



## Cohen discussion

The late Canadian icon Leonard Cohen was the subject of a public discussion between Rabbi Jeremy Parnes of Regina's Beth Jacob Synagogue and Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen on the first anniversary of Cohen's death according to the Jewish calendar. An observant Jew, Cohen often employed Christian themes and symbolism in his lyrics. — page 3

## Great War chaplain

There are no more soldiers from The Great War left to parade on Nov. 11, and the memories of sacrifice may fade a little more with each passing Remembrance Day, but the story of Rev. Thomas Nangle continues to fascinate. — page 7

## Parishioners share church

"Welcome home," said Archdeacon Catherine Harper as parishioners from Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church took their seats in the pews of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Qu'Appelle, Sask. With the Catholic church closing because of the prohibitive costs of repairing the 110-year-old-structure, Anglican parishioners invited their Catholic neighbours to worship at St. Peter's. — page 8

## Fr. Joe Park

"I was completely dumbfounded," said 93-year-old Rev. Joe Ackerman, OSB, on learning that the new community park in Bruno, Sask., where he had been pastor since 1998, had been named after him. — page 8

## Ecumenical movement

Ecumenism was a dirty word until the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), whose document on ecumenism allowed Catholics to jump in with both feet, writes Thomas Reese, SJ. — page 13

# With war you lose everything, pope says

By Carol Glatz

NETTUNO, Italy (CNS) — "No more, Lord, no more (war)" that shatters dreams and destroys lives, bringing a cold, cruel winter instead of some sought-after spring, Pope Francis said looking out at the people gathered for an outdoor mass at a U.S. war memorial and cemetery.

"This is the fruit of war: death," he said, as the bright Italian sun lowered in the sky on the feast of All Souls, Nov. 2.

On a day the church offers special prayers for the faithful departed with the hope of their meeting God in heaven, "here in this place, we pray in a special way for these young people," he said, gesturing toward the rows of thousands of graves.

Christian hope can spring from great pain and suffering, he said, but it can also "make us look to heaven and say, 'I believe in my Lord, the redeemer, but stop, Lord,' please, no more war, he said.

"With war, you lose everything," he said.

Before the mass, Pope Francis placed a white rose atop 10 white marble headstones; the majority of the stones were carved crosses,

one was in the shape of the Jewish Star of David.

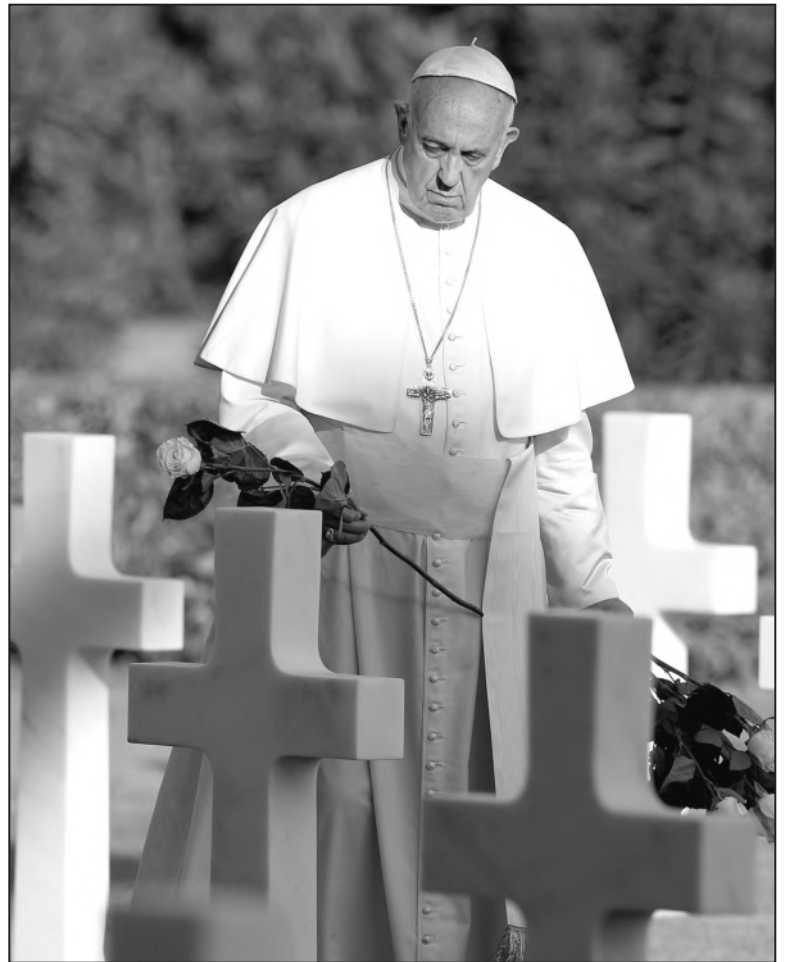
As he slowly walked alone over the green lawn and prayed among the thousands of simple grave markers, visitors recited the rosary at the Second World War Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial site in Nettuno, a small coastal city south of Rome.

In previous years, the pope marked All Souls' Day by visiting a Rome cemetery. This year, he chose to visit a U.S. military burial ground and, later in the day, the site of a Nazi massacre at the Ardeatine Caves in Rome to pray especially for all victims of war and violence.

"Wars produce nothing other than cemeteries and death," he said after reciting the Angelus on All Saints' Day, Nov. 1. He explained he would visit the two Second World War sites the next day because humanity "seems to have not learned that lesson or doesn't want to learn it."

In his homily at the late afternoon mass Nov. 2, Pope Francis spoke off-the-cuff and said people do everything to go to war, but they end up doing nothing but destroying themselves.

"This is war: the destruction of



CNS/Paul Haring

**POPE VISITS CEMETERY NOV. 2 — Pope Francis places roses on graves in the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy, Nov. 2, the feast of All Souls. The cemetery is the resting place of 7,860 American military members who died in the Second World War.**

ourselves," he said.

He spoke of the particular pain women experience in war: receiving that letter or news of the death

of their husband, child or grandchild.

— WAR ENDS, page 19

# Christians commemorate Reformation anniversary

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Christians in Saskatoon gathered Oct. 29 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with an ecumenical worship service, repenting for the division and violence of the past, and pledging to move forward together as followers of Jesus Christ.

Five hundred years ago, on Oct. 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted to the Archbishop of Mainz his 95 Theses calling for the reform of church practices. The date is considered to be the start of the Reformation, with the movement spreading across Europe throughout the 16th century.

Christians across the world have been marking the 500th anniversary together — not as a celebration of division, but as a

moment of healing.

Rev. Kevin McGee, administrator of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, welcomed hundreds to the Sunday afternoon worship at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, noting how, for the past 50 years, Christians have been on a journey "from conflict to communion," recognizing that what unites Christians is far greater than what divides us.

"We come with different thoughts and feelings of thanksgiving and lament, joy and repentance, joy in the Gospel and sorrow for division," McGee said. "We gather to commemorate in remembrance, in thanksgiving and confession, and in common witness and commitment."

A number of Christian denominations participated in the Reformation 500 event, with a joint sermon given by Bishop Sid Haugen of the Saskatchewan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina.

"The message is really the service itself," said Haugen: "that we are here to give thanks for the gifts of the Reformation, but also to repent for the ways that we have sinned against each other."

Haugen recalled two words

— CHRIST URGES, page 19



Kiply Yaworski

**REFORMATION 500 — An ecumenical service was held Oct. 29 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, with worship led by (from left): Shirley Karstad, Deacon Marie-Louise Ternier, Dr. Del Haug, Carmen Kampman, Rev. Lindsay Mohn, Bishop Sidney Haugen, Archbishop Donald Bolen, and Rev. Kevin McGee.**



# Canonization process opens for Black Elk

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (CNS) — During a mass to formally open the sainthood cause for Nicholas Black Elk, the Native American was described as someone who merged the Lakota and Catholic culture in a way “that drew him deeper into the mystery of Christ’s love and the church.”

Black Elk’s love for God and Scripture led him to become a catechist, fulfilling the mission of all disciples, said Bishop Robert D. Gruss of Rapid City in his homily at the Oct. 21 mass at Holy Rosary Church in Pine Ridge.

The bishop said that for 50 years Black Elk led others to Christ often melding his Lakota culture into his Christian life. “This enculturation can always reveal some-

thing of the true nature and holiness of God,” he said, adding that Black Elk always “challenged people to renew themselves, to seek this life that Christ offers them.”

Gruss said Black Elk’s life as a dedicated catechist, spiritual leader and guide “inspired many to live for Christ by his own story.” With the formal opening of his cause, Black Elk now has the title “servant of God.”

Black Elk was born sometime between 1858 and 1866. He died Aug. 19, 1950, at Pine Ridge.

The bishop said the process for the sainthood cause for Black Elk is a long one. First, he must show a reputation for holiness that spread to others.

The first phase involves gath-

ering testimony about his life and his virtues. Gruss said Black Elk’s public and private writings are currently being collected and examined. This documentary phase can take many years.

“Where the process ends is now up to the Holy Spirit and Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Our task now is to continue to gather more information, testimony about his life, and to pray that he is found worthy to have his cause moved forward,” he said.

The road to canonization involves three major steps: First is the declaration of a person’s heroic virtues, after which the church declares the person “venerable.” Second is beatification, after which he or she is called “blessed.” Third

is canonization, or the declaration of sainthood.

In general, two miracles must be accepted by the church as having occurred through the intercession of the prospective saint; one must occur before beatification, and the other after beatification.

The bishop also encouraged the congregation to follow Black Elk’s example stressing that all Christians are called into the missionary field.

“Like Black Elk, if we are docile to the Lord’s will, devoting our lives to him, we will be out working for his kingdom of mercy, love and peace,” he said.

The bishop also stressed that today’s Catholics should not live “isolated religious lives” but instead should recognize they are called to be “God’s servants and instruments of Christ’s love in building and advancing his kingdom. Each of us has to decide how we can participate,” he added.

Last February, Gruss appointed Bill White, as the diocesan postulator of Black Elk’s sainthood cause. White is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Deacon Ben Black Bear from St. Francis Mission is translating some of Black Elk’s writings from Lakota to English.

Deacon Marlon Leneagh,



CNS/Marquette University

**BLACK ELK A MODEL** — Nicholas Black Elk is pictured in an undated historical photo teaching a girl how to pray the rosary. Bishop Robert D. Gruss of Rapid City, S.D., celebrated an Oct. 21 mass at Holy Rosary Church in Pine Ridge, S.D., to open the sainthood cause for the Native American.

Rapid City’s diocesan director of Native Ministry, described Black Elk as a revered holy man among the Lakota who bridged the gap between traditional native spirituality and Catholicism.

“He showed his people that you did not have to choose between the two, you could be both. He did not abandon his native ways when he became a Christian. To him it was together — praying to the one God.”

## Church leaders: Palestinians need homeland

By Simon Caldwell

LONDON (CNS) — Recognition of a national homeland for Palestinians is required to achieve justice and reconciliation in the Holy Land, English Catholic and Anglican leaders announced Nov. 2.

They used the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, in which Britain declared its support for a Jewish state, to press for a two-state solution to decades of strife between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

Catholic Bishop Declan Lang of Clifton and Anglican Bishop Christopher Chessun of Southwark said in a joint statement that they wished to acknowledge “Britain’s past and future responsibilities to the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.”

“Israel’s security and development are inseparable from the fulfilment of Palestinian aspirations to statehood,” they said.

“We renew our call on the U.K. government to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to belong to a state on their own lands, next to the state of Israel,” they continued.

“Only justice for both peoples will lead to the reconciliation for which we pray with the Christian Church in the Holy Land,” the statement added.

Both bishops are regular visitors to the region and, in January, Lang will lead a visit of the Holy Land Co-ordination, a delegation of bishops from Europe, North America and South Africa. Chessun also will attend.

The Balfour Declaration takes its name from Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary who, in a letter Nov. 2, 1917, told Lord Rothschild, a British Jewish leader, that Britain backed as policy “the Zionist aspirations” for a Jewish homeland in the lands of the Bible.

At the time, Jews formed a minority of the population of the Holy Land, which was part of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, and the declaration, once accepted by the League of Nations in 1922, encouraged Jews to migrate to the territory, which later became the state of Israel in 1948.

However, besides supporting a Jewish homeland, the declaration

also said, “Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and

religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.”



CNS/Ammar Awad, Reuters

**BALFOUR DECLARATION ANNIVERSARY** — An Israeli police officer scuffles with a protester outside the British Consulate in Jerusalem Nov. 2.

## Faith leaders want protection for immigrants extended

By Dennis Sadowski

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Religious leaders, including influential voices in the Catholic Church, want the Trump administration to allow immigrants who are in the United States under a special immigration status to be able to stay in the country.

The leaders are making an all-out push to the Department of Homeland Security and the White House, arguing that it would be morally unacceptable to end Temporary Protected Status for hundreds of thousands of people from the troubled countries of El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti.

The status, commonly known as TPS, authorizes employment and protection from deportation. It has been extended to immigrants from the four countries, which continue to struggle with violence, economic insecurity and the aftermath of natural disasters. Some immigrants have been in the U.S. for up to 20 years and have had TPS extended by previous administrations several times.

The Trump administration had to decide by Nov. 6 on TPS for Nicaraguans and Hondurans and

by Jan. 8 for Salvadorans. Haitians are facing a Jan. 22 deadline to begin exiting the country when their special status will expire.

Advocates worry because Homeland Security has signalled reluctance to extend the status for other countries. In mid-September, the administration announced the end of TPS for nationals from Sudan, prompting an outcry from Catholic groups who said they will face dire circumstances upon their return.

Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, who has worked with South Florida’s Haitian community for nearly 30 years, called a rollback of TPS “highly objectionable.”

Terminating TPS would devastate family unity because parents would be forced to leave their U.S.-born children behind and return to countries that are unable to resettle tens of thousands of people, he said during a news teleconference Nov. 1.

Citing Haiti in particular, the archbishop said that a September fact-finding trip to the Caribbean country showed that “there does not exist conditions that would be able to absorb a significant number of returnees from the United States.”

Haiti continues to struggle in recovering from a massive earthquake in January 2010 that claimed up to 300,000 lives and a hurricane in 2016 that devastated much of the southwest peninsula. Haiti also is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, offering few employment opportunities and leaving the vast majority of people to eke out an existence through odd jobs or subsistence farming.

“The same situation exists for the triangle countries in Central America (El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua),” Wenski explained. “There’s a humanitarian reason for the administration to extend TPS. This would also give these recipients time to seek a permanent legislative solution from Congress.”

Kevin Appleby, senior director of international migration policy at the Centre for Migration Studies, said during the news briefing that the administration’s immigration policy seems to be guided by a belief that rolling back protections for immigrants is in the country’s best interests.

“Part of the issue here is there are battles on many fronts in this administration. They’re going with due speed to remove any protections that they can unilaterally for

immigrants in this country,” he said.

He said even though TPS may end for the immigrants, it is unlikely they will automatically return home and instead would add to the number of people in the U.S. illegally, causing the federal government to expend resources on people who would no longer be officially registered by the government.

The faith community has been rallying forces to approach Congress and the White House to not just extend TPS on moral grounds, but to enact comprehensive immigration reform to protect people already in the country, Appleby said.

Rabbi Elizabeth Richman, deputy director of Washington-based Jews United for Justice, who also was on the call, agreed that humanitarian concerns dictate that the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the four countries have their status extended.

“There’s consensus across religious communities (on the issue),” she said. “The administration should be following their lead and that this is a moral issue and a humanitarian issue.”

Political and economic reasons also were cited during the call.



# Melkite Catholics in Middle East face challenges

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Melkite Greek Catholics both in the Middle East and in the West face pressures eroding their communities — but from different sources.

The Christians of the Middle East are experiencing the “suffering shared by the entire population” due to the continuing war in Syria, said the new head of the Melkite Greek Catholics, Patriarch Youssef Absi. Because Christians do not have an army, or arms to defend themselves, “they are affected the most.”

The patriarch of an estimated two - three million Melkite Catholics around the world was in Ottawa Oct. 26 as part of the ninth Congress of Bishops from the Countries of Immigration, including Canada, and bishops from countries as far-flung as Australia, Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico. Including the patriarch, 10 bishops attended the Congress.

The patriarch cannot be called only the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, said Melkite Catholic Eparch of Canada Bishop Ibrahim Ibrahim. The borders of Antioch have now expanded, so “Antioch is both in the East and in the West.”

“I think we have some things to say in the West,” said the patriarch. “I am saddened by the decrease of the faith in the West.”

The Damascus-born patriarch’s visit to Canada was designed to help him learn about the challenges facing Melkite Catholics in the West, through meetings with Catholic leaders, Melkite clergy



CCN/D. Gyapong

**CONGRESS TAKES PLACE — The Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholics, Youssef Absi, was in Ottawa Oct. 26 as part of a Congress of Melkite Bishops from Countries of Immigration. He presided at vespers at the Melkite parish of St. Peter and St. Paul. The Eparch of the Melkite Catholics in Canada, Bishop Ibrahim Ibrahim, is to his left.**

and youth, said Ibrahim.

The patriarch is well aware, however, of the immense difficulties facing Melkites in his native Syria.

“Christians are emigrating now,” said the patriarch, who was elected last June and divides his time between Lebanon and Damascus. “They are leaving the country and this fact is miserable for us.”

“What is most needed is to help us make peace in our country,” he said. “We can take care of the rest.”

Stopping the war is not just a matter of stopping ISIS and other similar groups, but for world powers to address “who is behind or supporting ISIS,” he said. The confrontation is not so much with these groups but those who are helping them.

If they stop supporting and helping to sustain ISIS and every other group, a “big part of our work is done,” the patriarch said.

The ongoing war, instability

and destruction of livelihoods threatens to empty Syria of its ancient Christian populations, but the patriarch said perhaps the money being spent to settle refugees in the West could be better spent in the Middle East.

“With the money we could help them stay in their country, because we have a mission, a testimony to fulfil,” he said. This testimony has a great deal to do with the ability of differing religious

groups to live side by side, in harmony with one another, as they did before the war.

“We have to think about the future,” said Patriarch Absi. “The essential point is what is the philosophy, the ideas that will lead Syria in the future.”

What will the future of Syria look like?” he asked. “Sooner or later the war will stop. After that, what will be the new face of Syria? We have to give a shape to the new Syria.”

“It’s not a question of a person or an individual, it’s a question of a homeland, a nation,” he said.

“What you are living now in this country, we lived it for centuries and centuries,” the patriarch said of Canada’s pluralism. “Why would you want us to give up what you are defending and living?”

If the pluralistic model of diverse groups living side by side “fails in Syria, it’s a bad indication for the whole world,” the patriarch warned. “It means the experience is threatened everywhere else.”

Without Christianity, the Middle East risks becoming increasingly “monochromatic” and “sectarian,” said Rev. Rami Wakim, the personal assistant to the patriarch. “We need to fight the idea of every sect living alone in the country.”

