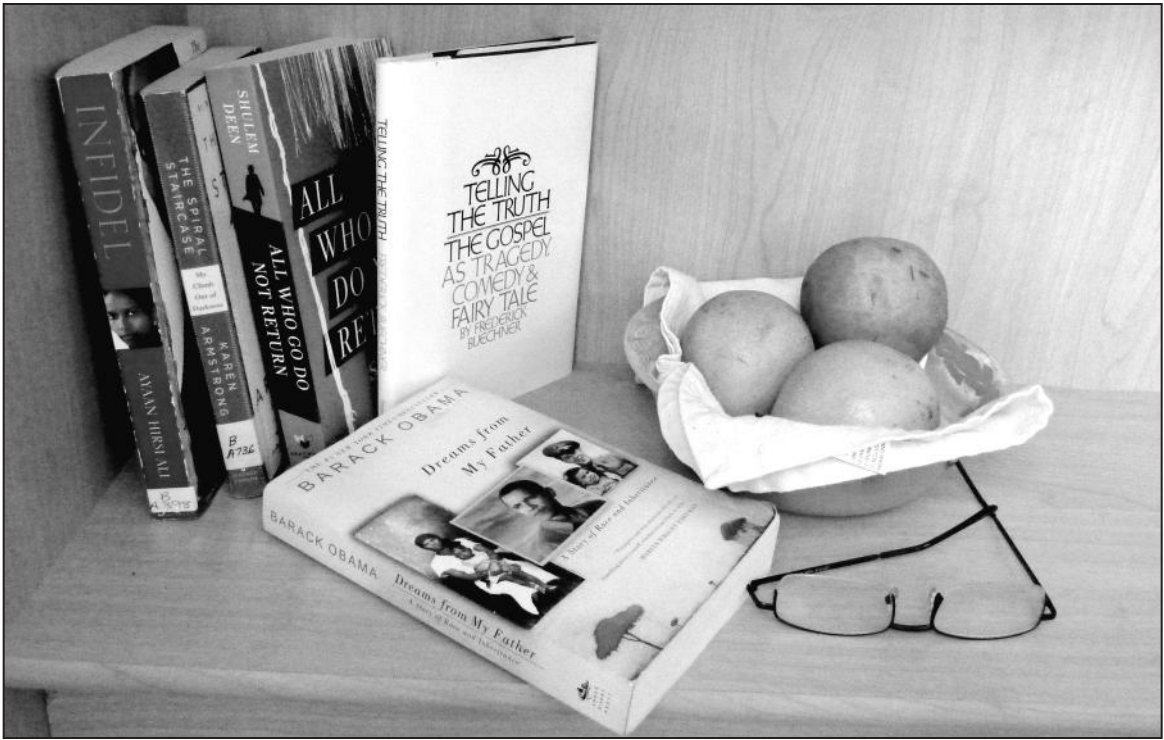
By Edna Froese

Anyone who has ever publicly confessed to enjoying books can anticipate the next question: “so what do you like to read?” The usual assumption is that, of course, we read stories, whether they be westerns, mysteries, fantasy, historical fiction, literary novels, or romance. Some might add memoirs to the list. Still others prefer poetry, history, philosophy, theology, or political and cultural analysis, without necessarily understanding that those genres, too, tell stories.

My reading life certainly began with stories, although I was taught, from the cradle on, to revere the Bible. Of course, what I heard from my Sunday school teachers were stories: the Creation, the Flood, the Exodus, Daniel in the lions’ den, Jesus healing sick children or walking on water. So stories it was, and I read whatever I could find.

Besides wanting to find out what happened next, I delighted in the voice of the storyteller. From Thornton Burgess’ talking animal stories and the Black Stallion books to the teen Beany Malone series, the familiar characters seemed like friends. But I also grew to appreciate individual authors’ views of the world, even Thomas Hardy’s astonishingly bleak outlook on life. No surprise then, that I eventually found my way into a career of reading novels and talking about them. While I also taught drama, poetry, and essays, novels remained my chosen bedtime reading.

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.



Edna Froese

The sole exception was devotional reading. Childhood training had born its fruit, and I read books and books about what being a Christian meant. Thus my faith competed with story for my attention. Or did it? I don’t remember just when I understood that theology was also story, with God as the main character. As Frederick Buechner observed, the grand narrative of Christianity can be read as comedy, tragedy, or fairy tale, each genre lens yielding truth to live by.

Actually, my reading choices were not as unchanging as I have so far implied. In both fiction and theology, I became impatient with predictability and easy answers. The pleasures of formulaic stories are limited, because they rely on superficial otherness (exotic settings, improbable plot lines), while reinforcing a simplistic distinction between goodness and badness through cardboard characters and too-easy happy endings. My tastes

were evolving into a demand for greater scientific literacy and more mysticism in theology, and for honest engagement with human issues in fiction — for literature offers truth at a deeper level than facts do.

Just how much I had changed I didn’t grasp until retirement removed me from academic pressures to stay current in my field. I rejoiced that I now had the time, finally, to read as many novels as I wanted to, never mind the literary quality. Expecting to return to former habits of happy escapist reading, I was quite unprepared for what did happen.