Melkite Catholics face a different set of challenges in the west, said Ibrahim. “It’s easier to keep

— CHRISTIANS, page 7

## Government to match Foodgrains Bank donations

By Amanda Thorsteinsson

WINNIPEG — The Government of Canada will match donations from individual Canadians in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh through its new Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund.

The announcement was made Oct. 31 in Ottawa by the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development.

“Bangladesh is now hosting the world’s biggest refugee camp where over 900,000 Rohingya and other minorities are fleeing the ethnic cleansing in Myanmar,” she said. “Your donation will save lives and will allow them to be treated with dignity until they can return home.”

The crisis began at the end of August when Rohingya militants attacked government forces in Myanmar’s northern Rakhine state. According to the United Nations, the Myanmar government responded against the Rohingya minority with disproportionate violence.

As a result of the violence, well over 600,000 refugees, most of them women and children, have fled into Bangladesh seeking safety.

The Foodgrains Bank is responding to the Rohingya refugee crisis with two projects through its members World Renew and Emergency Relief and Development Overseas, both sup-

ported by the Government of Canada. The projects total \$1 million, and are providing emergency food to people living in informal settlements in Bangladesh.

“People are being terrorized, running from their homes as fast as they can,” said Foodgrains Bank executive director Jim Cornelius. “They are arriving in Bangladesh in poor health, and often deeply traumatized. They are in dire need of our support. I hope the match from the Canadian government will spur many more Canadians to donate to help people who are suffering.”

When a donation is made to the Foodgrains Bank’s Rohingya Refugee Appeal by individual Canadians, the Government of Canada will match the amount on a 1:1 basis. The government will then put matching funds into their Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund, which will be distributed to NGOs and other agencies to help people affected by the crisis.

In addition to the government’s Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund match, donations to the Foodgrains Bank that are designated to this crisis are also eligible to be matched on a 4:1 basis through the bank’s ongoing grant agreement with the Government of Canada.

The appeal, retroactive to Aug. 25, runs until Nov. 28.

For more information, see <https://foodgrainsbank.ca/campaigns/rohingya-appeal/>

## Rabbi and archbishop discuss Cohen

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — “A Rabbi and a bishop walked into a synagogue,” began Beth Jacob Synagogue president Barry Braitman as he welcomed a full house for an evening of Leonard Cohen’s music as reviewed by Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen and Rabbi Jeremy Parnes. The two are fans of Cohen’s music and, at the invitation of Bolen, he and Parnes presented videos of Cohen’s music and took turns analyzing and discussing what influenced Cohen’s music and lyrics. It is of particular interest to the two because Cohen, an observant Jew, composed lyrics and music that often contain Christian themes and symbolism.

The evening began with “Hallelujah,” one of Cohen’s best-known compositions.

“I hadn’t paid much attention to his music until I heard k.d. lang sing ‘Hallelujah’ at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics,” Parnes admitted.

Parnes and Bolen talked about the verses as reflections of human frailty, brokenness, hope, and praises to God, ending with allusions to Psalm 150. Bolen commented that Cohen is said to have composed over 80 verses to the song, most of which were never made public.

They continued with “The Window” (1979), “Come Healing” (2012), “Who By Fire” (1974), “Treaty” (2016), and “You Want it Darker” (2016), which Parnes said was Cohen acknowledging that he



Frank Flegel

**Rabbi Jeremy Parnes and Archbishop Donald Bolen**

was coming to the end of his life. There was also an excerpt from “Book of Mercy” (1984), which Bolen called “a stunningly beautiful prayer.”

The event was held on Oct. 26, the first anniversary of Cohen’s death according to the Jewish calendar. When the discussion was finished everyone was asked to stand. Parnes then chanted a traditional memorial prayer, following which everyone sang “Hallelujah.”

A reception with light refreshments ended the evening. Audience member Lyn Goldman said the evening gave her a much broader understanding of Cohen’s work: “It certainly enlightened me about Leonard’s work and his deeper thoughts.” Goldman said she wasn’t familiar with the biblical context or prayers, “but you can see they are actually relevant all the way through.”

Dave Bamford, another audience member, said there was a religious element in all Cohen’s

writing, “going way back,” especially in his final album: “You can tell he is talking about bringing all religions together. He speaks not as a Christian or a Jew; he is everything.”

In an interview with the *Prairie Messenger* following the presentation, both the archbishop and the rabbi described Cohen as an ordinary, humble guy but a man of faith who used his music to speak to the world.

“To speak to us not only about meaning but also calling us to ask questions, pointing to darkness and calling us to light. There is a deep hope embedded in his writings. He is a person of faith,” said Bolen.

Parnes commented: “He really needed, first of all, to make some meaning of life and a big part of that meant challenging and accepting the Higher Authority and understanding it’s not just the good and the bad but all of it together; he embraced all of that. It is remarkable.”



# Navigating the unknown part of faith journey: Prather

By Lorraine Turchansky  
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — If Sandy Prather has any advice for the contemporary Christian, it might be this: say yes, and then figure out how you're going to do it.

That saying, rooted in an old German proverb, became a guiding principle for Prather after an Oblate mentor used it to persuade her to lead a five-day retreat for 60 Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate priests and brothers — something she had never done before. She ended up agreeing and headed into uncharted territory.

But Prather says navigating the unknown — and getting lost along the way — has been typical of her

*Turchansky is chief communications officer for the Archdiocese of Edmonton.*

life and career, and she wouldn't have it any other way.

The longtime retreat director, facilitator, teacher and *Prairie Messenger* columnist, was recently honoured by Newman Theological College with the 2017 Kevin Carr Christian Leadership Award. In an acceptance speech peppered with humility and humour, she noted that she is notorious for being "directionally impaired."

"I can and do get lost frequently, even going to places I've been to before," she admitted to a luncheon crowd on Oct. 25. "So I'm bemused, and that's why I find it ironic that it's a leadership award. I never want to lead, because I'm pretty good at following."

Prather said she has come to realize that many "guiding stars" were placed in her path just when she needed them most.

"I think I actually have GPS — God's Providential Support," she

said. "Corny but true. I was shown a path. I have been led for all my life; I just didn't know it for most of the time. It was often in that cloud of unknowing that the mystics talk about, and it was often just one step, one foot in front of the other, one footstep at a time. And apparently, that gets you somewhere!"

"Kind of like a real GPS though, you only see the next turn ahead, you still make the wrong turns and get lost, and you hear a whole lot of 'Recalculating, recalculating.'"

Prather's faith story began in young adulthood, when she wandered for several years in what she called a spiritual desert. She credited her cousin Mary Ellen for being "that initial guiding star, who brought me out of that spiritual desert by reintroducing me to a God that I had abandoned and whom I thought I had lost forever."



Lincoln Ho @yegventures

**PRATHER HONOURED** — Longtime retreat director, facilitator, teacher and *Prairie Messenger* columnist Sandy Prather was recently honoured by Newman Theological College with the 2017 Kevin Carr Christian Leadership Award.

When Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish offered a short course sponsored by Newman Theological College, she decided to sneak in and sit at the back, hoping no one would notice.

"And I was hooked. Because I heard in that class something that spoke directly to my hungry heart and my searching mind."

After that, she decided to take some theology courses at St. Joseph's College as options for her bachelor of education degree at the University of Alberta.

"Many of the professors were Newman professors. It was the same thing, good news, and everything my heart hungered for. What I realized was that bad theology can kill you, can kill your soul and your spirit. Good theology can be life-giving for your soul and spirit, and I was being given life."

She went on to pursue a master's degree in theology at Newman, while raising a family and working part time. She credits her Newman education for changing her life and her career.

"In another time and another place, as a woman I would not have been allowed to study theology. But it was at Newman, with those gifted (professors) . . . that's where everything broke open," she said. "I feel I have as good a grounding as from any of the fancy theological schools all over the world. I feel solid in what I learned at Newman."

"Pope Francis says that today more than ever we need an educated laity to take their proper place in the church, and I think this award continues to speak to that vision. We need to continue to call forth and train lay men and women to take their place in the church."

A call out of the blue one day led to Prather's accepting a position as executive director at Star of the North, the Oblate retreat centre in St. Albert, where she served for 21 years.

"The Star became my rooftop, a place to proclaim the Lord and good news," she said. "And the invitations to lead retreats, to offer programs, to facilitate days, every one of them was an entry into unknown territory, where I've always felt that I was wandering and lost. None of it would have happened without the Oblates . . . because it was the Oblates who kept calling me into another unknown territory, and then gave me the guidance and support to be able to go there."

"The Oblates, with their spirituality and ecclesiology of inclusiveness, of welcome, of gentleness, of compassion, and their empowerment of women in the church, they have been the guides, the support for the entire journey."

Prather continues to work as a retreat leader, facilitator, and writer, and she also serves as provincial animator for Oblate Associates for OMI Lacombe Canada.

She said she was honoured and humbled to receive the Christian leadership award, which is named for Newman's first lay president, Kevin Carr.

"If you only knew how often I am lost and uncertain and wandering and unable to guide or lead anybody anywhere — but if by some amazing grace, people have found something of Christ in what I have said or what I have done or where I have been, if some semblance of God has touched their lives, then all I can say is, God is good, all the time."



Art Babych

**REMEMBRANCE DAY** — Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police march past the reviewing stand following the 2016 Remembrance Day ceremony at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. Remembrance Day services will take place this weekend.

## Tubman's church in need of repair

By Adelle M. Banks

(RNS) — A century and a half ago, a new Canadian church gave fleeing slaves a place to worship. Now the sanctuary that welcomed Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman and other escapees needs help itself.

The dwindling membership of Salem Chapel, a British Methodist Episcopal church just north of Niagara Falls, has started a crowd-sourcing campaign in hopes of raising \$100,000.

The congregation wants to shore up the building, which is in an area where heavy traffic has contributed to its shifting foundation.

Dedicated in 1855 by runaway slaves and free blacks, the church needs cable wires to secure the log frame of the building ahead of expected nearby construction and wants to replace parts of the building that are deteriorating or damaged.

Salem Chapel is in St. Catharines, Ont., a spot known as an end

point of the Underground Railroad, the multipronged clandestine route through which slaves escaped to freedom. Some of the people Tubman helped escape became members of the church.

Rochelle Bush, one of the 11 remaining members who launched the campaign, is the great-great-granddaughter of Rev. James Harper, who was the minister in charge of the congregation when Tubman attended and when it changed its affiliation from the African Methodist Episcopal Church to BME.

"We became British Methodist Episcopal in 1856 because nobody wanted to go back for conference (in the United States) because of the fugitive slave laws," Bush said, adding that about 10 churches in Ontario remain British Methodist Episcopal and consider the AME Church their parent organization.

After the Civil War, the church, which began with 195 members, began to dwindle as members re-

turned across the border, decreasing to about 40 in 1970. Most of its members now are age 80 and older.

The congregation, which continues to meet for worship each Sunday with a pastor and a pianist, has been sustained by tourists, who increased from about 2,500 annually to 4,000 this year, Bush said. Visitors pay a \$5 admission to learn about "the who's who in the abolitionist movement" — including Frederick Douglass and John Brown — who have visited the church.

"That's what helps us keep the church doors open and it pays the bills throughout the winter season," she said.

But now, the church's members say they need more assistance to keep their building available for future generations.

"(W)e want to ensure that it continues to serve as a religious institution and because it is an important treasure in North American history," they said.

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# Clergy in general among happiest groups: Rossetti

By Eric Durocher

MONTREAL (CCN) — What do priests usually do when they get together socially? They complain, of course, says Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, but that doesn't mean they're an unhappy bunch. "It's when the troops stop complaining that you need to worry," says the former U.S. Air Force intelligence officer.

In fact, clergy in general and Roman Catholic priests in particular are among the happiest groups, certainly in the United States. Priests and ministers report the highest level of personal satisfaction with their lives and ministries, according to several studies, including a 2009 landmark survey of 2,482 priests conducted by Rossetti.

These results fly in the face of the growing misconception that priests are isolated, burned out and unhappy, observes Rossetti.

The Syracuse diocesan priest and licensed psychologist was here Oct. 26 to present the results of his findings and to lay out a program of psycho-spiritual development for more than 100 Montreal priests and seminarians.

Rossetti, 66, is the former director of the St. Luke Institute, a treatment centre for religious in Maryland. Having worked for 18 years with those struggling with serious mental health issues during the height of the church sexual abuse crisis, he wanted to investigate the level of psycho-spiritual health within the priesthood in general.

A six-page survey — including standard psychological tests, satisfaction scales, spiritual practices, and childhood/developmental experiences — was mailed to more than 4,300 priests in 23 dioceses; 57 per cent responded. Although not a stratified random sample, Rossetti remains confident in his findings because of the survey's large sample size and high response rate.

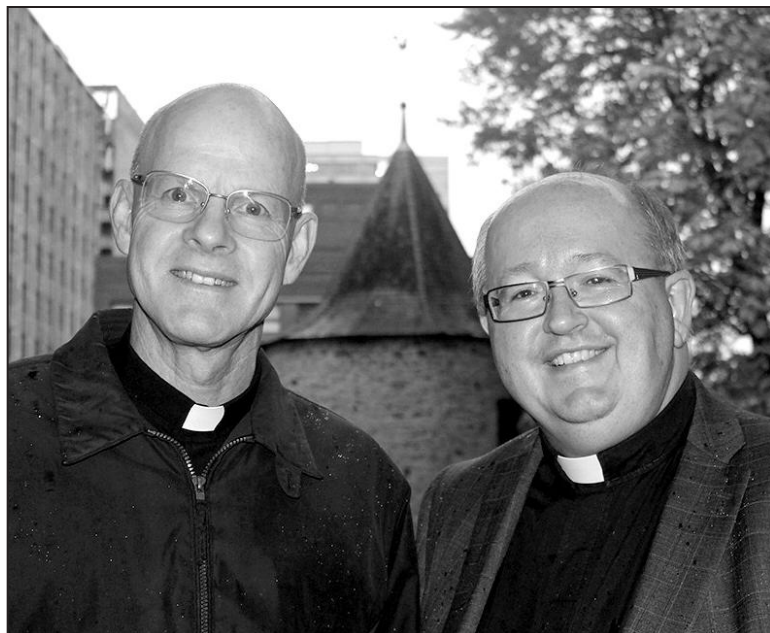
## 'Happiness factor'

The survey revealed that 92 per cent of those who responded "report an exceptionally high degree of happiness with being a priest and with their lives."

"We're referring to the inner joy the Lord gives to us," Rossetti explains. "We have good days, bad days, but there remains that internal joy with is a sign of God's presence in us."

Similar studies confirm these findings, Rossetti pointed out during his daylong presentation. A United Kingdom survey of 274 occupations reported that clergy had the highest level of job satisfaction, even though they had one of the lowest incomes. Similarly, a 2006 survey by the U.S. National Opinion Research centre also found that clergy reported the highest level of job satisfaction (87 per cent) and the highest level of overall happiness of any group.

According to Rossetti's survey, the main "happiness" predictors include: a sense of inner peace, a



Eric Durocher

**HAPPY PRIESTS** — Msgr. Stephen Rossetti and Rev. Raymond Lafontaine outside the Grand Seminary of Montreal. Rossetti, the former director of the St. Luke Institute, a treatment centre for religious in Maryland, conducted a survey of 2,482 priests and found high levels of personal satisfaction in terms of their lives and ministries. Lafontaine is parish priest at St. Monica Parish in Montreal, a member of the part-time faculty in the department of Theological Studies at Concordia, and teaches at the *Grand Séminaire de Montréal*.

strong relationship to God, a positive view of celibacy, feeling appreciated, and the presence of close friends.

When the "happiness" factor was analyzed to see what variables were associated with priests' sense of fulfilment, the results consistently showed the same elements at work.

Those priests who fell under

the happy/fulfilled category also reported having close friends, praying more than one hour a day and going to confession frequently. Conversely, those who had few, if any, close friends, prayed less than 15 minutes a day and went infrequently to confession, usually reported the lowest levels of feeling happy or fulfilled as priests and higher

levels of emotional exhaustion and loneliness.

With the survey suggesting that a strong spiritual life is at work in those who scored high in the personal happiness and fulfilment scales, Rossetti used these variables to formulate a 10-step program of holiness. These steps include: cease any serious sin, go frequently to confession (a good confessor is a good penitent), pray more, develop a deeper eucharistic spirituality and nourish good friendships.

"My overall mission is to help priests live happy, holy lives," he said. "We (priests) have our share of mental health issues, too," he notes, but according to the survey "not any more than what we find in the general population."

The Ten Steps to Holiness helps priests to live "with integrity, enhances self-esteem, strengthens one's sense of vocation and promotes psycho-spiritual wellness," he states, elements crucial to presenting a credible witness in a secular age.

## Secularism on the rise

In the secular culture of today, "you won't survive being mediocre," he warns his fellow priests. "The diocesan priest is called to a level of sanctity that we hadn't envisioned when we entered the seminary," he says, exhorting his brother priests to recognize and witness publicly to

the inner peace and joy they feel.

It's one of the antidotes that Rossetti proposes to confront the rising tide of secularism he sees in his travels as a consultant to the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. The view of secularism in the West feeds on the notion that "religion makes you unhappy and miserable."

Rossetti distinguishes between secularity — the separation of church and state — and secularism, which he says "tends to be a sense that the world, society and our own lives can be lived without a sense of God."

Secularists look for proof that religion in general, and Christianity in particular, makes you miserable and that priests are the most miserable of all, he explains. "That's a lie; it's just not true," Rossetti says, pointing to his research on priests' levels of personal happiness and fulfilment.

"When one has God in one's life, what does one find? Joy, peace, fulfilment," he explained during a followup interview. "When you take God out of your life, what is that state called? Hell," he stated unequivocally, predicting that the advance of secularism will generate more isolation, anger and narcissism in the world, variables statistically incompatible with engendering joy, peace and a sense of fulfilment.

# Newman College graduates look forward to future

By Thandiwe Konguavi  
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — Brother Benjamin Ripley is a Franciscan Friar planning a career as a chaplain.

Beth Pecson is a Catholic teacher hoping to be a stronger role model to her students.

Both are among this year's 34 graduates of Newman Theological College who reflect the vision of its president, Jason West, that it's an educational institution that offers preparation for the priesthood, as well as theological studies for lay people, at all stages in life.

"We want to make sure that it's not a secret, that it becomes better known and that there's more opportunities for people to encounter the college in different ways at stages that are suitable for where they're at, both in their faith journey and also in the practical time that they have available for deepening their understanding of faith."

The number of Newman graduates has doubled over last year, including a large group of teachers from Edmonton Catholic and school districts in Alberta. Another nine teachers from Saskatchewan Catholic schools will be graduating from Newman in May 2018.

Teacher Beth Pecson hopes her students at Monsignor Fee Otterson Elementary and Junior High School will take a lesson from her

efforts to obtain a master of religious education degree and enrich her current role as a music teacher and chaplain.

"I would like for them to see that learning doesn't end," said Pecson, as students from her school's junior high glee club performed at the Oct. 14 Convocation mass for Newman graduates.

"It's lifelong, especially if you're trying to learn about your faith because it's a never-ending journey and it doesn't matter where we are, there's always room for growth and there's room for excellence in that pursuit."

Pecson is the 2017 recipient of the Emmaus Award, given to the student who comes to recognize Jesus more clearly while fostering community in their learning environment.

"The one core idea that stood out to me the most just looking through that salvation history is how merciful and loving our God is. Newman is such a gift to our Catholic community," said Pecson, who has been teaching for more than 24 years.

Other graduates, such as Brother Benjamin Ripley, are just kicking off their careers.

Ripley is completing a placement as a student chaplain at St. Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital, a long-term care facility in south Edmonton. He hopes to use his master of divinity degree from Newman to become a hospital chaplain.

"What's been given to me is very valuable and very rewarding, to be able to take what I've learned here and to apply it where



Grandin Media

**NEWMAN GRAD** — Teacher Beth Pecson hopes her students at Monsignor Fee Otterson Elementary and Junior High School will take a lesson from her efforts to obtain a master of religious education degree at Newman and enrich her current role as a music teacher and chaplain.

ever I end up in the church and in my order," he said. "What's given to you is a solid grounding in our faith," Ripley said.

Ripley received the Joseph N. MacNeil Outstanding Achievement Award for academic excellence and commitment to the college.

Ripley said he enjoyed the mixture of clergy and laity in his classes at Newman.

"I think we need that dynamic within the church," he said. "For me, it gives a perspective of how the laity wants to serve the church and how they want to be a part of it. They provide a different view of what church is and what it should be."

A wife and mother of four children, Pecson relied on the moral support of her classmates — many

of whom were also teachers holding full-time jobs and raising families.

In the fall of 2016 there were 233 students enrolled in 465 courses at Newman — a 40 per cent increase over the year before and the highest in 12 years.

This fall, enrolments have remained steady, with 430 course enrolments, representing 232 students.

West said enrolment has been climbing steadily due to new programs, including one for the formation of permanent deacons, greater interest in online programs, as well as strong enrolment from the seminary and school districts.

For more information about Newman Theological College, visit: <https://www.newman.edu/>

Durocher is editor emeritus, *Catholic Times Montreal*.

Konguavi is staff writer for *Grandin Media*.



# Educators set record straight on human sexuality

By **Thandiwe Konguavi**  
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — Catholic educators are being accused of abandoning science and failing to protect their students — none of which is even remotely true, say the province's Catholic school superintendents.

A firestorm erupted in the mainstream and social media following publication of a working document prepared by the Council of Catholic Superintendents of Alberta, which identified for government officials possible areas of concern in the human sexuality part of the health and wellness curriculum. Catholic schools teach the full provincial curriculum in all subjects, but supplement it with a Catholic perspective.

"What everybody did is they took our document, they actually cut words and they put them together. And so they created sentences," said Karl Germann, council president and superintendent of Grande Prairie Catholic Schools.

"It caught us completely off

*Konguavi is a staff writer with Grandin Media.*

guard. It's disappointing," added Bonnie Annicchiarico, the council's past president. "Our goal was to be active participants with the government for the good of Catholic education."

She said the council of superintendents has been working with Alberta Education for more than a year — "in good faith," — as the ministry updates the provincial school curriculum.

Asked to identify areas of potential concern on human sexuality education, the council replied with a working document that was sent to Alberta Education on April 11. That document was recently made public through a freedom of information act request.

The goal was to ensure the new curriculum is not so restrictive that it would prevent Catholic schools from including relevant church teachings alongside the provincial curriculum.

For example, they would teach the curriculum content on contraceptives and abortion, and also teach why the church opposes these measures. They would teach about different sexual orientations, and also teach the Catholic view of marriage as a sacramental bond between a man and woman.

Some critics said that would lead to marginalization of minorities.

On the issue of consent, the superintendents wrote, "Although consent is always necessary for any sexual activity to be healthy, it is not the only threshold that needs to be met when considering choices regarding sexual activity and other important decisions." They want students also to consider "personal, family and faith values and legal requirements" in order to make informed decisions about sexual activity.

The superintendents' document identifies a number of concepts that might be taught but not promoted in Catholic schools because they conflict with church teaching, such as same-sex relationships or the theory that gender is not connected to biology.

"We wanted to say for the first time that this is what we see being our teachings and what could be problematic," Germann said. "We're trying to be pre-emptive in our work."

In addition to the new school curriculum, the council wants to develop a resource document for Catholic teachers of human sexuality education, which would provide an expanded view of sexual-



Karl Germann

ty, from a Catholic lens, and within the school curriculum.

"I think if people read and process the document, they'll get a deeper understanding of what we're trying to articulate," Germann said. "We're not in any way judging anybody else's beliefs."

Critics include Premier Rachel Notley and Education Minister David Eggen. Despite that, Annicchiarico said the superintendents will continue to work constructively with Alberta Education officials on the new curriculum.

For now, the council is dealing with the fallout.

"We articulated our Catholic perspectives on what would be

our Catholic teaching and what might be contrary to our Catholic teaching," Germann said. "We're trying to respect our bishops and respect our ministers. We would have to get a blessing from both."

Their document states that the church has a foundational teaching that all people are created in God's image and that "individuals must be treated with respect, compassion, sensitivity and against discrimination."

"Same-sex inclinations in no way diminish the full human dignity or intrinsic worth of the person."

Janay Mori, a Grade 12 student at St. Francis Xavier High School in Edmonton, wasn't surprised by the superintendents' suggestions.

"If it's a Catholic school then I guess you can teach Catholic values, because that's the whole point of a Catholic school, but just have limits," said Mori.

She noted that her school is "bringing LGBT people in to share their experiences, how people can treat others better, and (teaching that) it's not OK to discriminate."

Sean Comrie, another St. FX student, said the public high school he attended in B.C. taught safe-sex options, and that's important.

"It's going to happen when people are dating in high school and in university, so they should be prepared for that."

— with files from Andrew Ehrkamp and Lorraine Turchansky

## Keep section in Criminal Code: bishops

By **Deborah Gyapong**

OTTAWA (CCN) — Canada's Catholic bishops say removing a section of the Criminal Code protecting clergy and religious services from obstruction would "send a disturbing message."

"More than ever we need to legislate protection for religious services taking place," Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto told the House of Commons Justice Committee Oct. 30 via video-conferencing.

The cardinal said the bishops wished to "convey our grave concern" over Bill C-51's removal of section 176 from the Criminal Code that makes it an indictable offence to threaten or obstruct clergy or ministers from celebrating services or going about their work.

Its removal would "send a disturbing message from Parliament to all religious communities," the cardinal said.

"We believe attacks on religion are not like other attacks against public safety — they are not only more grave, but threaten the essence of democracy itself," said the president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Lionel Gendron of Saint-Jean-Longueuil. "This is because religious freedom is the cornerstone of human rights."

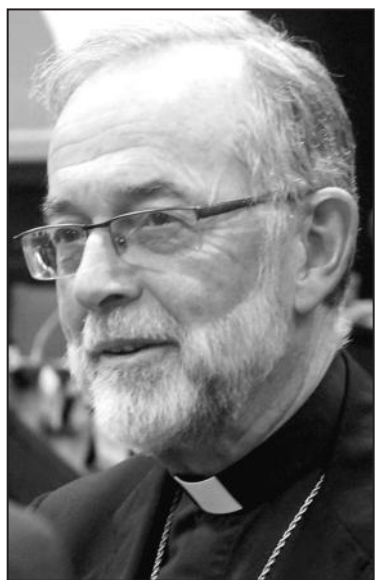
Gendron said the CCCB would soon join in the issuing of an interfaith letter signed by the conference as well as Jewish and Muslim faith leaders in support of keeping section 176.

"Section 176 of the Criminal Code is a deterrent and educator concerning particular threats with which faith communities can be faced," said Gendron. "If the recent rise of hate crimes and prejudice against religious believers in Canada is any indication of the

dangers that lie ahead, the removal of this clear and unequivocal section of the Criminal Code will make it harder to protect millions of Canadians who are active members of their faith communities."

Section 176 represents our "shared belief in and respect for the freedom of religion and maintains an indispensable link between the Criminal Code and the protection of fundamental human rights," he said.

"The human person understood as a seeker of truth is the basis for religious freedom, for freedom of



CCN/D. Gyapong

Bishop Lionel Gendron

conscience, and indeed for freedom of speech."

Section 176's protection of religious ministers from assault or obstruction in carrying out their duties protects "the community of faith by ensuring that the exercise of religious freedom is not impeded by acts of violence or threats which are directed against its faith leaders," the CCCB president said.

The Liberal government has

argued Bill C-51 removes redundant and archaic portions of the Criminal Code and behaviour covered under Section 176 is addressed in sections governing assault, making threats, causing a disturbance and provisions covering hate speech and crimes.

"If you're disrupting a religious service, you are causing a great deal of turmoil to a lot of people," said Bruce Simpson, a criminal lawyer who accompanied the CCCB delegation. "It doesn't matter why you're doing it."

The section "covers conduct not otherwise covered" in the Code, Collins said. "We must recognize that there are ways to 'wilfully disturb' a religious service without screaming or shouting. A silent protest, unfurling a banner, blocking a procession, etc., can all prevent communal prayer and worship from taking place."

"We accept the right of people to peacefully demonstrate" in public places but at the same time "congregations have a right to gather without being impeded," the cardinal said.

"I think most people know it's illegal to disrupt a religious service, but if you take it out, maybe they'll find out it isn't," Simpson warned.

Also making presentations to the Justice Committee Oct. 30 were the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, B'nai Brith Canada, a Jewish human rights group, and the Association of Reformed Political Action (ARPA) who all urged the government to retain the section, though lawyer and professor Janet Epp Buckingham, appearing as an individual, said some archaic language in the section such as the words "clergyman" and "minister" could be replaced by "religious official" and with words added to show both men and women can fill that role.

## Youth send message to Rome

By **Agnieszka Krawczynski**  
The B.C. Catholic

VANCOUVER (CCN) — Pope Francis has asked young people to weigh in ahead of next year's synod on young people, and Canadians from as far away as Vancouver are speaking up.

"There is a misconception that young people are apathetic and uninvolved in the church," said Matthew Furtado, one of 11 Catholics from the Lower Mainland who participated in a national youth forum hosted by Salt + Light Television Oct. 10.

Furtado told Cardinal Kevin Farrell and at least 100 live participants the best way to reach young people is by communicating in their language.

"A lot of youth express their identities through social media through what they post, but they are also listening on social media," he told *The B.C. Catholic*.

Furtado, a youth ministry leader at St. Matthew's Parish in Surrey, actually encourages teens to use their smartphones during events.

"There can be a misconception that when we're doing things in person we shouldn't be on our devices. To a certain point, I encourage people: 'why don't you post something that resonated with you online?'"

Those photos or reflections that get posted on Facebook or Instagram make the events personal for attendees and share the Gospel with friends or peers who didn't attend.

Furtado also pointed out that

millennials are an indecisive generation.

"I think young adults today, versus 20 or 30 years ago, have a hard time with decision-making," he said. "That could be anything: discernment of vocation, what I am going to study, or what am I going to do with my youth. That resonates with anyone," Catholic or not.

"What is the church's response to that and how do we include discernment in our faith formation?" he asked.

Furtado and 10 other Catholics aged 19 - 29 took part in the national forum from a satellite studio in Vancouver. Other audiences shared their thoughts from locations in Calgary, Windsor, Montreal, and Quebec City, as Farrell listened and spoke with a live youth audience based in the Salt + Light broadcast centre in Toronto.

The 11 Vancouverites who spoke were a mix of young adults who were married, single, professionals, and students, said Vancouver co-ordinator Clay Imoo.

"I think that was a really good representation and echo of a lot of what the rest of the country was saying," said Imoo. Concerns that came up across the country included using digital platforms to evangelize, navigating the tension between traditional and modern liturgical styles, and educating young Catholics to handle controversial topics such as same-sex marriage or ordaining female priests.

While the synod itself is still a year away, Imoo said there's no need to wait to learn from the feedback that's being gathered during the consultation process.



# Story of Thomas Nangle lives on in Newfoundland

By Meggie Hoegler  
The Catholic Register

In the years following the First World War, it would not be unusual for a Catholic family in Newfoundland to have three portraits hanging in their home: Pope Benedict XV, Newfoundland Archbishop E.P. Roche . . . and Rev. Thomas Nangle.

Nangle, a respected First World War chaplain who served with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, was born in St. John's in 1889. He was ordained a priest in 1913 and served at St. Michael's Parish on Bell Island. When war was declared in 1914, the 25-year-old Nangle wanted to enlist with the Newfoundland Regiment as their chaplain. Initially, the archbishop denied the request, but finally gave his permission in 1916.

Thus began a journey that has become legendary, and Newfoundlanders have not forgotten the chaplain who cared for their ancestors on the battlefield. There are no more soldiers from The Great War left to parade on Nov. 11, and the memories of sacrifice may fade a little more with each passing Remembrance Day, but Nangle continues to fascinate.

His story was told in a 2006 book, *Soldier Priest in the Killing Fields of Europe*. In 2016 he was named a person of national significance by the Canadian government. In September 2017 a plaque was installed in his honour at his alma mater, St. Bonaventure College in St. John's.

After the war Nangle was appointed Newfoundland's representative to the Imperial War Graves Commission, which led him to return to France and Belgium to exhume the bodies of dead soldiers and give them proper mili-



Photo courtesy Library and Archives Canada

**THE GREAT WAR — Soldiers await chaplain service and free coffee in Arras (near Calais), France, September 1918.**

tary burials. That story became the basis for the opera *Ours*, which debuted in 2016 with Newfoundland's Opera on the Avalon.

"There was no Facebook or email in 1918," said Cheryl Hickman, artistic director of Opera on the Avalon. "Once they went overseas, the families had no idea where their loved ones were or what they were doing. They would get a letter in the mail saying their loved one had been killed and that was it."

Nangle was tasked with uncovering the bodies of the unaccounted for and moving them to actual graves. "He had to negotiate with French landowners to get permission to dig up the bodies, which he did himself," said Hickman.

Nangle fought to have a memorial erected in St. John's to commem-

orate the 1916 battle of Beaumont-Hamel in France, which left 700 of the Newfoundland Regiment's 800 soldiers dead, wounded or missing. He lost that fight, as the official monument was erected at the site of the battle in Beaumont-Hamel. Later, he oversaw construction of The National War Memorial in St. John's, which was erected in 1924.

"The people of Newfoundland were so grateful to him," said Hickman. "He even took photos of the gravestones while he was in Europe so the families could see them."

During the first two years of the war there was a great shortage of Catholic chaplains. The ones who were sent overseas were responsible for thousands of men and burnt out rapidly.

Matters were made worse in early 1917 when the British took horses away from the chaplains, calling it a "waste of horseflesh and hay." At the battles of Passchendaele and Vimy Ridge, the centennial anniversaries of which are this year, there were 357 Protestant chaplains but only 83 Roman Catholic chaplains. Soldiers wore discs around their necks identifying them as Catholics or Protestants so they could be blessed by a respective chaplain.

Following the gruesome battles of early 1917, the Knights of Columbus began to provide welfare agency support to Catholic padres, establishing "Catholic army huts" or makeshift chapels, stocking them with both religious and practical supplies like food and canteen goods. Though padres were ordered to stay back and care for the dead or wounded behind the battle lines, many bravely defied orders, risking their lives to administer the last rites and care for the wounded alongside physicians.

"When the first fleet of soldiers approached the front lines of battle, the chaplain was often right behind them, carrying a stretcher over his shoulder," said Duff Crerar, a military historian and author of the essay "In the Day of Battle." "There were no real age restrictions for chaplains. Some were in their 30s. Others were in their 60s. But they were all robust and full of moral courage, they were driven to help

in any way they could."

As chaplain, Nangle was responsible for the spiritual health of his regiment, including administering last rites to dying soldiers.

"In the Day of Battle," Crerar also tells of Rev. R.C. MacGillivray's experience baptizing a dying soldier during the Battle of Passchendaele:

"'Father, I am dying and I want you to baptize me.' Another dying soldier gave the chaplain a ring after he had blessed him. 'Souvenir, Father,' were the last words he spoke to me. MacGillivray kept the ring always and valued it above money."

At the time, Newfoundland's population was just over 242,000. Nangle knew many of the soldiers he went overseas with and had to give last rites to boyhood friends.

"He did a lot of recruiting during the war, many of the young boys signed up because of Nangle's speeches," said Gary Browne, author of Nangle's biography *Soldier Priest*. "That played havoc on his mind. He was shaken to the core, I don't know how he couldn't have been. He had to see the faces of the wives, children and family members of the boys he'd watched die every day at mass. Post-traumatic stress disorder was not a diagnosis at the time, but clearly he was suffering from just that."

Nangle's guilt and suffering led him to make a drastic decision: in 1925, he left the priesthood and began a new life in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe.) He married, had four children and became involved in farming and local politics. He never returned to Newfoundland and seldom spoke of his wartime experiences. It was Nangle's son, Hugh, who

got his father talking about his experiences as a chaplain.

Nangle died in 1972 at age 83. He is survived by two of his four children, Hugh, who lives in Ottawa, and Mavourneen Galbraith, who lives in New Zealand. Galbraith visited Newfoundland for the first time in September 2017 and was part of the unveiling ceremony for her father's commemorating plaque.

"Hugh was the only child who knew much of anything about his father's experiences because he was the one who asked," said Robert Chafe, a Newfoundland-based playwright who wrote *Ours* after reading Browne's book.

"While reading about Nangle, I had this gut feeling," said Chafe. "I wanted to tell a story of the aftermath of Beaumont-Hamel but I wanted a human narrative to centre it around. Nangle's story was the perfect fit. It was one I'd never heard before yet here I was, living in a land that had been changed by the incredible legacy he left behind."

The final scene of the opera shows Nangle walking into the archdiocese in 1925 and leaving the priesthood forever.

"It's a story of patriotism," said Hickman. "It attempts to explain the scar Beaumont-Hamel left on Newfoundland."

In many ways, Nangle's story mirrors that of Beaumont-Hamel

## Christians in the West threatened by secularism

Continued from page 3

people (in the churches) in the Middle East. Here we're threatened by atheism and secularism that are less efficient in the Middle East."

"If you're born a Melkite, you'll die a Melkite in the Middle East," said Ibrahim. But in the West, if you're born a Melkite there's no guarantee you'll even "die a Catholic."

"There Christians are threatened by war, instability and lack of opportunity," he said. "Here it's archaic to have religion, to have faith, to say you believe in God."

Children here are "persecuted by their peers in school if they have faith," he said. "Especially if the church they are coming from has different liturgy, spirituality and

different traditions such as icons instead of statues, and oriental music instead of western music."