I’ve read far fewer novels. Instead, I’ve bought poetry books for bedtime reading, and ignored collected novels while reading magazines like *The Atlantic* and *Harpers* and books on culture and religion and politics in Canada and the U.S. That doesn’t mean I’ve exchanged fiction for facts. After all, “non-fiction” is probably a misnomer; there is always an

author(s) who selects the facts to be discussed, who assumes a narrative voice for particular purposes, and who shapes that material into a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion. So it does, in the end, come down to story. I’m just choosing different ones more often than I used to.

Perhaps an analogy from literal tastes can be instructive. These autumn days I’ve been enjoying the bounty of food at the Farmers’ Market. I love the fruit stands — all those varieties of apples, available only briefly. They’re not “keepers,” but oh, the taste of Sunrise apples is redolent with the mature warmth of the end of summer.

For most of my life, I ignored the similar bounty of pears. When I was a child, my palate had unequivocally rejected both flavour and texture. Fruit lover that I normally was, I could not abide pears. So I did not eat pears, did not buy pears, did not offer our children pears. Imagine my recent embar-

rassment then to discover, after my son persuaded me to try his pear gingerbread cake, that I liked it. Since I was regularly baking scones for a small market, I tried pear cranberry scones — delicious! Pears now often appear in our fruit bowl, reminding me that tastes evolve; I should pay attention.

In the past two years, I’ve begun reading memoirs, a genre I once disliked almost on principle, thanks to propagandistic missionary stories urged on me when I wasn’t old enough to protest safely; I resented the pious pressure to be inspired. With a fine irony, I was eventually drawn in by stories of the opposite experience — the departure from an inherited faith. First it was Karen Armstrong’s exit from the convent, then other accounts of disillusionment and drastic changes in worldview. Yet these people still found life worth living and often became voices for change, their faith changed but not diminished.

The memoirs I read turned out to be personal accounts of what I had been reading about in non-fiction analysis. Barack Obama’s *Dreams from My Father*, Brian Stevenson’s *Just Mercy*, and Malcolm X’s autobiography increased my understanding of race relations in the U.S., just after I had read *A Colony in a Nation* by Chris Hayes. And *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance gave me a more nuanced perspective on the parallels between working class people and people of colour. All of the above made it harder to make superficial pronouncements about recent political developments in U.S. politics, and easier to show empathy to those whose views might once have offended me.

Books do come to hand when the reader is ready. In the ripeness of time, the despised can become the necessary and even the beautiful.

Praying with Grandpa, and the notion of purgatory transformed

By Joseph Foy

When I was a seventh grader in St. Ann’s School, Msgr. Sprenke often came to teach our religion class. He was friendly and let us pepper him with questions.

Just before Halloween, he gave us a talk: “The first day after Halloween, we will celebrate one of the three greatest feasts of the year: there’s Christmas, there’s Easter, and there’s All Saints’ Day.”

Really? There is something else that ranks up there with Christmas and Easter?

A hand shot up: “Monsignor, how many saints are there?” I remember his answer to this day: “Millions,” he said, “Millions and millions! That’s what All Saints’ Day is about. It’s not a feast for the saints who have their own special days, like St. Ann and St. Joseph and St. Peter. It’s a day set aside to honour ALL the holy people who are now with God in heaven. Like your grandparents, and their parents, right on back,

Joe Foy writes from Hantsport, Nova Scotia.

hundreds and hundreds of years. All your ancestors. They are saints too, you know. From all over the world. All united together in heaven. We call this The Great Communion of Saints. AND — he looked at us for a long time — you and I are spiritually connected to those people; all of us; we are all part of that great Communion of Saints. That is one of the greatest teachings of our church. It’s right in the Apostles Creed.”

He went on: “The next day, the one after All Saints’ Day, is called All Souls’ Day, and it is also very important. On that day we all pray as hard as we can for all the poor souls still in purgatory, to help them get out.” (I still remember that phrase: the “poor souls.”)

We knew about purgatory from our Catechism: after you died, a few very, very good people went directly to heaven, but everybody else went to purgatory to receive the punishment they deserved for their many sins. Not a nice place, purgatory. It was just like hell, a fire pit, but with one big difference: you eventually got out.

The monsignor had just created for me a big problem. I had once asked my dad, “What church did

you and your dad go to?” Dad told me he went to St. Alphonsus, “but my dad didn’t go to church. He always encouraged me to go, but he never went himself.”

A grandfather who never went to mass on Sunday? Grandpa Foy was not with God in heaven? I figured he must be stuck in purgatory.

Then, to our teacher Sister Mary Gertrude’s stunned surprise, Monsignor finished up by saying: “On All Souls’ Day, whenever you are finished with an assignment, you can go next door to the church and pray for one of your ancestors. Say a rosary and God will let them out of purgatory sooner.”

For years I said the rosary on All Souls’ Day for Grandpa Foy, to help him get out of purgatory.

Flash forward a dozen years and I am taking early church history at a papal university from Prof. Johannes Quasten, a world expert. A question came up: “Where did the idea come from that purgatory is a fire pit?”

“The fire pit image of purgatory is very common in our western church,” said Quasten, “but there is an alternative.” Now I was really listening. “The ancient churches

of the Middle East did not buy that idea. Their idea of purgatory was different: when someone dies, and it is time for them to be ushered into the presence of God, they say, ‘Wait! I’m not ready for this. I have been selfish, greedy, mean; I’ve hurt too many people, too many times.’”