Sometimes children are afraid to mention what kinds of food they eat, he said. "It takes courage to be ourselves and to teach our children to be ourselves, to keep the colours and flavors of our traditions."

The patriarch also helped celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour in Montreal, he said. This church has existed continuously since 1892, and was the home of all the Eastern Catholics, the Maronites, Syriacs, Chaldeans and Armenians initially. "We are not guests in Canada," said Ibrahim. "We are an essential part" of the country's fabric, with a "successful history."



Courtesy Archives and Special Collections, Memorial University

**Rev. Thomas Nangle**

— an event that changed the course of history for both a province and a man of faith.

"He was a person who had such a monumental affect on the *Zeitgeist* of this province," said Chafe. "In Newfoundland in the early 1920s, people had a picture of the pope and the archbishop on the wall and beside it, a picture of Thomas Nangle. He was a superstar in this country and he was greatly loved. . . . As soon as he quit the priesthood, those pictures on the wall came down."

Chafe is optimistic that portraits of Nangle will begin to reappear in homes.

"He disappeared from our history for so long, but we are bringing Nangle back."

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# Anglicans, Catholics share historic church

By Frank Flegel

QU'APPELLE, Sask. — Parishioners of Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church in Qu'Appelle, Sask., a community



Frank Flegel

Archdeacon Catherine Harper

55 km east of Regina, realized that their church needed major repairs, which they could not afford. They requested permission from Archbishop Donald Bolen to close the church. Hearing of their plans,

parishioners of St. Peter's Anglican Church invited their Catholic neighbours to worship there.

In an emotional goodbye, chair of the Immaculate Conception pastoral council Chad Geis, speaking from the ambo, said they had exhausted all efforts to secure the quarter-million dollars required to bring the building up to code and their failure sealed the fate of the building. He said that, with all that has happened, the church is saying in her own secret way, "I have done my Catholic duty, I have loved and served the Lord but after 110 years, let me go in peace." Geis then asked for a moment of silence.

Former Pastor Emil Kutarna said that, when he heard I m m a c u l a t e

Conception was to be closed, he had to return. He read a poem he had composed for the occasion. It recounted the life and memories of the church and ended with, "Goodbye old friend; you have

served us well. Faithful to the end, to the last toll of the bell."

"We are most appreciative of the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, and especially St. Peter's Anglican Church, for inviting us and allowing us to continue practising our faith at their church," Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen said to the congregation. "So, we mark our sorrow and a new beginning."

The archbishop began his homily with a reflection on the Gospel and the readings of the day: Jesus joins the apostles on the road to Emmaus. He remarked on how the apostles were devastated at Jesus' death, "perhaps much like how you might feel this evening, leaving this beautiful Immaculate Conception Church."

The apostles didn't recognize Jesus because they were focused on the past. "You will remember the eucharistic celebrations, homilies, baptisms and how the community was formed. Jesus did reveal himself to the apostles and walked with them, as he will continue to walk with you," he said. "The closure of this church does not close your mission as disciples of Christ."

He then proceeded with the ritual of decommissioning the building as a church, ending with the removal of the altar stone. Parishioners then left the building and processed up the street to St. Peter's Church as the Immaculate

Conception bell tolled for the last time.

Archdeacon Catherine Harper, on behalf of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, greeted everyone as they entered St. Peter's. "Welcome home," she said as people found their places in the pews.

Bolen again thanked the Diocese of Qu'Appelle for their generous offer to share their church: "It's hard to imagine a community that could have been more welcoming to a Roman Catholic parish whose building is no longer sustainable. We are incredibly grateful."

He went on to say that it was hard to imagine how an Anglican church of the name St. Peter could be a more inviting name for a Roman Catholic community, which prompted laughter from the pews. Bolen encouraged the two congre-

gations to seek appropriate ways to grow together in unity and mission, as Anglicans and Catholics have sought responsible ways to grow together on an international level.

St. Peter's Church was the original cathedral for the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle. In 1944 the title was transferred to St. Paul's Cathedral in Regina.

Although Immaculate Conception is no longer a church, some issues remain. Geis is concerned about finding storage space for articles to be removed from the building and used for services for the Catholic community now sharing St. Peter's. Artwork, including two frescoes on the wall behind the altar, are to be removed. Some articles will be placed with other churches, as per past practice, or will be assigned to the archdiocesan archives.

## Town park named after longtime pastor

By James Riley

BRUNO, Sask. — A chilly day could not quell the warmth and appreciation that the town of Bruno holds for Rev. Joe Ackerman, OSB. In a public ceremony Oct. 12, the name of the town's new playground was officially revealed — Fr. Joe Park — much to the surprise of the 93-year-old Ackerman.

"Victor Granger (chair of the St. Bruno Parish Council) came and picked me up, saying, 'It's been a while since you've been out and around the town. Let's go see what's new,'" said Ackerman.

Stopping at the new playground, Granger suggested they get out and attend the naming ceremony that was about to take place. After a brief address by Bruno Mayor Dale Glessman and words of congratulations from MP Kelly Block on the completion of Bruno's "Canada 150" project, the sign bearing the new park's name was unveiled. Rev. Pius Schroh, current pastor of St. Bruno Parish, and Ackerman then blessed the park.

"I was completely dumbfounded. My mouth was opened wide enough to drive a tractor in," commented Ackerman when asked about his reaction to seeing the

park's name. "I was surprised, surprised, surprised. There are so many people that have spent their whole lives here in Bruno, and I've only been in Bruno for 19 years."

Ackerman served as pastor of St. Bruno Parish from 1998 until retiring last year. Throughout his time in Bruno, he was always involved in community activities and gatherings, whether they were at the church, school, rink or community hall.

"This will be a great remembrance of who Fr. Joe is and all he has done for our town," commented Bruno resident Michele Hoppe. "He gathered everyone, no matter who you were, to be a part of everything. Especially the little ones."

The name for the new playground was the suggestion of 13-year-old Éowyn Riley, who submitted the name as part of a summer "name the park" contest held by the town. She didn't know that her suggestion had been selected until she was called from the crowd by Glessman to unveil the sign.

"When I think of Bruno, that's who I think of," said Riley. "Fr. Joe is a very fun-loving guy, and always wants other people to enjoy themselves, so I felt that naming a community park after him would be a good choice."

## Father and daughter active in ministry

By Kate O'Gorman

SASKATOON — Michael and Ava MacLean are a father/daughter team, both committed to building the Body of Christ through campus ministry.

As a member of the campus ministry team at St. Thomas More College — a team that includes Madeline Oliver, Rev. André Lalach and Rev. Mark Blom, OMI, in collaboration with Basilian Father Ron Griffin, as well as Gertrude Rompré, director of Mission and Ministry — Michael works to foster faith formation and spiritual support among students, faculty and staff.

His commitment to campus ministry extends to the national level, where he serves as chair of the Canadian Catholic Campus Ministry (CCCM) executive team, an association that serves campuses across Canada.

Like her father, Ava has taken a leadership role in witnessing to the Gospel on the U of S campus and beyond while completing her degree in education. As the western representative and president of the executive team for the Canadian Catholic Student's Association (CCSA), a national body that mirrors and works in tandem with CCCM, Ava has followed in her father's footsteps.

Together, the CCCM (with Michael as chair) and the CCSA (with Ava as president), work to support faith and leadership development opportunities, offer pastoral care, unite students from campuses across Canada, and promote the mission of the church in higher education.

"University is a time when young people begin their first

foray into independent academic study," says Michael. "All sorts of questions about faith and meaning, as well as questions about other Christian denominations and religions, start to come up. As campus ministers, we help students wrestle with those questions as they grow in both their academic and their faith lives."

"If there wasn't campus ministry, there would be no student leadership," Ava adds. "Leadership is synonymous with service. It's students wanting to serve other students to create a better environment."

Ava highlights how campus ministry is not exclusive to STM students: "The university is a big place. It can be difficult to find communities that are ready to welcome you, but campus ministry does that."

With father and daughter holding parallel positions, Michael and Ava often work together to offer local events such as TED talks and coffee houses through the Newman Centre on campus.

While Michael has found it exciting to share his work and passion with his daughter, Ava initially expressed concern over "the optics."

"Dad does so much around campus and I wanted to contribute as well, but I was worried people



STM Campus Ministry

**FATHER AND DAUGHTER TEAM — Michael MacLean and daughter Ava are both active in campus ministry at the University of Saskatchewan.**

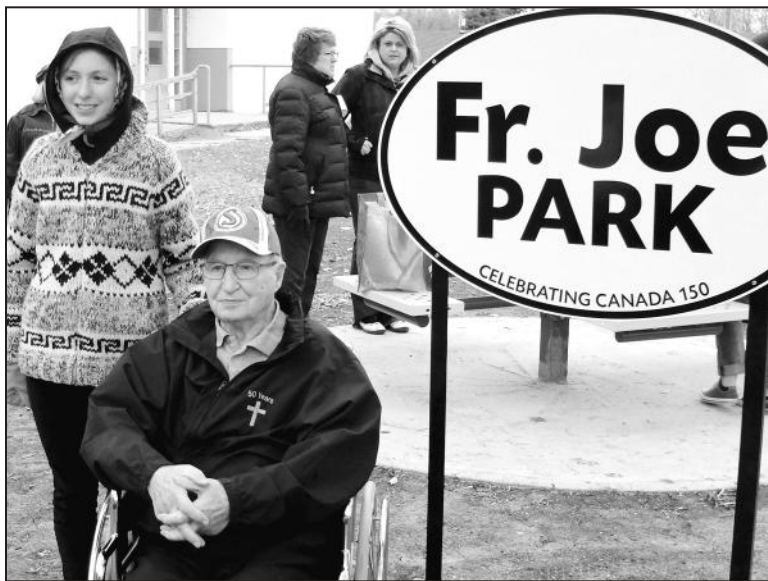
would think I was involved only because my dad was involved," she said.

However, the independent nomination process that led to her election as CCSA president alleviated her fears.

"It's been great for me to find a place in the CCSA," Ava continues. "I get to do this work in a similar but different way."

Ava's involvement in student leadership has afforded her many opportunities. A highlight was attending the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) in Italy earlier this year, where she interacted with Catholic students from all over the world and participated in a general assembly with Pope Francis. It has also helped prepare her to be a leader in the workplace.

— CONNECTED, page 9



James Riley

**FR. JOE PARK — "I was completely dumbfounded," said 93-year-old Rev. Joe Ackerman, OSB, when he saw the name of the new playground in Bruno, Sask., where he served as pastor for 19 years. The name was the suggestion of 13-year-old Éowyn Riley, who submitted it as part of a "name the park" contest held by the town.**



# SCSBA elects new president at annual meeting

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Regina Catholic Schools board trustee Vicky Bonnell was elected president of

the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association (SCSBA) at the association’s annual meeting Oct. 21 at the Doubletree Hotel in Regina.

Bonnell has served in various positions with the SCSBA, most recently as vice-president for 2016 - 17. She has elected Regina Catholic School Division trustee

in 2006 and re-elected in 2009, 2012 and 2016. She has served as chair and deputy chair of the division over the course of her 11 years on the Regina board.

“Our goals remain: to help Catholic school divisions in their role to provide a faith-filled education and prepare our students as future leaders in society,” she said in thanking members for their support.

Saskatchewan Catholic school divisions have, in general, met or exceeded government-established academic goals as well as graduation rates for all students, including specific graduation rates for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

Bonnell spoke about the ongoing challenges facing Catholic education, notably those created by the Theodore court decision which ruled the government of Saskatchewan cannot fund non-Catholic students attending Catholic schools.

“That decision is being appealed, of course,” said Bonnell, “but legal costs are estimated to be about \$250,000 if the appeal goes all the way to the Supreme Court, which it probably will.”

Those costs could increase by \$50,000 if a petition to recover court and legal costs filed by the Good Spirit School Division #204 is successful.

Bonnell advised the meeting that a committee has been established and a major fundraising



Frank Flegel

Vicky Bonnell

campaign will shortly be announced. All eight Catholic school divisions are also being encouraged to come up with fundraising programs of their own to help the effort. Fundraising is necessary because school divisions cannot — and would not, in any case — use government education grants to pay legal costs for the appeals.

The Saskatchewan government also intends to appeal the judgment. Premier Brad Wall announced that the government will invoke the Notwithstanding Clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to overrule the court decision and maintain the status quo for at least five years while the appeals process winds its way through the courts.

## Karstads live as interchurch family

By Paul Paproski, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — Bernie and Shirley Karstad of Saskatoon are retired seniors who love to keep active. Though in their late 70s and 60s, respectively, the Karstads follow busy schedules that would be difficult for young couples to emulate. They believe

the religious education of their children.

“Bernie is Lutheran. I am Roman Catholic. At present we participate in both the Lutheran and Roman Catholic communities in Saskatoon,” Shirley said to an Oblate gathering Oct. 21 at St. Peter’s Abbey. “We do not talk about ecumenism. We live it.”

The beginnings of their journey together go back some 30 years when Bernie was a widower and Shirley a divorced Catholic. Bernie had one child, while Shirley had five.

The Karstads agreed, before marriage, to hold onto their beliefs and each participate in the parish of the other. Bernie and Shirley attend each other’s church on alternating Sundays, a schedule that has worked well for them.

“We did not see any reason to convert to the other’s tradition,” Shirley said. “We felt very strongly about our commitment to each other and we were prepared to

each give 100 per cent of ourselves to each other.”

The Karstads knew their decision to marry would bring many challenges.

Shirley’s parish priest opposed her decision to marry a non-Catholic, so she returned to a former parish where she was warmly accepted. Some of her family refused to come to her wedding and then cut off communication with her for a time. A few of Bernie’s friends reminded him that his son

needed to remain Lutheran and encouraged him to bring his new family into the Lutheran Church.

“We were blessed to have our Lutheran pastor and our Catholic priest encouraging us and praying for us and wanting to marry us,” Shirley commented. The interchurch family came to be seen as something that was not a problem but a challenge for growth.

In 1992, Rev. Bernard de Margerie of Saskatoon formed a group of couples in mixed marriages. They discussed the book, *Double Belonging: Interchurch Families and Christian Unity*, by Rev. George Kilcourse. The book brought everyone to understand that belonging to different traditions and participating in them was a blessing and not a problem.

The group met for two years to study the book, and its members grew in their faith journeys, Shirley said. Priests and pastors were included in their discussions. Invitations were sent to the bishops of the Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Catholic churches. The interchurch families shared their stories with the bishops who, in turn, encouraged them to continue in their faith journeys.

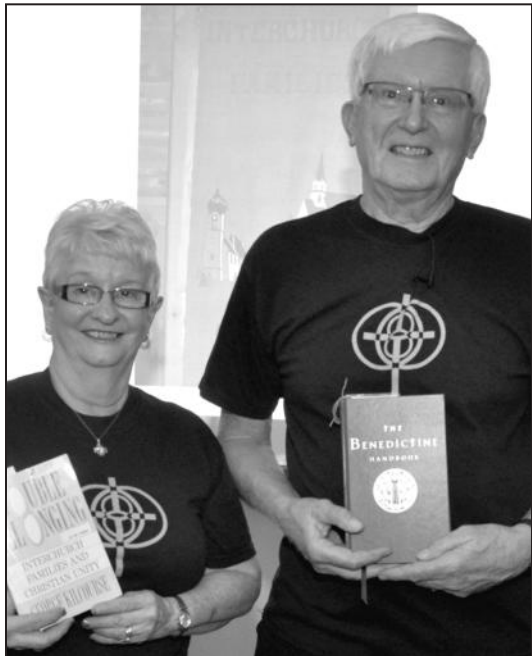
The late Bishop James Mahoney of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon encouraged the families to follow their consciences, find pastors who would listen to them, and attend parishes that met their needs. These words are being reiterated by Pope Francis who wants his priests to be pastoral and listen to the people, said Shirley.

The Karstads have been active with interchurch families for the past 25 years. Their experiences have led them to realize that there is more that unites them than separates them in their Christian traditions. Their faith life and personal relationship with God has grown.

One of their meaningful encounters was centred around discussions of Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Evangelii gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel). They have presented their stories to marriage preparation courses, parishes, and diocesan groups.

“The diversity of our traditions has created a rich tapestry of who we are as God’s children,” said Bernie. The words “faith” and “denomination” have often been misunderstood, he added. Faith is a set of beliefs held by a religion, such as Christians, Jews, Muslims or Buddhists. A denomination refers to different groups within a religion. There are many denominations within Christianity, and there are a number in Judaism (Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox) and Islam (Sunni, Shi’a, and Sufi).

The Karstads have broadened their friendships to include people of other faiths, among them Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus. They have shared meals and prayed with them.



Paul Paproski, OSB

**INTERCHURCH FAMILY — Shirley and Bernie Karstad of Saskatoon were guest speakers at St. Peter’s Abbey during Oblate Day, Oct. 21. The Karstads, both Benedictine oblates, discussed their life as an interchurch family and their involvement with interchurch families over the past 25 years.**

in sharing gifts and one of them is their vocation to bring greater understanding among Christians of all denominations, and that has extended, recently, to Christians and non-Christians.

Bernie and Shirley are an “interchurch family,” which comprises a married couple who are active in two different traditions. Each spouse remains faithful to the church of his or her upbringing and takes part in the traditions of the other. Both are involved in



Kiply Yaworski

**ALL SAINTS’ DAY — A joyful group of young saints-in-training visited the Catholic Pastoral Centre resource library in Saskatoon Nov. 1 for an All Saints’ Day celebration that included activities, dressing up as a favourite saint, and enjoying some Halloween treats left over from the day before. The Michael J. Koch Resource Centre at the pastoral centre is supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, offering a borrowing library of videos, books, periodicals and other resources related to faith and the church.**



Peter Novecosky, OSB

**KNIGHTS CENTENARY — Fred Staniec cuts the anniversary cake at the Knights of Columbus banquet held in Humboldt, Nov. 4. Staniec is the grand knight of Humboldt Council 1886 which was formed in 1917 and which has been the “mother” of more than half a dozen councils in the area over the past 100 years.**

## ‘We are all connected’

Continued from page 8

With her term as CCSA president nearly completed, Ava encourages other students to become involved in campus ministry.

“It gives you an awareness of the wider Catholic student community. You come to understand that we all play a part in the Body of Christ. Everyone brings something to the table, and we make the community that much richer. Being involved with campus ministry has affected my faith life as well. I’ve really grown to understand how my faith can be lived everywhere, not just in church on

Sundays.”

Looking at the impact CCSA and STM’s Newman Centre has had in the life of his daughter and in the lives of student across the campus, Michael says he is confident in the future of Catholic campus ministry: “We will continue to have creative ideas that will draw the campus community together, in all its diversity.”

Michael says he is committed to offering ministry that is comprehensive in its approach. “It’s exciting to see students become aware that there is unity within diversity. We are all connected, we all belong.”