“So the angel says, ‘That’s OK, you don’t have to go in until you’re ready. Go over into that garden and rest for awhile.’ And they do. And then, to their surprise, Jesus walks into the garden! He begins to teach them how not to be selfish, not to be greedy, not to be mean, not to hurt people. In short, how to love. And then, when they feel ready, he takes their hand and they go out of the garden and into the loving embrace of their forgiving Father.”

I was thunderstruck. The fire pit had just turned into a garden. The garden had a regular visitor named Jesus.

I didn’t get much sleep that night. And, after that, I stopped going to church on All Souls’ Day. I figured, no need to; Grandpa was in good hands.

Some years later a Sunday sermon mentioned the idea of “pray-

ing with the saints,” which got me thinking about Grandpa again. Maybe I should be praying *with* Grandpa. Think about it. Suppose you are visiting someone very sick. You might ask, “Would you like to pray for a moment together?” I have done that, and mostly folks say yes.

There is something comforting about praying to our God of mercy along with someone else. So now, on both All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day, I quietly say, “Grandpa, let’s pray together.” It feels right, because I believe in the Apostles Creed, which teaches the Communion of Saints. And that means Great-grandma Kelly and Grandma Alice and Dad and Mom and my brother Dan and Uncle Eddie and Aunt Marie and all sorts of ancestors are all linked together — and they are all praying right along with Grandpa and me.

I have no way of knowing whether Grandpa is now in the presence of God, or still getting ready. No matter, because I believe he is in good hands. We are both part of the Mystical Body of Christ, embraced by the Holy Spirit.

Baum worked toward a society that was more just

By Jean-Claude Ravet

The following editorial will appear in the November-December issue of Relations. It is reprinted with permission.

Few among us who were familiar with Gregory Baum would have thought, just recently, that he was going to leave us so quickly. He seemed to be in good shape, in spite of his 94 years and his period of dialysis three days each week. Even more so because he still had writing plans to follow his intellectual autobiography, *The Oil Has Not Run Dry* (McGill-Queen’s University Press 2016), published last year and recently translated into French. The years caught up with him suddenly and without warning. Old age was transformed into death so quickly that many peo-

Ravet is editor-in-chief of Relations.

ple who loved him did not have the opportunity to offer their last farewells. Even if the oil truly ran dry on Oct. 18, his light will not quickly go out.

Like Augustine of Hippo, whose works marked him deeply, notably his *Confessions*, whose reading, in 1946, led him to convert to Catholicism, Gregory was always grateful for grace offered him as a free gift of God. It was a gift he welcomed as a debt to pay back by placing himself resolutely at the service of life — placing compassion against exclusion, justice against oppression — and in showing himself in solidarity with the excluded whose multiple faces he had learned to recognize.

Did he not already share their condition when he was 15 years old, leaving Germany for England in 1939 because of the Nazi menace? Coming from a family whose origins were Jewish, though assimilated into Protestantism in the 19th century, he narrowly escaped the tragic



http://saltandlighttv.org/witness

MAJOR FIGURE OF SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY — Gregory Baum from a Witness interview with Rev. Thomas Rosica, CSB, on Salt + Light. Baum died Oct. 18.

destiny of millions of European Jews. Just to listen to him speak of the three years spent in an internment camp for German nationals in Farnham, Quebec, where he was transferred at the beginning of the war, was to understand his prodigious capacity for resilience.

It is in a similar climate of interior serenity that Gregory Baum, always ready to explore new paths that life opened to him, built up an inspiring and strong theological body of works that was in constant evolution. First of all, as an Augustinian priest in a monastic community which he entered in 1947 and then as a member of the laity — after having renounced the priesthood and religious life, in 1974, because of his disagreement with the sexual ethic promoted by the Vatican, notably on homosexuality — along with his partner, Shirley Flynn, who died in 2007.

So it was that he worked, during the 1950s and 1960s, as an expert theologian on ecumenical questions at the Second Vatican

Council, to establish fraternal links with the Christian churches, then with Judaism and finally with other religions. These bridges were also built afterward with non-believers, in the name of a transcendent God, immanent to history, a “divine accomplice” in the fight for justice and dignity.

Various events favoured the discovery of the political dimension of the faith he lived as a true conversion in the 1970s. One such moment we can point to is the declaration of the assembly of Latin American bishops gathered at Medellin in 1968, calling, in the name of the Gospel, for solidarity with the oppressed and their struggle for justice; another the blossoming of liberation theology; or again his meeting with the theologian Rosemary Ruether, a socialist, while he was studying sociology at the New School for Social Research in New York.

Opening his eyes to structural inequality and various forms of oppression, he became aware that following the Gospel required of him to look at society and the

church from the perspective of the poor, of the excluded, of those without power, and so to condemn all forms of domination, oppression and alienation as Jesus had done. The fact that only a minority followed this path did not disturb him. “The creative renewal begins on the margins of society; it is there that Jesus is to be found,” he liked to say. Knowing he was carried along by a force that was larger than himself, he was not only confident of the multiple movements of resistance that rose up from the grassroots, but he was also open to the unforeseen. He thus saw the arrival of Pope Francis as a source of comfort and joy in the final years of his life.

He pursued this commitment as a Catholic thinker on the Left in Quebec, when, in 1986, he became professor at McGill University after a career of 27 years, beginning in 1959, at the University of Toronto.

From the time of his arrival, he joined the editorial board of *Relations*, where he remained for 30 years.

His thought took a new turn through contact with Quebec society and culture that he grew to know, even embracing the project of independence — and doing so in spite of his negative experience of German nationalism — in the name of a more just and open project for society.

Gregory Baum is a major figure of a social Christianity in which social issues such as justice and the common good are as central as the interior life, prayer and liturgy. So, he will continue to accompany and inspire those who have bound themselves to the long march toward “a society that is more just, fraternal and authentically human.”

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Don't overlook God's shining presence in our lives

Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



A couple years ago when my kids and I were shopping at the Indigo book store, we saw a display featuring Stephen King's newest novel at the time, *Doctor Sleep*. This book is a sequel to his famous novel *The Shining*. You might remember the Stanley Kubrick movie adaptation of the novel starring Jack Nicholson. Classic film.

For the month of October I delve into the world of horror novel reading. It is thematic in a way, because October is the month of spooks, thrills, scares and Halloween. I love Halloween, but unfortunately it tends to be "demonized" in many circles because of its depictions and supposed celebration of evil. Hollywood is more to blame for that.

In my estimation, Halloween is a festival of fun and make-believe, but it is also part of a day that commemorates the dead. Horror novels tend to go a bit further and Stephen King is the most famous in that genre.

King is author of some of these classics: *Salem's Lot*, *Pet Sematary*, *Carrie*. It (a weighty tome among King's many long novels) is a particular favourite. However, my enjoyment of Stephen King pales in comparison to my brother Gerard, whom I consider to be an expert on the "Master of the Macabre." Gerard has read all of King's material multiple times. He's even had the pleasure of visiting Stephen King's home in Bangor, Maine!

I credit my brother with getting me into Stephen King, but for a while I had trouble reading his stuff. The content is disturbing, but not just to his readers. In an

early 1980s interview King said he used to sleep with the lights on. And in this excerpt from an interview: "At night when I go to bed, I still am at pains to be sure that my legs are under the blankets after the lights go out. I'm not a child anymore but . . . I don't like to sleep with one leg sticking out. Because if a cool hand ever reached out from under the bed and grasped my ankle, I might scream . . ." He, too, has become a casualty of his own imagination.

That night in Indigo, the *Doctor Sleep* display piqued my interest in reacquainting myself with King.

Doctor Sleep follows the adult life of the young boy from *The Shining*, Danny Torrance. After reading *Doctor Sleep* I was compelled to reread *The Shining* — the novel where it all began. Danny, a five-year-old at the time, has an extraordinary gift — the gift to be able to read people's thoughts. To feel their emotions. To prophesy, in a way, about events that have not happened but might happen. He has visions into the past and, in particular, of people who died sudden and tragic deaths. If he should come across a person who has the same gift, they are able to communicate with each other without actually talking aloud. They call it "the shine."

The Shining takes place in an old seasonal resort hotel called the Overlook, located in the highlands of Colorado, an idyllic mountain setting. The hotel has to close for the winter months because access to the hotel is



Warner Bros.

THE SHINING — Danny Lloyd is pictured here in his role as "Danny" in the 1980 film adaptation of Stephen King's *The Shining*. October is a good month to confront our fears, and create new ones.

impossible during the winter. The hotel hires a live-in caretaker to look after it. The caretaker must heat parts of the hotel, checking the old boilers, fixing things, protecting it so it can open again for the spring and summer seasons. When the snow arrives, the family looking after the hotel is cut off from the rest of civilization. There are no roads in or out, and the only communication is through a CB radio.

As winter descends with its unrelenting cold and fury, isolation and loneliness threaten to destroy Danny and his family. The demons of distress and destruction, intent on consuming the live-ins, begin their work. The scenes are sinister and the phantoms of the past come alive with macabre and gruesome savagery. Beware of the Redrum! Fun stuff to read when you're home alone with the creaks of the house during the eerie evenings of October.

So much of what Danny sees he is able to control in his own

mind, despite what seem to be impossible odds. Through Danny we see that the human spirit is a powerful and indomitable force. Danny will not be consumed. When tested to the extremes, the spirit will not be destroyed.

Life always has the final say. Yet, our own personal terrors and frights are no laughing matter, and they are not works of fiction, either. The struggles we all experience are real and sometimes difficult to endure, but we have been promised that we will never be left alone.

No matter the terrors that lurk down the darkened hallways of our minds, no matter what demons we fight in our personal lives, despite feeling isolated, alone and cut off from the rest of civilization, remember, we will never be abandoned and we will never be forsaken to fight the battles alone. Despite the darkness, the light will shine because light cannot be contained. Light and life will, ultimately, triumph.

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Welcoming new parishioners

Parishes seeking to improve their “best practices” programs could learn from the example of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Monon, Wis.

A story from Catholic News Service illustrates how parishioners go out to welcome newcomers. “Hello, we’re from Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Monona. We understand that you recently moved into the area. We just wanted to welcome you to the neighbourhood.”

That greeting — along with an apple pie, a bulletin and a smile — are what the parish’s “Apple Pie Ambassadors” have given out nearly 50 times since May.

Earlier this year, the Immaculate Heart of Mary parish council came up with the idea for the ambassadors to serve as a “welcome wagon” for people who recently moved into the area, both Catholics and otherwise.