# Wahlberg shares faith journey with young adults

By Joyce Duriga

CHICAGO (CNS) — Hearing the faith journey of Hollywood actor and businessman Mark Wahlberg left an impression on the hearts of many young adults at the Archdiocese of Chicago’s first (re)Encounter event Oct. 20 at the UIC Pavilion.

“It’s powerful for a celebrity to feel that way about religion,” said Omar Lopez, 21, from St. Gall Parish. “For me, when I think about a celebrity, I think cockiness, selfishness, but to hear an artist say that he takes time to just pray, that’s an incredible feeling.”

“I came to hear him because personally I feel lost myself,” Lopez told the *Chicago Catholic*, the archdiocesan newspaper. “At first I was really skeptical about it. I came here just to hear different stories and to hear different aspects of life.”

About 2,000 young adults attended (re)Encounter — an evening of music, speakers, and faith sharing aimed at energizing the faith of young adult Catholics.

The highlight was a question-and-answer session with Wahlberg and Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich.

Star of movies such as *Patriots Day*, *Transformers: Age of Extinc-*

Duriga is editor of the Chicago Catholic, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago.



FAITH AND YOUNG ADULTS — Actor Mark Wahlberg and Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago discuss faith and the life of young adults during a (re)Encounter event in October.

tion, *The Departed* and *Deepwater Horizon* and producer of the popular HBO series *Entourage*, Wahlberg takes his faith seriously, often attending daily mass and making time for quiet prayer each morning. He was master of ceremonies at the Festival of Families with Pope Francis during the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in 2015.

His faith wasn’t always important to him. Youngest in a family of nine children, he dropped out of school at 13, and served prison

time. At 16, he was charged with attempted murder but he pleaded guilty to assault.

Today, he said, he’s committed to being a good father and husband and giving his children the Catholic education he didn’t have.

“I’m a street kid from Dorchester, Massachusetts. Grew up in St. Greg’s and St. William’s parishes,” he told the crowd.

Because his parents worked a lot, he was often unsupervised and took to running the streets.

“Ended up getting into a lot of

trouble, incarcerated, tried as an adult at 16, 17. That was a big wake-up call for me,” he told Cupich. “A lot of people go to God, especially when they get in trouble. When I heard the jail doors close behind me, I started praying right away.”

It was then that he turned his life around.

“Still, every day it’s a process. That’s why I start my day, every day, by getting on my hands and my knees and starting a time of prayer and reading, reading Scrip-

ture. Then I feel like I can go out there and conquer the world or at least do my job and give back because I’ve been blessed so much,” Wahlberg said.

He keeps in touch with his parish priest from when he was growing up, Rev. Ed Flavin, who married him and his wife and all of his siblings and baptized his four children. When Wahlberg decided to turn his life around, the priest was one of the people he looked up to.

Wahlberg, 46, said his biggest mistake was quitting school. Despite having a successful career as an entertainer and businessman, that haunted him, so he got his GED at age 42.

Responding to a young adult’s question about knowing when one has made the right decision in life, Wahlberg shared how he felt God was calling him to more involvement with his faith leading up to the World Meeting of Families and his role as MC at an event featuring the pope.

“Somebody came to speak at the church . . . they were saying, ‘Are you a participant in the church and the community or are you a spectator?’ And I was like, ‘Whoa.’ I felt like, yeah, I’m a bit of a spectator right now,” Wahlberg said. “I’m coming and getting what I need, but I’m not really giving back, you know, reciprocating the kind of love and support I’m getting.”

— EXAMPLE, page 15

## On good character: how much is learned, and how much is innate?

By Caitlin Ward

It snowed last night. Not much, mind you. It barely covered the grass in Saskatoon and it melted off the concrete as the sun came up this morning. As we drive north of the city, I can see more brown and yellow stubble covering the ground than white snow.

Heaven Help Us All

Ray Charles & Gladys Knight

(originally by Stevie Wonder, written by Ron Miller)

The prevailing language in the car is Spanish, and the music is a Ray Charles *Duets* CD that keeps skipping — my colleague Cooper thinks it belongs to his mother. There’s not a lot of piano on the album, or a lot of Ray Charles singing, come to that. At the moment Willie Nelson is talking about it being a very good year, and it’s strange to hear him sing a Sinatra standard.

The whole moment is a lot less strange for me than it is for our companion. He saw snow for the first time this morning. He experienced his first Halloween last night. He tried poutine for the first time a few days ago. He got on a plane for the first time a

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](http://www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings)

few days before that. He brought 25 pounds of coffee with him from the Dominican Republic, and tried to give the border agents coffee when he arrived in Toronto because they said it smelled nice.

Through a series of serendipitous events and Cooper’s hard work, we’ve managed to bring Quico, a Dominican *campesino*

and community leader, to Canada for a week and a half. Over the past five years Quico has welcomed my companions and my students into his home at *Las Piedras de los Virganos*, a village that’s three hours’ walk from the nearest road, and a 40-minute mule ride to the nearest cell reception.

In a small way we can return the favour. I think it’s the first time in 40 years he hasn’t done 10 or 12 hours of manual labour every day. We’ve joked more than once that he must think we’re all terribly soft for how little we work compared to him and his community, although he’d be far too polite to ever say such a thing.

Today we’re driving him to Waskesiu to see the boreal forest and the lakes. Cooper bought him coffee from Tim Horton’s this morning; every time we buy him coffee we apologize that it’s so terrible compared to what he drinks at home. He’s so gracious, though.

Quico and I can’t speak to one another much. He has no English. My Spanish, which was not extensive in the first place, is rusty from lack of use since the summer. He asked what I’m writing about today. I try to tell him I’m writing about Remembrance Day, because it’s coming up, but I don’t know how to say Remembrance Day and, as it turns out, I’m not writing about Remembrance Day, anyway. I’m writing about him.

I haven’t told him that yet, but I will, and he’ll laugh when I do, I’m sure. He doesn’t think he’s that interesting. He doesn’t think the fact that he spearheaded the construction of a hydro-electric dam in his community is amazing, or the fact that he goes out in any weather to fix it when the power goes down is impressive. He doesn’t think much of the fact that he consults on dams in the surrounding area to make sure that other remote communities have access to electricity.

He doesn’t think it’s a big deal that he stayed in his remote village and has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life there so residents don’t have to move to the cities where work is poorly paid and there’s a shortage of reasonable housing.

He doesn’t know we’re humbled by his very existence. He’d be embarrassed if I said so directly to him. And in that sense, he reminds me a bit of my grandfather, who didn’t go in much for people paying attention to him, and definitely didn’t know how to take praise. And also, had a

mustache like Quico’s.

But I always think of my grandfather at this time of year because it is near Remembrance Day. I think of the fortitude he and my grandma had to make it through that war, the emotional and psychological price they paid for it, and how much of my life has been shaped by those two things.

If my circumstances were different, I hope I would have had that fortitude, or if I’d been raised in a remote community in the inner mountainous region of the Dominican Republic, I would

have been as strong and humble and hardworking as Quico. I’ll never know if that’s true.

I don’t know how much our character is dictated by circumstance and how much of it is uniquely ours at birth. I just know that I am happy I had the opportunity to thank my grandparents for the strength they showed in those moments, and I’m so very grateful that, in some small way, we can repay the kindness Quico has so consistently and selflessly showed not only us, but also the world.

Heaven help the boy who never had a home  
Heaven help the girl who walks the street alone  
And Heaven help the roses if the bombs begin to fall  
Lord, won't you help us all?

Heaven help the black man if he struggles one more day  
Heaven help the white man if he turns his back away  
Heaven help the man who kicks the man who has to crawl  
Heaven help us all

Heaven help us all, Heaven help us all, help us all  
Heaven help us, Lord, hear our call when we call  
Oh, yeah

Heaven help the boy who won't reach 21  
And Heaven help the man who gave that child a gun  
And Heaven help the people with their backs against the wall  
Lord, won't you help us all?

Heaven help us all, Heaven help us all, help us all  
Heaven help us, oh Lord, hear our call when we call

Now I lay me down before I go to sleep  
In a troubled world, I pray the Lord, the Lord to keep  
Keep hatred from the mighty and the mighty from the small  
Heaven help us all, Heaven help us all, help us all  
Heaven help us, Lord, hear our call when we call



# Trumpism: behind what happened, and why

## Screenings, Readings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



This is the second of a two-part series.

One year ago today Donald J. Trump surprised pollsters and pundits to win the U.S. presidential race, becoming the republic's 45th president several months later. On that date creator/producer Jeff Deutchman led a team of 16 documentary filmmakers in recording hundreds of hours of footage of how that unusual election day was perceived across the country, what it looked like to a diverse range of voters, and also non-voters bearing in mind that 47 per cent of voting-age Americans did not cast a ballot. The result is 11/8/16

in a more polarizing and extreme rightward direction from the Tea Party movement to the "alt-right" media (the Drudge Report, Breitbart, Infowars, talk radio's Rush Limbaugh, Fox's Sean Hannity, Ann Coulter et.al). Charles Sykes' new book, *How the Right Lost Its Mind*, laments that, prior to Trump, conservatives had already "outsourced our thought leadership to the loudest, angriest, most vulgar voices on the right." As a longtime conservative he sees Trump's modus operandi as being purely self-serving with no real commitment

11/8/16 (U.S. 2017)

Get Me Roger Stone (U.S. 2017)

Trumped: Behind the Greatest Political Upset of all Time (U.S. 2017)

Devil's Bargain: Steve Bannon, Donald Trump and the Storming of the Presidency by Joshua Green (New York, Penguin Press 2017)

(<http://www.11-8-16.film/>), available on Netflix. Deutchman calls it an exercise in "critical empathy" — "allowing yourself to be humble enough to understand other people's points of view without abandoning your own perspective and accumulated experience."

Deutchman, who admits to being a troubled Clinton supporter, calls the film an invitation "to stare directly into the ugly, chaotic, messy nature of American democracy . . . how we often pay lip service to democratic values without confronting or acknowledging the darkest aspects of what living in a democracy means; namely that we must live under an enormous tent, full of a broad spectrum of different types of people with vastly different experiences, many of whom are confused, ill-informed, or mentally unstable. And that system, as Churchill famously said, is better than all the other ones."

Speaking of "darkest aspects," it's worth delving further into the conditions under which the emergence of what might be called Trumpism was enabled, and into the circumstances under which it managed to succeed politically. In the following I look at several other documentaries and a particularly insightful book that go behind the scenes of this phenomenon.

Trumpism, while it aligns on the right of the political spectrum, should not be confused with a consistent or coherent philosophy or ideology of conservatism. Indeed that is why many traditional American conservatives have been dismayed by its apparent takeover of the Republican party. At the same time, Trump's success also did not just come out of the blue. Especially during the Obama years the party embraced those who took it

to conservative principles. He worries that the "capitulation to Trumpism" will do lasting damage to the conservative movement.

One of the operatives with decades-long experience who got behind the Trump bandwagon is Roger Stone, who rose to prominence in Republican circles during the Nixon and Reagan eras. Stone is an aggressive self-promoter who prides himself on a mastery of dirty tricks and his skills as an agent provocateur and Machiavellian manipulator. Anything goes under "Stone's rules." He is a boastful in-your-face presence in the Netflix documentary *Get Me Roger Stone* that premiered at the Tribeca film festival. Directors Dylan Bank, Daniel DiMauro and Morgan Pehme have put together an eye-opening profile of this fascinating and revolting character who believes in winning at any cost and that it's better to be infamous than never famous at all. One can see his attraction to a fellow egomaniac in Trump.

Stone may be a purveyor of "anti-establishment," "populist," far-right views, but he is also a longtime Washington insider and backroom dealer whose D.C. firm represented some of the world's worst dictators. You might say he was swimming in the "swamp" Trump promised to drain.

Like Paul Manafort, Trump's campaign manager during last year's Republican convention, Stone saw great opportunity in Trump's challenge. (Manafort, under investigation for shady Russian-Ukrainian connections, currently faces a 12-count indictment by a federal grand jury including a charge of conspiracy against the United States.) According to Manafort: "Roger's relationship with Donald Trump

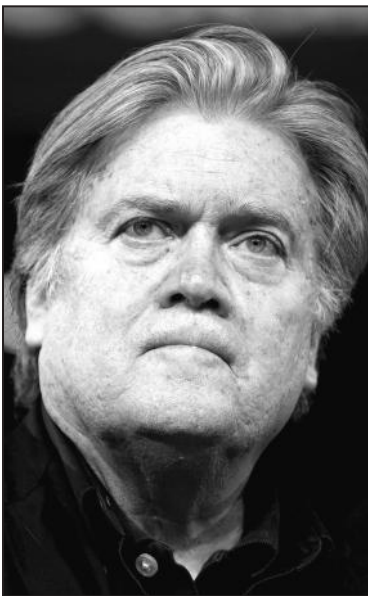
has been so interconnected that it's hard to define what's Roger and what's Donald. While it will be a Trump presidency, it is influenced by a Stone philosophy."

Manafort and Stone may seem to have been discarded as Trump's chaotic campaign attempted a late course correction. But Stone is effusive in his admiration for the incoming Steve Bannon as "a bomb-thrower." When Trump pulls out a win, after whining for months how the election would be "rigged," Stone exults that "it's the manifestation of a dream I've had since 1988." He sees the triumph of Trumpism as a personal vindication.

Asked on camera what message he has for viewers who will loathe him, Stone shoots back: "I revel in your hatred because if I weren't effective you wouldn't hate me."

The dynamics of how Trump and his team pulled off last November's surprise is the subject of *Trumped: Behind the Greatest Political Upset of All Time*, an equally fascinating and revolting story put together by another trio of directors — Ted Bourne, Mary Robertson, and Banks Tarver. Premiering at the Sundance festival that coincided with Trump's inauguration, it offers clues as to why he gained such a rabid following that for the most part continues to stick with him.

*Trumped* was assembled from footage shot for the Showtime television series "The Circus: Inside the Greatest Political Show on Earth" led by reporting from Mark Halperin, John Heilemann, and Mark McKinnon. It covers the raucous Republican primaries with Trump as the "chaos candidate" and the subsequent raucous campaign in which Trump capitalized on voter anger while inciting venomous attacks on "crooked Hillary." Roger Stone is among the Trump confidantes shown operating in the back rooms and encouraging Trump to double down on taking the low road.



CNS/Joshua Roberts, Reuters

**ALT-RIGHT INFLUENCE — Former White House Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon. Part of a deeper explanation of Trump's victory, as explored in Joshua Green's Devil's Bargain, lies in the rise of "alt-right" influence within Republican circles in which Steve Bannon plays a central role, becoming Trump's winning campaign manager and then "chief strategist."**

*Trumped*, which unfolds in a series of punchy chapters, may be a rushed job that shows more the how than the why of Trump's ultimate success, which seemed so unlikely at the outset yet kept defying predictions. What it does is underscore the depth of discontent manifest at his campaign rallies, whipped up to a scary intensity as he proclaimed "I am your voice" and delivered bombastic "America First" tirades against a host of targets at home and abroad.

Part of a deeper explanation, as explored in Joshua Green's *Devil's Bargain*, lies in the rise of "alt-right" influence within Republican circles in which Steve Bannon plays a central role, becoming Trump's winning campaign manager and then "chief strategist." Bannon may have left in August, returning to his perch at the helm of the incendiary Breitbart News website. But Bannonism remains at the core of the Trumpist challenge and shows no signs of retreating; quite the contrary. Indeed Bannon insisted to a correspondent for *The Economist* that his departure had been voluntary, adding: "In the White House I had influence. At Breitbart, I had power."

Bannon is a complex, bizarre character whom Green has followed and interviewed extensively since doing a profile of him for *Bloomberg Businessweek*. His checkered background has taken him variously through the Harvard Business School, Wall Street and Goldman Sachs, Hollywood and the production of propaganda documentaries, a Hong Kong video-game venture that gave him an appreciation for the arts of Internet trolling.

Bannon's background may be as odd as his appearance is unkempt, but he holds to a core of beliefs that veer rightward.

Raised in a traditionalist Tridentine (i.e. opposed to Vatican II) Irish-Catholic family, he attended a conservative Benedictine military academy. He became attracted to reactionary philosophers of "Traditionalism" such as René Guénon and Julius Evola, who inveighed against the perils of secular modernity. In Bannon's dark clash-of-civilizations worldview, Islam poses another mortal threat to the West and its national identities. Green points out that Bannon has cited Vladimir Putin's chief ideologist, Aleksandr Dugin, who developed a Russian-nationalist version of Traditionalism. Bannon's Catholi-

cism is diametrically opposed to Pope Francis whom he dismisses as a "liberal-theology Jesuit" and "pro-immigration globalist." Bannon established Breitbart Rome to



CNS/Shawn Thew, EPA

**POLITICAL UPSET — One year ago today Donald J. Trump surprised pollsters and pundits to win the U.S. presidential race, becoming the republic's 45th president several months later.**

support Catholic traditionalists.

Politically Bannon gravitated toward the world of billionaire backers of hard right causes like Robert and Rebekah Mercer, Clinton haters (Hillary's complaint about a "vast right-wing conspiracy" wasn't far off the mark), and a rogues gallery of rightist operators like Roger Stone and David Bossie of Citizens United, the front behind the notorious legal battle that opened the floodgates for corporate campaign cash. The "Tea Party" insurgency and the success of outlets like Breitbart signalled a growing discontent in the country ripe for exploitation. When Donald J. Trump, who had long flirted with presidential ambitions, decided to go after Obama and get serious, there was a well of disaffection with the "politically correct" Washington "establishment" and distrusted "elites" to draw from.

Green pegs Bannon as "a political grifter seeking to profit from the latest trend." At the helm of Breitbart he saw opportunity in the extreme-right "populist" movement that provided the impetus for Trump's offensive first on other Republicans and then the Clintons. (Bernie Sanders' aggressive grassroots challenge to Hillary and her own sense of entitlement underscored her vulnerability to such an attack.) Bannon got his big chance to become the right-hand man when the Trump campaign seemed to be in disarray and Corey Lewandowski and Manafort had been dumped. (That Trump's two previous campaign managers loathed and schemed against each other is among many engrossing details in the book.)

Bannon was called a "human hand grenade" who would "encourage Trump's worst tendencies."

— TRUMP, page 14



# Awake and alert, we put our talents to good use



## Liturgy and Life

Brenda Merk Hildebrand

Context matters. Read this Gospel without context, without an understanding of the whole story, without a sense of the love, compassion and caring of our Lord, and these words can seem harsh and exacting. One might picture a goal-oriented and productivity-driven Master, one who is only interested in results, and good results at that. Without a sense of his whole message, Jesus' words might seem to encourage a life driven by a panicky effort to do more good works, to somehow earn enough "points" to secure salvation, and to somehow avoid the awful punishment that waits in the outer darkness.