They are invited to check out the parish, which is in the Diocese of Madison, and they are also informed of some of the bigger events that have a presence in the neighbourhood such as the parish festival and fish fries.

An Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner who is a realtor sends program leader Sharon Coffey a list of the new homes sold in Monona every month.

“We’d eventually like to get to the whole parish boundaries,” Coffey told the *Catholic Herald*,

Madison’s diocesan newspaper. “Right now, we’re just getting started and we kind of want to feel our way through these houses (in Monona).”

From there, she assigns which of the dozen ambassadors — ranging in age from their 30s to 60s — is to make the visit, typically close to their own residences.

The visits are typically done in pairs and usually on Saturdays when people are likely to be home. Parishioners’ children sometimes go along, too.

Coffey said she hopes the ambassadors will make a connection and a friendship, “and maybe it will grow into something.”

“We’re coming in contact with all different kinds of people,” she added, including people of varying ages, marital status, and religion.

If no one is home, the ambassadors will try again on later dates before leaving a door hanger with a greeting from the pastor, Rev. Chad Droessler, and information about the parish.

Along with meeting new neighbours, the ambassadors “get to know different people in the parish too” through making the visits together, Coffey said.

Parishioner Christopher Speece is one of the ambassadors. He’ll typically make the visits with his daughters, Clare and Monica.

“The initial conversations have been much more positive than I thought they would be,” Speece said, expecting negative reactions or door slamming in his face, but “that really hasn’t happened.”

Speece will give the standard welcome, offer the pie and bulletin, and “we just got into conversations from there.”

He added religion topics didn’t come up unless the new neighbours would talk about it.

“It was more a friendly visit,” he said, but added that he’s hoping to see them at church soon.

He reiterated the fact that ambassadors meet a variety of people while making the visits, saying conversations typically last between five and 15 minutes.

Those he met included a business owner who told his success story, a woman from Africa who came to the U.S. to help her daughter who is expecting her first child, and even some people he had previously met at a neighbourhood block party and were looking for a church.

Some have been Catholic, but not active mass-goers.

“Evangelization takes place by building relationships first,” Speece said.

“I hope it continues for the long term . . . eventually every person that moves into Monona gets a visit from IHM,” he said, and he hopes to meet a parishioner in the future for whom the first person he or she met upon moving to Monona was an Apple Pie Ambassador.

As Catholics are encouraged to be missionaries and reach out to people on the peripheries, a free apple pie may just be the ice breaker that is needed. — PWN

A missionary responds to the faith and spiritual hunger of people



Life In Canadian Arctic

Jon Hansen, CSsR

The last couple of articles I have written for the *Prairie Messenger* have been informative, but this time I thought I would get a little more personal and share some of the reasons why I have come to be a missionary in the Canadian Arctic and what it is that I hope I can do while I am here.

I belong to a missionary order and one of the things we do and are known for is parish missions. As a Redemptorist I was formed by the stories of St. Alphonsus Liguori and our early founders who would seek out the places in their world where the Gospel had not been heard or where people just did not have access to the life of the church in a way that most of us take for granted.

I guess it is only natural then that when I received an invitation to come to a remote village on the east coast of Canada to celebrate the Easter Triduum, I jumped at the chance. Here was an opportunity to be a true Redemptorist missionary. It was during this journey, my first real experience of working with Aboriginal people, that I received the most amazing blessing to my own priesthood. In seeing the devout faith and spiritual hunger of so many people, who rarely had a chance to celebrate the eucharist, my heart was touched by a desire to explore this type of ministry in a deeper way.

Hansen is a Redemptorist priest and pastor of Our Lady of Victory Parish, Inuvik. See his website: www.jonhansencsr.com

After that experience, as often as I could I would volunteer to spend time, at Christmas and Easter, in small communities where a priest was seldom available. Over time my desire to do this as a full-time ministry grew and I began to make inquiries about where that could be done. Canada’s northern dioceses seemed a likely place.

To make a long story short, after much prayerful discernment and discussion with the local bishop and my own Redemptorist community, I now find myself as the pastor of a region in Canada’s North where I can live out my Redemptorist and priestly vocation in a way that fills my heart with joy. But what does a missionary do?

Saving souls and bringing people to Christ was the old battle cry of the missionary, but I think that our approach needs to be very different today. I do believe that Jesus offers plentiful redemption (our Redemptorist motto), but as a missionary I am only human. There has been a great deal of hurt caused by over-zealous evangelization and to believe that I am the one bringing salvation would be arrogance on my part.

Rather, I see the role of the missionary as a presence that helps bring awareness to what God is already doing. In my homilies and pastoral outreach, I point out the goodness that is present and, where there is suffering, I remind people that they are not alone, that God is with us always.

That might seem rather simplistic but if we look to the scriptures I believe we find that this is the way Jesus shared the message



Jon Hansen

NORTHERN CHURCHES — Holy Name of Mary Church at Tsiigehtchic, left, and Our Lady of Lourdes Church at Paulatuk.

of his Father’s love for us all. He took the laws and the stories of the scriptures and distilled them

into a simple message of love for God and for neighbour to share a message that everyone could

understand and appreciate.

— NEW IMAGE, page 15

Pope’s pro-life challenge: respect all life

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis’ recent statement that the death penalty is incompatible with the Gospel focused less on a government’s role in protecting its people and more on the need to defend the sacredness and dignity of every human life.