Additionally, the last sentence of last week's Gospel cautions us to stay awake because we don't know the day or the hour when the Master will come. Without the context of the whole of Jesus' message, these readings might leave us feeling caught between a rock and a hard place. At the very least, we need to stay tuned for next week's Gospel reading so we can hear the remainder of chapter 25 of Matthew's Gospel. The liturgical year will close with something of a more complete picture of who Jesus is and what is asked of us. Hint: we are asked to tend to some very

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doable tasks: welcoming, encouraging, feeding, clothing, caring, and visiting those who are ill or in prison.

In the meantime, let's also look closely at this lesson. It is interesting to note that the people in this story are aware of the talents they've been given. Whether one, two or five talents, each knows exactly what they have to work with. For those who serve the Master, honest self-knowledge is part of the job. After all, we can't use something if we don't even know it exists.

No one is judged on the talents given to another. The gifts and graces that have come our way are as unique as our fingerprints. So too, the opportunities and resources which have been placed at our disposal. Our only task is to be trustworthy — to be worthy of the trust that accompanies the talents we have been given. Our task is to put them to use. Hiding them where they will never see daylight is not an option.

We might have a sense of compassion for the one who was afraid of the Master. I know I do. Years ago, in quiet prayer, I heard our Lord ask me the same words he asked

**Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**November 19, 2017**  
**Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31**  
**Psalms 128**  
**Thessalonians 5:1-6**  
**Matthew 25:14-30**

Peter: "Do you love me?" As I sat there, unwavering before that question, I had to admit my fear of Jesus outweighed my love of him. I am still on the journey toward the perfect love that casts out all fear.

We hear the word *fear* in the first reading: "a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." We ponder what it means to fear the Lord. We wonder what it means when Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, suggests that we work out our salvation "with fear and trembling." Over the years, many of us have likely heard various interpretations and understandings of what it means to "fear the Lord."

For this moment, let's stay with the literal definition. Fear is real. Recall that when an angel visits, the first words

are usually "Do not be afraid." Mark and Luke tell the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment so that she might be healed. She fell to the ground in fear and trembling when Jesus spoke to her. Of the many who approached Jesus, some were very afraid. Some came alone, and some sought the comfort of the crowd. For many of us, times of fear are part of the journey.

We also ponder how this parable meshes with the teachings of the Master who promises an easy yoke and a light burden. We consider how the task of multiplying our talents fits together with teachings about Sabbath rest. What about taking time to eat and drink and enjoy the companionship of family and friends? Do we set aside our responsibilities and actually take time for rest, relaxation and renewal?

What then, is our best understanding of this Gospel? First, we see that no one is responsible for everything. Each was given a set of talents that was accompanied by an expectation of putting them to good use. We are reminded that these talents are not our property, but are simply entrusted to us. Jesus makes it clear that fear is not an acceptable excuse to bury everything and run away from all responsibility. When he comes to us, he is hoping to be able to say "well done." He wants to call us good and trustworthy. He wants to invite us into his joy.

Paul reminds us that we are children of the light, we are children of the day. Time after time we turn from darkness, doubt and despair. We turn to face the light. We consider the wisdom of Proverbs, painting a beautiful word picture of a willing worker: industrious, strong, wise and kind. Encouraged by Paul, we keep awake and sober, alert to the changing times and seasons of our lives. We pay attention to the whole of Jesus' message and we are careful to keep all of it in context. Slowly and surely, day by day, we move toward the perfect love that casts out all fear.

Free from fear, we become ever more free to fully receive the gift of our talents. Awake, alert, and attentive, we put them to good use.

# A soul isn't explained, it is experienced, and always at great depth

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



*It's hard to find your soulmate in someone who doesn't believe you have a soul.*

Recently on *The Moth Radio Hour* a young woman shared the story of her breakup with her boyfriend, a young man for whom she had deep feelings. The problem was that she, a person with a deep faith, a Mormon, struggled with the radical materialism of her boyfriend. For him, there were no souls; the physical world was real, and nothing else. She kept asking him if he believed he had a soul. He couldn't make himself believe that. Eventually, not without a lot of heartache, they broke up. Why? In her words: *It's hard to find your soulmate in someone who doesn't believe you have a soul.*

Her frustration is becoming more universal. More and more our world is ignoring and denying the existence of soul, becoming soulless. It wasn't always like this. Up until modern times, often it was the physical and the body that

weren't properly honoured. But things have changed, radically.

It began with Darwin, who rooted our origins more in the history of our bodies than in the origins of our souls; it took more shape in the mechanistic philosophies of the last century, which understood both our universe and ourselves as physical machines; it became more firm as modern medicine and experimental psychology began more and more to explain the brain primarily in terms of carbon complexification and biochemical interactions; it seeped into our higher educational systems as we produced more and more technical schools rather than universities in the deeper sense; and it culminated in popular culture where love and sex are spoken of more in terms of chemistry than in terms of soul. It is not surprising that for most pop singers today the mantra is: *I want your body! I want your body!* We're a long way from Shakespeare's marriage of true minds and Yeats' love of the pilgrim soul in you.

Religion, of course, has always lodged its protests against this, but often its understanding of the soul was itself too narrow to have much power to lure a materialistic culture back into wanting to rediscover and listen to the soul. Ironically, it took a non-religious

figure, Carl Jung, to speak of soul again in a way that is intellectually intriguing. And it was in the sick, the insane, the suicidal, and others whose lives were broken that Jung began to hear the cry of the soul (whose demands are sometimes very different from those of the body and whose needs are for much more than simple comfort and the prolonging of life).

Much of Jung's teaching and that of his followers can be seen as a protest for the soul. We see this, for example, in the writing of James Hillman. It's ironic that as an agnostic he was able to speak about the soul in ways that we, who are religious, might envy and emulate. Like Jung, he also drew many of his insights from listening to the soul cry out its meaning and pain through the voices of the sick, the insane, the broken, and the suicidal. Religion, medicine, and psychology, he believes, are not hearing the soul's cry. They're forever trying to fix the soul, cure the soul, or save the soul, rather than listening to the soul, which wants and needs neither to be fixed nor saved. It's already eternal. The soul needs to be heard, and heard in all its godly goodness and earthy complexes. And sometimes what it tells us goes against all common sense, medical practice, and the over-simplistic spiritualities we often present as religion.

To be more in touch with our souls we might examine an older language, the language that religion, poets, mythologists, and lovers used before today's dominant materialism turned our language about the soul into the language of chemistry and mechanism. We cannot understand the soul through any

scientific description, but only by looking at its behaviour, its insatiability, its dissatisfactions, and its protests. A soul isn't explained, it's experienced, and soul experience always comes soaked in depth, in longing, in eros, in limit, in the feeling of being pilgrim in need of a soulmate.

Happily, even today, we still do spontaneously connect the soul to things beyond chemistry and mechanism. As Hillman points out: "We associate the word 'soul' with: mind, spirit, heart, life, warmth, humanness, personality, individuality, intentionality, essence, innermost, purpose, emotion, quality,

virtue, morality, sin, wisdom, death, God. As well, we speak of a soul as 'troubled,' 'old,' 'disembodied,' 'immortal,' 'lost,' 'innocent,' 'inspired.' Eyes are said to be 'soulful,' for the eyes are 'the mirror of the soul'; and one can be 'soulless' by showing no mercy."

Soullessness: We understand the makeup of something best when we see it broken. So perhaps today we can best understand our soullessness in the growing acceptance of pornography and hook-up sex, where the soul is intentionally and necessarily excluded from what is meant to be the epitome of all soulful experience

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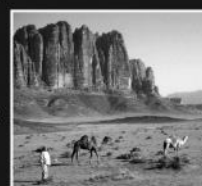
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# Why the ecumenical movement is a historical event

By Thomas Reese, SJ  
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A hundred years ago, Catholics were not interested in celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, except to remember how a bunch of reformers led people astray.

How times have changed!

This year, Catholics, led by Pope Francis, are celebrating the Reformation with their fellow Christians.

However, it is important that we not simply look at it through rosey glasses. The division of Christianity led to warfare and bloodshed on a par with the conflicts between the Sunnis and Shiites in the Muslim community. It was not pretty. We Christians cannot look down our noses at Muslims as if we have not also killed our brothers and sisters.

Although the fighting and bloodshed eventually tapered off, antagonism and prejudice between Catholics and Protestants (and among Protestants) lasted well into the 20th century.

It was not till the 20th century that progressive Protestant churches initiated the ecumenical movement. Conservative Protestants and Catholics held back, seeing ecumenism as giving in to relativism.

Two world wars fostered ecumenism in foxholes where soldiers of different faiths got to know and respect each other. The wars also made the churches realize they needed to put aside their squabbles to work for peace.

To Catholics growing up in the 1950s, Protestants were heretics outside the true church, although Protestants might be forgiven for their “ignorance.” In school and at home, Catholics heard stories of prejudice and discrimination from the WASP establishment.

We were reminded that the three groups most hated by the KKK were blacks, Jews and Catholics. American history books had photos of signs saying “Irish need not apply.”

The 1960 election proved that anti-Catholicism was still alive and flourishing. In polling, John Kennedy’s religion was singled out as an extremely important variable in the election.

Ecumenism was still a dirty word until the Second Vatican Council (1962 - 1965), whose document on ecumenism allowed Catholics to jump in with both feet. And jump we did. Catholics are now dialoguing with everybody. Likewise, the Vatican is engaged in dialogues with almost every religion of any significant size. Leaders in the Catholic ecumenical movement included German Cardinals Augustin Bea and Walter Kasper.

When it was time in the early 1970s for me to study theology before ordination as a Catholic priest, I did it at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. The school is part of the Graduate Theological

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CNS/Paul Haring

**TOWARD UNITY — Pope Francis stands with Rev. Martin Junge, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and Archbishop Antje Jackelen, primate of the Lutheran Church in Sweden, at an ecumenical prayer service at the Lutheran cathedral in Lund, Sweden, in October 2016. The 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation is being marked this year.**

Union, an ecumenical consortium of Protestant and Catholic schools.

This would have been unthinkable prior to the Second Vatican Council.

I remember taking a course in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation taught by two professors, one a Jesuit and the other Lutheran, where we read Luther and Calvin and decrees from the Council of Trent.

I truly felt I understood Luther better than my Lutheran classmates because Luther and I had grown up in the same church. The Lutheran students, on the other hand, had no experience of what he was railing against.

So, as we celebrate the Reformation, let’s remember also to celebrate the ecumenical movement that did so much during the last century to heal the divisions among Christians. It is a historical event on a par with the Reformation itself.

Not to say that there have not been bumps along the way.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had a way of using words that could throw a monkey wrench into dialogue. He once said that only the Catholic and Orthodox churches were true churches because only they had legitimate bishops. Protestants were simply Christian communities. The problem was that he defined the word “church” by himself without dialoguing with anyone else.

Another challenge to the ecumenical movement is that it involves churches that are not static.

I recall an ecumenical conference at Durham University in England in 2006. We had ecumenical prayer services and even some sharing of the eucharist. The participants were informed and friendly. One of the speakers was Cardinal Kasper, who at the time was the head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. During the question period, I asked him, “If Luther were alive today, could you make a deal with him?”

I think Luther could be comfortable in the Catholic Church of today.

Vatican II accepted many of the reformers’ reforms. The mass is in the vernacular; the laity can now drink from the cup; we are not selling indulgences; married Protestant ministers have been ordained as Catholic priests (and Francis is open to married priests); the theological dispute over faith and works has been resolved; the Catholic Church encourages the laity to read the Scriptures; and the concept of collegiality is tempering the absolute monarchical model of the papacy.

It might take time and dialogue, but I think it would be possible to reconcile Luther with today’s Catholic Church.

Cardinal Kasper pointed out that the Catholic Church is no longer in dialogue with Luther, but with his descendants, who have continued to evolve. Now we have other issues dividing the churches, like women priests, gay marriage, abortion, etc. These were not issues for Luther.

Ecumenical dialogue today is like trying to have a conversation between two people on horseback, when one of the partners is on a racehorse and the other is on a donkey. One needs to slow down and the other needs to speed up.

But we should not lose heart.

Ecumenism is not just about theological dialogue over matters

of doctrine. There is also the ecumenism of friendship, prayer and social action.

Ecumenical friendship at work and in neighborhoods and among families has taken us way beyond the uncomfortable tolerance of the past. “Let them know that we are Christians by our love,” not by our fights.

“My wish is that the dialogue between us should help to build bridges connecting all people,” said Pope Francis, “in such a way that everyone can see in the other not an enemy, not a rival, but a brother or sister to be welcomed and embraced!”

Praying together, exchanging pulpits and sharing the Scriptures are also signs of progress, but the work is not finished.

“Unity is primarily a gift from God for which we must pray incessantly,” said Pope Francis.

The ecumenism of social action has also progressed significantly as members of different churches work together to change the world. As Pope Francis said, “We can do much for the good of the poorest, of the weak and suffering, to promote justice and reconciliation, to build peace.”

Sadly, this social action has uncovered new divisions where American Catholics and Protestants working together against

abortion are probably closer than their compatriots who are working for social justice and the environment. Catholics seem to be divided as much internally as they are from other Christians.

In any case, after 500 years, Reformation-era divisions have lost much of their potency, according to the Pew Research Center, which surveyed Catholics and Protestants in Europe and the U.S. More than half of Protestants and Catholics say they are more similar than different from each other.

What might be next steps in the path toward unity?

**1. Churches (especially the Catholic Church) must recognize the important role of ecumenical marriages in the movement toward unity.**

Spouses in such marriages should be welcomed at the Lord’s table in the churches of both spouses as examples of the unity that is possible.

As Pope Francis says, communion is not a reward for the perfect, but food for the weak. The couples are already united by a sacramental love that reflects the unity of Christ with his church; they should be able to be united at the eucharist.

**2. The unity that comes from sharing in the same baptism should trump most disagreements.**

For too long, the Catholic Church has demanded agreement on how we explain the faith rather than a unity in the faith.

Seeing the eucharist as an opportunity for the Christian community to give praise and thanks to God while being transformed into the Body of Christ active in the world today is more important than agreeing on transubstantiation, a term even Catholics do not understand.

The eucharist can be a path to unity rather than simply a celebration of doctrinal agreement, which frankly Catholics no longer have in any case.

**3. The Catholic Church has to return to seeing itself as the “big tent” that is inclusive rather than as an exclusive club for the cognoscente.**

The Catholic Church moves slowly, but its goal must always be to be more inclusive, more “catholic” in the sense of universal.

Protestant churches, on the other hand, are the entrepreneurial engines of Christianity, where new ideas are tried and incorporated into Catholicism if they succeed and discarded if they fail. In the past, this role was performed by religious orders, but their role in the church is declining.

“It is clear that the faith is not intransigent, but grows in coexistence that respects the other,” said Pope Francis. “The believer isn’t arrogant; on the contrary, truth makes him humble, knowing that, more than our possessing it, it is truth that embraces and possesses us.”

We see the Reformation very differently today than we did 100 years ago. How will we see it in another 100 years? My hope is that ecumenism continues to progress so that at the next anniversary, we will truly know and experience our oneness in Christ.



RNS/Emily McFarlan Miller

**A statue of Martin Luther in Eisenach, Germany, in June 2017.**



# Alberta filmmaker brings suicide out of shadows

By Andrew Ehrkamp  
Grandin Media

"Sept. 20, 2015," Rick More says, quietly.

It's etched in his mind, and in the memories of his family and friends. On that date his 22-year-old daughter Lindsey took her own life. She hanged herself in the house she was sharing with friends.

Lindsey had lots of friends. She hoped to become a pilot.

But looking back, More says there were signs that she was having problems. She wasn't sleeping well. She was staying out late. She would go for a drive at 3 a.m. with her friends.

"She did it very well. She never wanted to bother anyone with what she was going through."

More and others hope to change that, by talking about Lindsey and raising awareness of suicide and mental illness through a new film.

*Ehrkamp is news editor of Grandin Media, a digital news portal that strives to inform and engage through the telling of inspiring stories of Catholic life in today's world, and particularly in central and northern Alberta.*

*Are You Listening? A Pathway to Empathy*, features a fictional mental health worker speaking with teens, as well as experts in the field. It features More, as well as a teen who attempted suicide, mental health professionals, former Alberta Liberal leader David Swann — himself a physician — and Rev. Len Cadieux, who officiated at Lindsey's funeral.

"Young people need to realize they are worth it," said Cadieux, the pastor at St. Mary's Parish in Red Deer. "God loves them. Their family loves them. God loves them for who they are right now, not what they wish to become."

Cadieux said the church treats suicide more sympathetically than when he began his priesthood 30 years ago. "We treat it as an illness. It's not like the old days where it was anathema. If they are so desperate that they don't see any light, God judges them based on their mental health."

The filmmakers and participants say they are all committed to bringing the issue of suicide and mental illness out of the shadows, eliminating the stigma, and starting a conversation.

"The goal is to normalize talk of suicide," said Rueben Tschetter, the Red Deer producer behind the doc-



**FILM SET** — A crew films a scene from *Are You Listening? A Pathway to Empathy*. "The goal is to normalize talk of suicide," says Rueben Tschetter, the Red Deer producer behind the film, which premiered Oct. 12 and is now available for viewing on YouTube.

umentary, which premiered Oct. 12 and is now available for viewing on YouTube. "It's OK to talk about it and get to the heart of issues that people might be dealing with."

Suicide is consistently a leading cause of death among Albertans ages 30 to 69, claiming more lives than motor vehicle collisions each year, according to Alberta Health Services.

More than 500 people die by suicide every year in Alberta. In addition, there are close to 6,000 emergency department visits and close to 2,000 hospitalizations every year for self-inflicted injuries.

"Sadly, feelings of hopelessness and that suicide is an option is something that I see daily in my practice," said Dr. Peter Silverstone, a University of Alberta psychiatrist who participated in the film.

Silverstone created

EMPATHY, a program that has been used in Red Deer Public Schools since 2013 to help lessen incidents of youth anxiety, depression and suicide. He said the perception of suicide is changing, but not fast enough.

"Many people still have negative views of those who are depressed, sad, downcast, or suicidal, and many don't understand the inner pain that drives some to feel suicide is the only way out of the pain," he said. "One of the most important things we can all do to help is to increase awareness and decrease stigma. Silence and avoidance do not help."

More said it's one of the main reasons why he participated in the film, just weeks after Lindsey's death.

"There's still a stigma about mental illness, and we need to address it. Kids are too afraid to get help because they feel that they might be judged," More said. "Most people don't talk about it, including us. We didn't tell anyone because everyone would see that our family wasn't perfect."

More said it was a "big shock" when Lindsey came to him and said, "Dad, I tried to kill myself."

The family tried to get help, but it was too late. Three weeks after her death, Lindsey's best friend went into her bedroom at the More's house. There, she found a note detailing how frustrated Lindsey was feeling, how she felt like a "fraud" and "how she thought no one believed her."

More said Lindsey was "always on her phone" and that social media didn't help.

"Young people don't have time to rest, to relax and reflect by themselves."

"As many as half of the individuals, children and youth, who are feeling suicidal do not disclose, then gaining support, understanding, tolerance and if necessary specific treatment can all be part of the solution," said Silverstone.