At least from the time of Blessed Paul VI in the 1960s, the Catholic Church has been increasingly critical of the use of capital punishment, even while acknowledging centuries of church teaching that a state has a right to punish offenders, including with the death penalty.

St. John Paul II, in his 1995 encyclical letter, “The Gospel of Life,” wrote of his alarm at “the extraordinary increase and gravity of threats to the life of individuals and peoples,” but said one sign of hope was the increasing opposition around the world to capital punishment.

“There is evidence of a growing public opposition to the death penalty, even when such a penalty is seen as a kind of ‘legitimate defence’ on the part of society. Modern society, in fact, has the means of effectively suppressing crime by rendering criminals harmless without definitively denying them the chance to reform,” he wrote.

Two years later, Pope John Paul had the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* revised to strengthen its anti-death penalty posture. The text now says that, “given the means at the state’s disposal to effectively repress crime by rendering inoffensive the one who has committed it, without depriving him definitively of the possibility of redeeming himself, cases of absolute necessity for suppression of the offender ‘today . . . are very rare, if not practically non-existent.’ ”

Opponents of the death penalty cheered St. John Paul’s move, and

theologians recognized it as a “development” of church teaching.

Death penalty opponents also welcomed Pope Francis’ even stronger position against capital punishment, but his words set off a debate between those who saw his position as a further development of church teaching and those who saw it as a “change” that contradicted both the Bible and the traditional position of the Catholic Church.

Edward Feser, a professor of philosophy at California’s Pasadena City College and author of *By Man Shall His Blood Be Shed: A Catholic Defense of Capital Punishment*, told Catholic News Service that St. John Paul’s teaching was “a non-binding prudential judgment,” which was in line with centuries of church teaching recognizing the right of states to impose the death penalty.

And, writing in Britain’s *Catholic Herald* Oct. 15, Feser

— DEATH PENALTY, page 15

Church teaches fear of punishment for sins

The Editor: Secular guardians are increasingly vigilant in warning about the temporal consequences of illegal activities. Should sacred guardians not be equally vigilant in warning about the eternal consequences of immoral activities? Are the eternal less fearful than the temporal?

In his column on fear of God (PM, Oct. 11), Rev. Ron Rolheiser says, "It's healthy to be afraid of violating any goodness, truth or beauty." But "To preach hellfire . . . is wrong in terms of the Gospel." He recognizes that reverence, awe and respect are a form of fear. However, "it is not to be confused with . . . dreading some kind of punishment."

True, the central message of the Gospel is that God, incarnate, loves us so much he suffered and died to save us from sin. But Jesus repeatedly warns us that to receive his saving grace we must repent and amend our lives. Otherwise, we risk damnation.

I know, because I regularly read the Gospels. Although I

haven't done the mathematics, it doesn't surprise me that a fellow reader claims a third of Christ's sayings entail threats.

As for dreading punishment, isn't that what the church asks us to do when we go to confession and say the Act of Contrition? — **Joe Campbell, Saskatoon**

PM was a weekly welcomed guest

The Editor: I want to thank you for the most informative, inspiring paper that has ever come into my life for more years than I care to remember.

Now, who will give us up-to-date information on the life of our church, the worldwide view expressed in so many traditions? What articles will start the many discussions in our Stang-Zerr clan? You have been our teacher, our voice, our conscience and our guide. I will miss the anticipated Friday treasure in my mailbox.

My best wishes to all of your staff — **Kay Zerr, Macklin, Sask.**

Church insists on limits to death penalty

Continued from page 14

said that if Pope Francis "is saying that capital punishment is always and intrinsically immoral, then he would be effectively saying — whether consciously or unconsciously — that previous popes, fathers and doctors of the church, and even divinely inspired Scripture are in error."

But Jesuit Father Jan Dacok, a professor of moral theology and theologian at the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court, said the church always insisted there were limits to the conditions under which a state could legitimately impose the death penalty. St. John Paul, he said, emphasized those limits to the point of saying that now that it is easier to keep a murderer in jail for life, the necessary conditions for legitimacy are "practically non-existent."

Pope Francis took a further step forward, Dacok said. The pope "did not change church teaching, but places it on a higher level and points out the path toward its perfection."

"What is accomplished with the death penalty?" the Slovakian Jesuit asked. "Do you obtain the true repentance of criminals? Do you offer them the possibility of correcting their ways, of asking for forgiveness?"

"No," he said. "With the execution, the death, you irreversibly cancel the entire dynamic of hope" for repentance, conversion and at least some attempt at reparation.

"Obviously, Pope Francis cannot change the laws of individual countries, because that's the competence of legislators," Dacok said. "But he can continually encourage respect for the sacredness of every human life, because the death penalty truly is not necessary."

Because security and justice can be served without capital punishment, he said, the urgent matter today is to demonstrate respect for the sacredness of every human life, "even the life of public criminals responsible for the death of others."

Rev. Robert A. Gahl Jr., a

priest of Opus Dei and a professor of ethics at Rome's Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, said Pope Francis "continues the recent development of doctrine regarding the centrality of mercy for the Christian faith and the urgency to promote a culture of life in today's throwaway culture," where abortion and euthanasia are widely accepted.

"Pope Francis wants the church to offer a radical example of the defence of all human life," Gahl said. And "without condemning all past practices, he vigorously demands the elimination of the death penalty."

The priest noted the church's historic concern for the impact of the death penalty not just on the criminal, but also on judges and executioners.

In fact, the 1917 Code of Canon Law, which was in effect until 1983, listed as those generally barred from priestly ordination "a judge who passed a sentence of death" and "those who take up the task of (execution) and their immediate and voluntary assistants in the execution of a capital sentence."

On the question of whether Pope Francis' statement marks a "development" or a "change," Gahl said the pope probably intended to "shake up theologians and to force us to reconsider traditional formulations of permanent teaching in light of this new and authoritative development of mercy and human dignity."

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, said Pope Francis was exercising his right and obligation to teach on faith and morals.

"Obviously, the church does not intervene on the level of civil legislation," the archbishop told CNS, "but today the pope authoritatively affirms that from a deeper understanding of the Gospel emerges the contradiction between the death penalty and the gospel of life."



Marissa Alarcon

Moments with You

In the busyness of the day
In the weariness of the night
In the coldness of the winter
In the heat of the summer
There You are calming my restless heart.

In the silence of the morning
In the breaking of the dawn
In the freshness of the morning dew
In the brightness of the stars at night
There You are embracing my joyful heart.

Your love for the world is incomprehensible
Your mercy is beyond compare
Your grace is always sufficient
Your praise and glory is forever.

By Marissa Alarcon

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New image of missionary

Continued from page 14

For me this approach also changes the idea of who can be a missionary. We might picture a missionary as a robed priest in some exotic, foreign land but really, we are all called by our baptism to be emissaries of Christ as priests, prophets and kings, bringing the Good News to all those we meet. We don't have to go to some remote location to find people who are spiritually hungry when so many around us are longing to discover the meaning in life that comes from knowing God.

I am truly grateful for my vocation and for my call to be a missionary priest in Canada's North. People often ask, "What are the biggest problems you face?" I don't see problems but, rather, challenges and opportunities.


Others will say that they can't imagine what it must be like to live in such an isolated place. To that I respond that Jesus told his disciples to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth, but I don't see where I am as earth's end but as the centre of the world for the people who live here and at the centre, God already is.

Letters to the editor

We welcome your response to articles published in the Prairie Messenger. Two-way communication assures everyone of a better exposure to the truth.

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Mercy sister named 2017 Opus Prize laureate

DENVER (CNS) — It would have been impossible to walk away from a downtown Denver hotel where this year's Opus Prize was announced Oct. 12 and not feel that urge to "go forth and set the world on fire."

In front of an audience of students, alumni, faculty, staff and members of the greater Denver community, Jesuit Father John P. Fitzgibbons, president of Regis University, named Mercy Sister Marilyn Lacey and her non-profit organization, Mercy Beyond Borders, as this year's \$1-million Opus winner.

Working in Haiti and South Sudan, Lacey and her California-

based organization are helping women and girls escape extreme poverty through educational, economic and empowerment opportunities.

Jesuit-run Regis University played host to the 2017 Opus Prize, one of the world's largest faith-based awards for social entrepreneurship.

The Opus Prize Foundation funds the \$1-million award and also awards two finalist prizes of \$100,000 each in recognition of social entrepreneurship. The foundation partners with a university or college to present the honour and "to inspire the next generation

to pursue lives of service."

The prize is awarded annually to an individual or organization of any religious background, anywhere in the world. Recipients must demonstrate a pioneering approach to solving the root cause of social problems in their community.

"I felt called by God to help these women and girls who are suffering," Lacey commented. "In serving others, we can find a connectedness, a kinship that leads to binding joy."

One finalist prize went to Sister Stan Terese Mumuni, a member of the Marian Sisters of Eucharistic Love, who is the

founder of Nazareth Home for God's Children in Ghana. It cares for children born with physical, mental or behavioural disabilities.

The other \$100,000 prize went to Drs. Jason Reinking and Noha Aboelata, whose work through Roots Community Health Centre

is providing health care to impoverished people living on the streets of Oakland, California.

"Your work truly restores hope and ignites the possibilities for those who live at the margins," Fitzgibbons said, addressing all three finalists. "We are inspired and moved by your example."

In letter pope gives correction to cardinal

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican is not to "impose" a specific liturgical translation on bishops' conferences, but rather is called to recognize the bishops' authority and expertise in determining the best way to faithfully translate Latin texts into their local languages, Pope Francis said in a letter to Cardinal Robert Sarah.

In the letter, released by the Vatican Oct. 22, Pope Francis said he wanted to correct several points made in a "commentary," which Sarah sent him and which was published on several websites in a variety of languages.

Sarah is prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. The pope's letter noted that most of the websites "erroneously" cited Sarah as the author of the commentary.

The commentary looked at changes Pope Francis made to the Code of Canon Law in the process for approving liturgical

translations. The changes were ordered in the pope's document, "*Magnum Principium*" ("The Great Principle"), which was published Sept. 9 and went into effect Oct. 1.

Pope Francis, saying he wanted to "avoid any misunderstanding," insisted the commentary could give an erroneous impression that the level of involvement of the congregation remained unchanged.