More said he hopes the film will encourage young people to recognize when they see someone who is struggling with mental illness, and seek the help of those who might be able to intervene. "If we have to think about one thing, it's to break that trust barrier. Kids may go to the grave thinking they could have done something about it."

Since Lindsey's death, the More family started the Smiles Thru Lindsey Fund <https://rddcf.ca/smiles-thru-lindsey>, which has provided \$200,000 for mental health programs in Red Deer, including \$10,000 to the Red Deer Catholic School District for training in mental health first aid.

The creators and participants in the *Are You Listening?* film hope it will be used as a tool in schools, mental health facilities and other venues, but for now they are relying on word of mouth.

More said it's already making a difference.

"I had a mother tell me she watched the video with her son, and they both cried. She said 'I had the best discussion with my son in years.' We're saying 'Enough is enough.' I'm making speeches and conferences as well; that's my medicine."

*Are You Listening?* can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNDboFCqfbg>



**TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE** — Rick More and his wife, Cindy, are pictured with their daughter Lindsey, who died from suicide in 2015. Rick More is featured in a short film that seeks to create a dialogue about suicide.

## Trump is 'fundamentally a creature of his own ego'

Continued from page 11

He didn't care. His advice to Trump: "Darkness is good. Don't let up." He urged Trump to brazen it out even after the release of the tape of Trump bragging about his impunity in sexually assaulting women, which some thought fatal to his chances. The strategy was shamelessly to shift the media focus back to Bill Clinton's sexual misdeeds and the investigation of "crooked" Hillary's emails.

That, plus Clinton's miscalculations, was enough, just, to give Trump a narrow path to victory in the anachronistic Electoral College. If there was some attempted Russian interference of a pro-Trump anti-Clinton nature (as U.S. intelligence agencies claim), Green doesn't mention it as a significant factor. The reality is that an aggrieved political climate had

emerged that was receptive to Trump's message. White nationalist rage had been stoked, elevating to Trump's side the Bannon described as "the Republican establishment's worst nightmare come to life."

Now what? Opposing and obstructing is one thing; governing quite another. It's not a one-man show. The presidency isn't like being an all-powerful CEO. So far Trump's vaunted agenda has achieved very little in the Republican-controlled Congress as his fractious administration becomes a revolving door. Trump, of course, blames everyone but himself and is said to have resented the spotlight on Bannon's role. Small wonder that Bannon, the radical ideologue, is happier returning to a public attack mode. At a "Values Voters Summit" in mid-October he openly declared

"war on the Republican establishment."

As indicated earlier, a strong element of Bannonism still runs through Trumpism. Frank Bruni in the *New York Times* of Oct. 7 cites a dismayed longtime Republican strategist: "The formula is to be more aggressive, more outrageous, don't back down from crazy statements . . . 'any disruption is a good thing, and that the best way to get what he wants — a white-centred, nationalist America — is to blow up the establishment.'"

The problem with that reckless approach is not only its failure as a philosophy of government, and its political deafness to demographic trends (the declining percentage of white voters), it is that the "devil's bargain" on which it rests has been made with a vainglorious empty vessel whose only allegiance is to his own aggrandizement. Bluntly

stated, writes Green in bold face: "Trump doesn't believe in nationalism or any other political philosophy — he's fundamentally a creature of his own ego. . . . At heart, Trump is an opportunist driven by a desire for public acclaim, rather than a politician with any fixed principles."

The Trump presidency, already beset by drift, departures and scandals, may be limited in effect by institutional checks and balances (the Bannon-reviled "deep state"), which is not to say it won't do considerable damage. Can we hope for containment and redress? Trump's dubious history gives grounds, concludes Green. Because "in the end, it's hard to imagine that Bannon and the legion he spoke for will wind up anything other than the latest partners disappointed when the deal with Trump turns sour."



# Document on exercise of authority worth revisiting



## Double Belonging

Rev. Marie-Louise Ternier

*“You know that among the gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; whoever wishes to become great must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first must be slave of all”*

(Mark 10:41-45)

While my previous column explored remaining differences between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches in terms of the spiritual and moral ethos of each tradition, here I’d like to highlight the important ecumenical document published in 1998: “The Gift of Authority” (Anglican-Roman Catholic International Dialogue — ARCIC).

Published nearly 20 years ago, it is still little known by ordinary Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Sad really, for it is a prime example of good ecumenism in action. The agreement takes a comprehensive look at the exercise of authority in the Christian tradition in a spirit of humility and honesty, openness and courage. Given the current challenges authority structures in both traditions experience, it would behoove us all to study and receive its content and to apply its insights sooner rather than later. The document confirms what I have been thinking and learning for quite some time, i.e. that the Roman Catholic way of exercising authority has been too centralized and hierarchical, and that the Anglican way of exercising authority can be perceived as too nebulous and overly tentative. The former risks increasing disconnection from the lives of ordinary people while the latter risks being too wishy-washy and lacking teeth. What the one tradition has too much of, the other needs more of, and vice versa.

The first section of the document

Rev. Marie-Louise Ternier serves the Anglican and Lutheran parishes in Watrous, Sask. This column is co-published with the Saskatchewan Anglican. Marie-Louise blogs at <http://graceat sixty.wordpress.com>

is a sweeping look at the theological and spiritual underpinnings of authority in the Christian tradition throughout history. This is, in a way, the articulation of the Christian vision of how authority is supposed to work — where it originates, how it is refined and informed, and how it needs to be exercised.

The document lays out explicitly what the challenges are in each tradition in order to recover the elements which have been “rejected, forgotten or not fully understood.”

The Roman Catholic Church is challenged to examine its commitment to lay participation in decision-making and governance structures of the church. It is only now with Pope Francis that some concrete efforts are being made to actively restore the principle of synodality, illustrated by Rome’s initiative to solicit input from lay Catholics through questionnaires in preparation for important synods.

Collecting real-life data from real people, then brought to synod deliberations by bishops urged by Pope Francis to speak frankly, has already resulted in what some called chaotic and messy debates at the two synods on the family — surprise! The lid has been held on tight for too long on concrete and controversial issues and new questions. The synodal model is still covered in lots of dust, collected from centuries of neglect in Rome. As Roman Catholics are waking up to the messy character of synodality, Anglicans are smiling — Rome has much to learn from Canterbury.

However, Anglicans are not off the hook. The document states: *Anglicans have shown themselves to be willing to tolerate anomalies for the sake of maintaining communion* (par. 56). The Anglican concern for the quality of relationships of love and respect is laud-



CNS/Tony Gentile, Reuters

**AUTHORITY — Pope Francis meets Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury, England, spiritual leader of the Anglican communion, in this 2016 photo. Given the current challenges in the authority structures of both traditions, we would do well to study the ecumenical document published in 1998: “The Gift of Authority,” writes Rev. Marie-Louise Ternier.**

able and trumps rigid adherence to rules. The Anglican concern for historical context, dispersed authority, and synodal consultation through careful discernment is laudable. Yet these also come with subtle yet real traps revealing its fragility. No issue has revealed this weakness, and tested this model, more than the current debate on same-sex marriage. Some Anglicans might look longingly across the Tiber for more central-

ized authority, while some Roman Catholics look longingly to the Anglican model of relational and moral persuasion and consensus.

It has been nearly 20 years since “The Gift of Authority” was published. Have our churches taken its recommendations to heart? The people in the pews still know regrettably little about most ecumenical agreements, a tragic fact. Twenty years is nothing in a tradition that thinks and breathes

in centuries. Both the Roman top-down model and the Anglican bottom-up model are going through their respective refiner’s fires at this time. Let us pray that “The Gift of Authority” can be a tiny guiding light in the current dilemmas. Maybe someday both models of authority could get remarried into a coherent whole, deserving of Jesus’ words as quoted above: “It is not so among you” (Mark 10:41-45).

## In every aspect of life, say grace

### Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



*“You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing, and grace before I dip the pen in the ink.” — G.K. Chesterton*

And grace before the *Prairie Messenger* column because this too is a form of communion; writers and readers are gathered here together to share what matters to us. Wherever and whenever the people of faith meet, we are in church. So let us say grace for the way this online and print journal nourishes us and strengthens the “one body” of community.

*I invite you now to pay dual attention to what you’re reading and your state of being in the moment . . . that quiet place within yourself from which you view these words with the spacious awareness of what is being read through you, even as you read.*

Speyer is a Benedictine Oblate as well as an author, subject matter expert for e-therapy, clinical consultant and director of Inner-View Guidance International (IGI). <https://www.innerviewguidance.com>

*While sitting still, with attention focused in the spiritual heart at the centre of your chest, let us receive with deep gratitude the food for thought and feeling in the articles we read in this PM issue. Thank you Holy Spirit, for bringing us together in this way. Thank you for the time to slow down and come into your Presence and the mind-hearts of each other. We pray you will sustain our subscription to the original participation in inter-being which connects us when this paper is no longer in our hands or on our computer screens. We bless the gifts of this reading. Amen.*

When St. Therese says “everything is a grace,” that’s certainly doubtful on the surface of life where even from the perspective of illness, aging, and inevitable death, it’s a losing battle. That’s not to mention the cruelty we can inflict on each other. Yet our physical sense of self and the see-and-touch world around us is a matter

of mere existence. With the vision of an infinite horizon seen by faith, this earthly existence is but one step on our soul’s journey.

The eternally abiding “confidence and love” of St. Therese only makes sense when you reverse the space of self-awareness and realize life is not about you; you are about life. You are about the presence, energy, and action flowing through you in a unique way, almost like a fourth person of the Trinity. You are also a relational space rather than a fixed point of identity. And we are all part of an evolutionary outward spiral paradoxically starting from and moving toward a central point — the alpha and omega. The grace of that spiral forms and reforms us each moment. Yet because we are so locked into thinking in terms of cause and effect, we lose touch with the First Cause and the movement of the spiral is blocked. In short, for God to work through us, we need to get out of our own way.

So what is the way to reverse the space and predispose ourselves to grace? Well, it goes against every grain of self-will. Rather than thinking, you are being thought through. Rather than speaking, you are being spoken for; the hearing, the touching, it’s all not about you. Rather than looking, you are being seen through, unnerving pun intended. Instead of tasting, you are being tasted, food God is offering, taste-testing through you. Be thou well-cooked, nutritious, and delicious, so that in every aspect of life you will be saying grace.

## Actor’s example inspiring

Continued from page 10

That encounter resulted in him saying “yes” to ushering when asked a few days later, and subsequently saying “yes” to the event with Pope Francis when asked a few days after that.

Wahlberg’s commitment to prayer inspired Yunuen Arroyo of St. Odillo Parish in Berwyn.

“I can’t even explain the motivation he has,” she said. “The whole event is awesome. I love it. I really enjoyed the questions because I’ve asked those questions, like, ‘How do you forgive yourself?’” said Arroyo. “You just have to keep going every day. You just have to keep trying.”

Mary Kando of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Gewargis Cathedral, also connected to the actor’s faith story.

“Not that my life has been anywhere near his life, but sometimes I feel like, ‘How can I pull myself together?’” Kando said.

A friend invited Kando to (re)Encounter and she was glad she accepted.

“I heard about it but I wasn’t really motivated to go because I didn’t want to go by myself,” she said. “I was looking for something to pull me back in. Not that I was away, but I was just kind of sick of the mundane, ‘It’s just Sunday mass.’ I wanted to get rejuvenated.”



# Arriving safe and OK is at the edge, not at the end

## Barefoot and Preaching

Leah Perrault



Safe and OK have been elusive feelings for quite awhile. Tracing the shape of the dark, wandering lost, tending to wounds, willing some measure of wellness — it’s all been a road I never wanted to turn down in the first place. I was aiming for a destination quite different from where I have found myself, perhaps somewhere with less confusion, fewer tears, maybe with lower propensity for trauma-induced jet lag?

Last week I was scrolling mindlessly through my Facebook feed when a friend’s post caught me off guard: “You have to be grateful whenever you get to someplace safe and OK, even if it turns out it wasn’t quite where you were heading” (Anne Lamott, *Small Victories*). The strangest part of the realization was that I noticed the constant fear and restlessness more in their absence than in their presence.

*Perrault is a wife and mom, a grateful employee of Emmanuel Care, and a speaker, writer and consultant at [www.leahperrault.com](http://www.leahperrault.com)*

All the stepping, one foot in front of the one before, the practices of showing up for my life have led me to somewhere new. Arriving safe and OK — on an ordinary Tuesday without having the location in my agenda — caught me by surprise. It took me two weeks to notice, actually. It is almost as if I have forgotten the purpose of the open-handed wandering: to grow intentionally toward something, toward *some One*. Isn’t that the point?

Trauma is evidence that we are not always safe; previously, my sense of well-being depended on a sense that I am, and will be. These months have been an exercise in choosing to love into a world that may not always return love with love. These days have been a discipline in reaching for the safety that does exist without obsessing over the what ifs that could threaten.

Even before the words that changed my world were spoken, I was afraid. My fear, an emotion designed to warn and protect me from harm, was realized. But when the threat was locked up, when the damage exacted, the

immediate need for fear receded. Pain, however, provides a place for fear to grow without attention to the need. It takes active practice to feel the fear and let it go, to hold it in my hands and then set it down so there is room to hold on to life.

Restlessness uprooted me, made my life feel unfamiliar. It threatens to pull me under and its gift is a new set of eyes. It tempts me to believe that I will never feel settled again. I have felt the invitation to see again, to see something new, and resisted the pull by planting myself in the present and breathing here.

Sorrow and ache are reminders of the fragility of life. One day, every single person I love will be lost to me, separated by their death or mine. The particular sorrow points to the universal. It takes energy to integrate and hold the ache, to let it leak out of my eyes and my heart, a tear at a time. And gradually, the pressure in the well returns to a bearable level, sneaking up less frequently, and with less intensity.

The effort it took to stay focused on the present moment made it hard to see and feel the gradual healing that was happening. While I have participated in the movement, I also feel swept along by the current of it, caught up in something more powerful than myself. A time or two in my past, I tentatively reached out to touch the Healer. The fragments of healing are still surprising, every time.



On the edge of something more. Design Pics

## Pro-life advocate supports bubble zones

By John G. Stackhouse Jr.  
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Ontario is about to authorize buffer zones around abortion clinics, of the kind that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled against.

According to the Ottawa Citizen, Bill 163 would prohibit anti-abortion protests within 50 metres of the province’s eight stand-alone abortion clinics. Ontario would join two other provinces — British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador — with similar measures.

In 2014, the U.S. high court struck down a Massachusetts law created in 2007 that established 10-metre buffer zones outside abortion clinics, also known as “bubble zones.”

In keeping with the strong American tradition of free speech, the court ruled that the law infringed upon the First Amendment rights of anti-abortion activists. Chief Justice John Roberts said that laws concerning harassment, intimidation and obstruction were sufficient to deal with abusive speech around the clinics.

As both a pro-lifer and free

speech advocate, I might be expected to hate this legislation. But, with regret, I confess it seems like the right thing to do.

To be sure, I thoroughly support campus groups putting up anti-abortion posters and distributing literature in student union buildings, even as such groups have been harassed and disenfranchised by student governments and university administrations throughout North America. The nexus of abortion and women’s rights continues to deserve straightforward debate, and universities ought to be places in which such important matters are freely discussed.

But a woman exercising her legal right to an abortion should not have to run a gauntlet of screaming opponents characterizing her choice and the difficult procedure she is about to undergo in the most horrifying terms. We protect free speech so that ideas can be articulated and considered fairly, and there isn’t a lot of sober deliberation going on amid the shouting of epithets outside a clinic.

I share the horror many protesters feel about what’s happening in these clinics. But many of the women who resort to them feel lousy about what’s happening to them and what’s going to happen. If the protesters were to offer gentle alternative advice and support for these anguished women — and some do — that would be one thing.

But bubble-zone legislation doesn’t get passed because a few kind souls engaged a few willing

women in thoughtful conversation on the sidewalk. In each jurisdiction that has passed these laws, violence has occasioned them.

I hate to see free speech restricted, but not if the intent and effect of these protests is mere injury, let alone the prevention of people from doing what the law allows them to do. And, despite Chief Justice Roberts’ assurances to the contrary, it’s very unlikely that overworked police officers and district attorneys are going to go to the trouble of prosecuting a few loudmouthed protesters — thus leaving the women open to abuse at a time when they feel especially vulnerable.

Bubble zones are like restraining orders: last resorts when civility and mutual respect have broken down and people fear for their safety. That evidently has been the case, so bubble-zone legislation needs to be on the table as a possible, if regrettable, recourse.

(And wouldn’t conservative Christians want bubble zones around our churches on Sunday mornings if protesters decided to use the same tactics on us as we tried to make our way in for worship?)

Meanwhile, pro-lifers have every other means of persuasion and legislation open to us. As ethicist Charles Camosy has recently written, the tide of popular opinion has already turned regarding the abortion wars, and it may be time to revisit the issue in both countries.

But without the yelling.

Resurrection and healing — these are not accidents, not coincidences of time or circumstance. Living barefoot changes something, opens me to possibilities I cannot predict, but can trust. It is a beautiful, if embarrassing, comfort to be reminded that I live this way for a reason. It changes my life, brings me closer to wholeness, even when I take the long way and forget.

The bright fall colours have given way to the edge of winter in Saskatchewan, and the safe and OK arrives with the same resigned shift into something cooler. Safe, if only for now, and OK, if only a minimum, is a beautiful place compared to the other stopovers

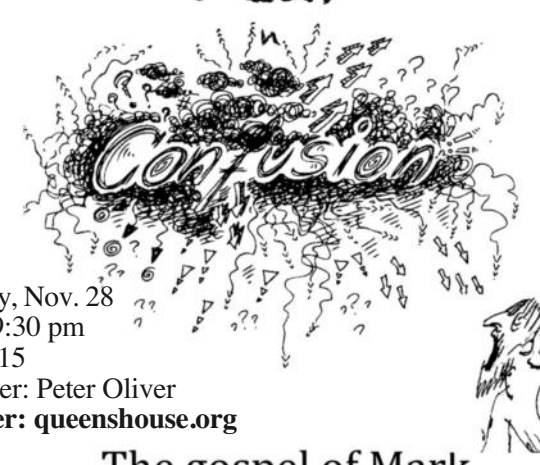
on this detour. I’m grateful for the gift of more space, more hope, more joy that this place offers. And I am grateful that safe and OK is an edge of something more and not an end.