However, while in the past "the judgment regarding the fidelity to the Latin and the eventual corrections necessary was the task of the congregation," the pope said, "now the norm concedes to episcopal conferences the faculty of judging the worth and coherence of one or another term in translations from the original, even if in dialogue with the Holy See."

The commentary attributed to Sarah insisted on the ongoing validity of the norms for translation contained in "*Liturgiam Authenticam*," the congregation's 2001 instruction on translations.

But Pope Francis, in his letter,

said the changes to canon law take precedence, and "one can no longer hold that translations must conform in every point to the norms of '*Liturgiam Authenticam*' as was done in the past."

The texts for mass and other liturgies must receive a confirmation from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, the pope said, but this "no longer supposes a detailed, word by word examination, except in obvious cases that can be presented to the bishops for further reflection."

Pope Francis also wrote to the cardinal that the "fidelity" called for in translations has three layers: "first, to the original text; to the particular language into which it is being translated; and, finally, to the intelligibility of the text" by the people.

The new process, the pope said, should not lead "to a spirit of 'imposition' on the episcopal conferences of a translation done by the congregation," but should promote co-operation and dialogue.



CNS/Chris Schneider

SISTER RECEIVES OPUS PRIZE — Mercy Sister Marilyn Lacey of Burlingame, Calif., accepts the 2017 Opus Prize at Denver's Regis University Oct. 11. As Opus Prize Laureate, she receives a \$1-million award as part of the honour.

Interviews a 'pastoral risk' the pope is willing to take

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Replying to questions and giving interviews are a "pastoral risk" Pope Francis said he is prepared to take, because it is the best way to know and respond to people's real concerns.

"I know this can make me vulnerable, but it is a risk I want to take," the pope wrote in the introduction to a new book collecting transcripts of question-and-answer sessions he has held all over the world.

The collection in Italian, "*Adesso Fate le Vostre Domande*" ("Now, Ask Your Questions"), was edited by Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro and scheduled for release Oct. 19. The pope's introduction was published Oct. 17 in the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*.

"I want a church that knows how to enter into people's conversations, that knows how to dialogue," Pope Francis wrote.

The model is the Gospel account of the risen Lord's meeting with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. "The Lord 'interviews' the disciples who are walking discouraged," he said. "For me, the interview is part of this conversation the church is having with men and women today."

The interviews and Q&A sessions "always have a pastoral value," Pope Francis said, and are an important part of his ministry, just like inviting a small group of people to his early

morning mass each day.

The chapel of the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, where he lives, "is, let's say, my parish. I need that communication with people."

And, in interviews, the journalists often ask the questions that are on the minds of the faithful, he said.

The most regular appointment he has for responding to questions is on the flights back to Rome from his foreign trips when he holds a news conference with the journalists who travel with him.

"There, too, on those trips, I like to look people in the eye and respond to their questions sincerely," he wrote. "I know that I have to be prudent, and I hope I am. I always pray to the Holy Spirit before I start listening to the questions and responding."

His favourite interviews, he said, are with small, neighbourhood newspapers and magazines. "There I feel even more at ease," the pope said. "In fact, in those cases I really am listening to the questions and concerns of common people. I try to respond spontaneously, in a conversation I hope is understandable, and not with rigid formulas."

"For me," he said, "interviews are a dialogue, not a lesson."

Even when the questions are submitted in advance, the pope said he does not prepare his answers. Watching the person ask the question and responding directly is important.

"Yes, I am afraid of being misinterpreted," he said. "But, I repeat, I want to run this pastoral risk."

New app teaches deaf children how to pray

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When Sister Kathleen Schipani



CNS/Paul Haring

Sister Kathleen Schipani

found out she was usually the very first person to teach deaf children to pray, she decided there had to be an app to fix that.

Learning to pray usually happens in the family, when a parent

or relative recites the words for grace before meals, asks for blessings or requests guidance or protection, the Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary told Catholic News Service in Rome.

But when a child is born deaf into a hearing family, those kids shouldn't have to miss out on learning Catholic prayers or religious terms as they learn American Sign Language, she said Oct. 20.

Schipani, who is director of the office for persons with disabilities and the deaf apostolate at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, was in Rome as part of a conference dedicated to sharing best practices in engaging and catechizing persons living with disabilities.

Lots of apps exist for learning ASL, she said, but there is nothing dedicated to religious terms, daily devotions or prayers of blessing, love, thanks and praise. The app meant to fill that gap is called, "Religious Signs for Families," and was to be available from the iTunes App Store and Google Play in early November.

"The locus of learning your faith starts in the family, so this app is really to provide families

with the ability" to foster prayer in the home and bond with each other and with God as they pray in ASL, she said. It also will help teachers who want to teach elementary school students how to pray using sign language.

"Deaf people have deep experiences of prayer," she said, particularly because it involves praying with "their whole body" with signing and visualization.

"Deaf people have never heard the language that we speak so they are not hearing the little voice in their head like we are," she said. Instead some people say they pray visually with beautiful imagery or with seeing hands signing in their head.

"A lot of deaf people have not been catechized because there was no one to sign to them, and that really is what the sad thing is — when there is no opportunity for deaf people to know religious language and have an experience of someone teaching them," she said.

Schipani said the beautiful thing about sign language is the signs are often "iconic," reflecting what the thing is and, therefore, they can convey the theology behind the concept.

Life is so hard, how can we be anything but kind?

— Jack Kornfield