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*Stackhouse is a professor of religious studies at Crandall University in Moncton, N.B., and author, most recently, of the book, “Why You’re Here: Ethics for the Real World.” The views expressed in this opinion piece do not necessarily reflect those of the Prairie Messenger.*


# Fear



Tuesday, Nov. 28  
7:00 - 9:30 pm  
Cost: \$15  
Presenter: Peter Oliver  
Register: [queenshouse.org](http://queenshouse.org)

## The gospel of Mark

A workshop



The 2017 - 18 liturgical year focuses on Mark’s gospel. Throughout Mark the good news is met with **fear & confusion!** In fact, it likely ended at ch. 16:8 they “fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”  
**What is Mark up to? Let’s take a closer look.**



# No theological reasons to define women as servants

## Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



A few years before I was invited to join the Kitchen Table columnists, I taught a class at St. Peter’s College for the University of Saskatchewan, and one evening went down to a basement lounge for a pre-class smoke (those were the days!). On the coffee table lay the June 6, 1994, issue of the *Prairie Messenger* with a bold headline, “Priesthood reserved to men alone.”

The story reported Pope John Paul II’s declaration that there could be no ordination of women, and that genuine Catholics would henceforth remain silent about the issue: “This judgment is to be definitively held by all the church’s faithful. It does not belong to matters freely open to dispute.” Nonetheless he added (though it was hard not to hear it as an afterthought), “the role of women is of capital importance for the humanization of society and for the good of the church.”

The “theological” reasons cited for this edict seemed to reduce to

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the fact that in the biblical stories Jesus chose men — not women — to accompany him in his travels and to send out on missions. This historical fact was held to imply that neither sociology nor psychology had anything to do with the judgment: Jesus (and thus God) had willed that women remain perpetually ineligible for priesthood.

That same *Prairie Messenger* carried another item on a bottom corner of the back page, this one with a smaller headline, “Re-instated heretic is honoured by Vatican.” Here the story concerned a postage stamp going on sale at the Vatican to honour Galileo Galilei, issued two years after the pope’s formal acknowledgment that the church had erred in condemning the scientist for his heretical views. Back in those days, John Paul II said, theologians “relied on an overly literal interpretation of the Scriptures to insist that the earth was the fixed centre of the universe.”

I took that copy of the paper up to my room, and at the beginning of class read these items to my students. Most of them happened to be women, and when I finished there was a short pause, then one woman said, “Well, maybe in another 400 years we’ll get a postage stamp too.”

This is not merely a Christian issue. R.H. Blyth makes these severe comments about the Zen he himself had espoused: “The least admirable part of Buddhism is its

attitude to sex. The Buddha accepted women into the Sangha with the utmost unwillingness, and indeed prophesied that they would be the ruin of his system. It is said that in this matter the Buddha ‘should not be judged by the standards of the 20th century.’ This is not so. He should be judged by the standards of the 30th. If a man’s views of half the world are wrong, his view of the other half must be so too. In actual fact one of the reasons for the decline of Buddhism in India was the resurgence of Tantrism with its female deities and esoteric eroticism. The same thing has happened in modern times to Christianity, only the sex-worship is extra-church.”

If a religion insists on a “theological anthropology” (as Pope Paul VI had earlier termed the Catholic stance), many who might otherwise return to the church will in principal, and even in good faith, remain protestant — *pro*, not *con*, the humanization of both church and society. Such people cannot make themselves believe that there are *theological* reasons to define women as servants in any sense that men imagine they are not. You may as well say that since Jesus rode on a donkey, the pope shall not travel in a popemobile; because Christ was poor all his life, the Vatican cannot collect valuable artworks; and since Jesus spoke only in parables, no written theology can ever be permitted. Carl Jung, who struggled with his own Reformed tradition, said, “It is no easy matter to live a life that is modelled on Christ’s, but it is unspeakably harder to live one’s own life as truly as Christ lived his.”

One summer night when I was 13, I was walking from my house at the edge of the village to visit Grandpa Gliedge. His place was always a refuge from my adolescent troubles, and in the stillness

of that night the stars hung overhead in inconceivable numbers as I followed a path through the garden that lay between our homes. Grandpa’s garden was huge, and I passed a stand of oats he was growing for his chickens, skirted the towering cornstalks, then began hurrying between the rows of vegetables on either side of the path. A walk that should have been peaceful was not so. From a few lots over I heard the village drunk in his yard shouting and cursing and beating his wife, and at every step I heard her cries and pleas, and his whaps delivered one after the other as she wailed in the night. I had often seen the man stumbling home from the pub, and knew that anyone who was outdoors that night would have heard the violence. I knew too that no one would interfere, and tried not to think about the children huddled in their ramshackle house, and when I got inside Grandpa’s door I didn’t tell him what I’d heard.

It’s a bitter memory.

Even a mystic like Teilhard de Chardin, in his accolades to the Eternal Feminine, says, “She floats between me and God, and I am astonished by the violence of the forces unleashed in me at Her approach.” A quarter of a century has now passed since John Paul II’s judgment, and apparently women are still *on* the altar and not behind it. No doubt, women as well as men can live in hell, but it was not women who

invented the place.

Perhaps priests are afraid of priestesses. If so, it implies that men know they are not the fixed centre of any universe, religious or cosmic. We humans seek something higher on the evolutionary



CNS courtesy of the International Year of Astronomy 2009

**ADMITTING MISTAKES —** The printing of Galileo’s “Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems” was banned by the Inquisition six months after its publication in 1632. More than 350 years after the Roman Catholic Church condemned Galileo, the Vatican issued a stamp honouring the former “heretic.” How long will it take for the church to recognize there are no “theological” reasons to define women as servants?

scale — the *trans*-humanization, if you will, of both religion and society. Alfred North Whitehead warns, “Those societies which cannot combine reverence to their symbols with freedom of revision, must ultimately decay either from anarchy, or from the slow atrophy of a life stifled by useless shadows.”

Then why not both mediators and mediatrixes, momes as well as popes, to help our incomplete selves toward something more divine?

And how about Jesus himself — don’t you think he’d be sharing a belly laugh with that poet Issa? *There the great bronze Buddha sits; a swallow darts out suddenly from his nostril.*

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Money goes astray

A Nov. 5 CBC headline broke the titillating news: “Paradise Papers offshore data leak reveals financial secrets of world’s elite.”

Juicy details were promised next: “Huge new leak of offshore tax records dubbed the Paradise Papers reveals financial secrets of the world’s elite, including the Queen, three former PMs and more than 120 other politicians across the globe.”

The report noted that more than 3,000 Canadian companies, trusts, foundations and individuals appeared in the records of the offshore law firm Appleby and the corporate registries of 19 tax havens.

Leaked data from the law firm, the CBC noted, shines a light on hundreds of well-known companies and wealthy Canadians who benefit from offshore trusts and corporations set up in countries where they

pay little or no taxes, as a way to legally avoid — or potentially evade — paying taxes at home.

While Canadians are critical of those who don’t pay their fair share, an even worse situation was revealed at a Nov. 4 - 6 gathering in Rome, organized by the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences and Global Alliance for Legal Aid. It dealt with human trafficking.

Human trafficking is the industry of buying and selling human beings for forced labour, prostitution, exploitation and even harvesting organs. The International Labour Organization estimates that human trafficking grosses \$150 billion a year and is rapidly growing, with profits beginning to match those made in the illegal drug and arms trades.

Human beings are highly lucrative, one participant said, because a drug sold on the street can only

be used once, whereas a person can be used and sold over and over again. One human rights group estimates that traffickers can make \$100,000 a year for each woman working as a sex slave — representing a return on investment of up to 1,000 per cent.

Worse than that is the story of how that participant, Rani Hong, became involved. She was stolen from her mother as a seven-year-old in a small village in India and sold into slavery. She was then kept in a cage to teach her to submit to her “master.”

Hong said no country is immune to human trafficking, and educating the public is critical for bringing awareness and stemming demand for forced labour.

Taken together, human trafficking, illegal drugs and the arms trade make tax havens seem like minor players. It’s not only the money lost or diverted, it’s also the human lives lost and diverted. — PWN

#metoo campaign exposes the pervasiveness of sexual exploitation

*This unsigned editorial titled “The #metoo campaign” was printed in the Oct. 29 issue of The Southern Cross, South Africa’s Catholic weekly newspaper.*

As the Catholic Church discovered 15 years ago, sometimes it takes just one case to blow the lid off a long-fermenting scandal.

In 2002 the investigation by the Boston Globe into the coverup of abuse of minors by clergy led to revelations of similar scandals in many countries around the world. The Catholic Church has been humiliated by the scandal of its own making and is suffering the fallout even now. But the exposure of the culture that allowed for the sexual abuse of young people and

its coverup was necessary so that overdue corrective measures could be developed and implemented.

Hollywood now has its own scandal of sexual abuse and cover-ups with the recent revelations concerning movie executive Harvey Weinstein, one of the film industry’s most powerful men.

Weinstein’s abuse of young women in the film industry, ranging from indecent exposure to alleged rape, are shocking, as is the fact that many people knew about it — and even joked about it at

award ceremonies. But Weinstein is not the only nor even the worst sex offender in Hollywood. He is, in fact, just the tip of an iceberg that has been growing ever since the inception of the movie industry.

The casting couch system, whereby actresses — and actors — would be coerced to submit to sexual acts in return for advancement, has been known about and tolerated for the best part of a century. A refusal to submit to the casting couch could end a career.

Hollywood is virtually synonymous with sexual exploitation. And its practitioners have been adept at covering up that sexual abuse, with many even defending

known offenders.

The Weinstein case must become the scandal that brings down the whole predatory system of sexual exploitation in Hollywood.

But Hollywood — like other areas of celebrity culture — merely magnifies the reality of pervasive sexual abuse in many other walks of life, throughout the world.

Weinstein symbolizes a patriarchal system, present in many different social environments, that has always insisted on men’s sexual entitlements, one which takes for granted acts of sexual harassment and coercion and even blames women for their rape. That is the way it was, and that is the way it must no longer be.

which should be double-guessed.

The importance of #metoo and similar campaigns which doubtless will come in the future, is in the awareness that sexual abuse happens to most women, and to women we all know. It builds awareness about the prevalence of the sexual exploitation, and the unequal power relations that feed it.

Such campaigns help to encourage women in the knowledge that their stories, which some may even be keeping as a “shameful” secret, is shared by others, and that shame rightfully resides with the perpetrator. Solidarity is a powerful healing agent.

For some women, #metoo has been an opportunity to tell that story. For men, even those who are innocent of sexual predation (or think that they are), it is a time to listen — to be silent and hear these stories, without offering justification or contextualization or mounting the defence that not all men are like that.

Internet facilitates child pornography

*This editorial titled: “Fighting online exploitation” appeared in the Oct. 10 issue of The Compass, newspaper of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wis. It was written by Sam Lucero, news and information manager.*

Despite its countless benefits in advancing learning and global communication, the Internet has had its pitfalls. The most heinous has been the growth of online child sexual exploitation.

Children make up over one-quarter of the 3.2 billion Internet users, according to WePROTECT Global Alliance, and they are the most vulnerable to new forms of harm and abuse.

said Pope Francis, acknowledging the recent church scandals involving ordained ministers.

“The spread of printed pornography in the past was a relatively small phenomenon compared to the proliferation of pornography on the net,” added the pope.

The international congress was one sign of a global movement to end the sexual exploitation of children online. WePROTECT Global Alliance has partnered with tech industry leaders, including Facebook, Google and Microsoft, to make technology safe for children. Seventy countries are participating in the “Global Alliance Against Child Abuse Online” campaign.

In the United States, a similar initiative, called Thorn, is enlisting the tech community in the fight against child exploitation. Thorn’s Technology Task Force includes more than 20 technology companies that offer their time, knowledge and resources to fight cyber child abuse. The group’s co-founders include actors Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore.

By partnering with tech industry leaders such as Google, Microsoft and Amazon, Thorn says it hopes to make an impact in three ways for helping children exploited online. “We need to shrink online abuse environments, decrease the anonymity of abusers and identify children faster,” it states.

Protecting children from what Pope Francis called “the dark net” requires the co-operation of governments, law enforcement, tech

companies, religious communities and other concerned groups.

The tech industry acknowledges that it helped spread child exploitation and pornography through online means. Now it is joining forces to curtail it and make the Internet safe for children. “We know that technology facilitates the exploitation of children,” stated Ernie Allen, the former president and CEO of the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, “but we also know that within technology resides a solution.”

It’s a movement we can all support.



CNS/Shanon Stapleton, Reuters

NEW YORK MEMORIAL — A bicyclist passes a memorial on West Street Nov. 2, two days after a man driving a rented pickup truck mowed down pedestrians and cyclists on a bike path alongside the Hudson River in New York City.



Writing letters does bring results

**The Editor:** I am catching up with my past issues of *Prairie Messenger*.  
In the Oct. 4 issue, Caitlin Ward wrote about Solidarity. She wondered whether our meager attempts to support social justice causes made a difference.  
I can assure her that they do. The letter-writing campaign which

Amnesty International heads up every December has resulted in prisoners being released sometimes after years in captivity. It speaks to the power of the pen.  
Even those computer clicks which add up do cause change. Small though these actions be, they do yield positive results. — **Mary Ertel, Kitchener, Ont.**

Christ urges followers, ‘Abide in me’

Continued from page 1

from John 11:37, when, upon learning that his friend Lazarus had died, “Jesus wept.” It was a text that came to Haugen when he taught the history of Christianity. “We have been the cause, I think, of Jesus weeping for his children.”  
Gathered in the upper room, Jesus says to his disciples, “I am the vine and you are the branches,” added Haugen, explaining that the “you” in this verse is not singular, but plural. Christ is urging his followers in unity to “abide in me, and abide with each other, and walk together and pray for each other.”  
The possibility of “rereading the Reformation” emerges after years of dialogue among Christians, said Bolen, reflecting on Martin Luther’s desire to initiate a discussion about things in the church that needed to change. “Above all, we discovered that Martin Luther in his own life heard the call of the Gospel and that it transformed him.”

After 50 years of dialogue, Christians are now praying together, serving and witnessing together, Bolen said. He pointed to the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* by Lutherans and Catholics as an important fruit of this dialogue.  
The archbishop quoted Article 15 of the document: “Together we confess: by grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.”  
The World Methodist Council signed on to the declaration in 2006, and this past summer Reformed Churches from throughout the world decided they, too, wanted to sign it, Bolen said.  
The Saskatoon worship service included reflections on healing, reconciliation, dialogue, and unity, read by representatives of different Christian communities.  
Rev. Carmen Kampan, executive director for advancement at Horizon College and a candidate for ordination in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), quoted from the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue document *From Conflict to Communion*: “When divided Christians remember the events that led to the particular formation of their churches, they do not wish to

do so without their fellow Christians. In remembering with each other the beginning of the Reformation, they are taking their baptism seriously.”  
Dr. Del Haug read from the Mennonite-Catholic dialogue, *Called Together to be Peacemakers*: “Christians can take responsibility for the past. They can name the errors in their history, repent of them, and work to correct them.”  
Rev. Lindsay Mohn of the United Church also quoted a dialogue document that reflected on the importance of sharing a picture of the past that is historically accurate: “A healing of memories involves the openness to move beyond the isolation of the past and to consider concrete steps toward new relations. Together, these factors can contribute to reconciliation among divided Christians.”  
Deacon Marie-Louise Ternier, who is preparing for ordination in the Anglican communion, read from a document reflecting on how, in addition to the joy and gratitude of the Reformation 500 commemoration, there must be room to experience pain over failures and sins. “In the 16th century, Christians on all sides frequently not only misunderstood but also exaggerated and caricatured their opponents in order to make them look ridiculous. They repeatedly violated the eighth commandment, which prohibits bearing false witness against one’s neighbour.”  
During the commemoration, the assembly recited the Apostle’s Creed, prayed the Lord’s Prayer — each in their own language — and exchanged a sign of peace. Intercessory prayers and hymns were also part of the service, with music provided by a combined choir and a brass quartet.  
Five representatives of Christian communities each read a commitment for deepening unity, taken from dialogue documents, before lighting a candle from the paschal candle.  
Gerri Madill, chair of the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, read from dialogue documents urging com-

War ends as a reign of terror, death

Continued from page 1

So often people who want to go to war “are convinced they will usher in a new world, a new springtime. But it ends up as winter — ugly, cruel, a reign of terror and death,” the pope said.  
Today, the world continues to

head off fiercely to war and fight battles every day, he said.  
“Let us pray for the dead today, dead from war, including innocent children,” and pray to God “for the grace to weep,” he said.  
Among the more than 7,800 graves at the Nettuno cemetery, there are the remains of 16 women who served in the Women’s Army Corps, Red Cross or as nurses, as well as the graves of 29 Tuskegee airmen. Those buried or missing in action had taken part in attacks by U.S. Allies along Italy’s coast during the Second World War.  
After the mass, the pope visited the Ardeatine Caves, now a memorial cemetery with the remains of 335 Italians, mostly civilians, brutally murdered by Nazi German occupiers in 1944.  
The pope was led through the long series of tunnels and stopped to pray several minutes in silence at a bronze sculpted fence symbolizing the twisted, interlocking forms of those massacred. Walking farther along the dark corridors, he placed white roses along

a long series of dark grey cement tombs built to remember the victims.  
The victims included some Italian military, but also political prisoners and men rounded up in a Jewish neighbourhood. They were all shot in the back of the head in retaliation for an attack on Nazi soldiers. The Nazis threw the bodies into the caves and used explosives to seal off access.  
After the war, a memorial was built on the site. Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni, chief rabbi of Rome, sang a short prayer, and the pope prayed to God, merciful and compassionate, who hears the cries of his people and knows of their sufferings.  
Through the risen Christ, Christians know that God is not the god of death, “but of the living, that your covenant of faithful love is stronger than death and a guarantee of resurrection,” he said.  
After returning to the Vatican, the pope visited the grotto under St. Peter’s Basilica, where many popes are buried.



Design Pics

A Winter’s Reflection

I sit by a roaring fire,  
tucked in my furry throw  
reading the delicious words  
of a beloved book.

Outside my window I listen to  
the bitter sounds of a howling  
winter wind.

From the corner of my glasses  
I catch a reflection,  
a quick moment of wings.

I turn, and around the empty feeder  
I see an array of wild birds —  
jays, clarks, nutcrackers,  
chickadees and juncos.

So I leave my place of comfort,  
open the door to the bitter elements,  
and scatter seeds of love  
For my feathered friends.

By Diane Bauer

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# ‘Victims’ charter’ is next step in fighting trafficking

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — After seven-year-old Rani Hong was stolen from her mother in a small village in India and sold into slavery, her captors kept her in a cage to teach her to submit completely to her “master.”

“This is what the industry of human trafficking does,” she said; it is an industry of buying and selling human beings for forced labour, prostitution, exploitation and even harvesting organs. The International Labour Organization estimates human trafficking grosses \$150 billion a year and is rapidly growing, with profits beginning to match those made in the illegal drug and arms trades.

Human beings are highly lucrative, Hong said, because a drug sold on the street can only be used once, while a person can be used and sold over and over again. One human rights group estimates traffickers can make \$100,000 a year for each woman working as a sex

slave, representing a return on investment of up to 1,000 per cent.

Hong and others spoke to reporters at the Vatican Nov. 6 during a conference on ways to better assist victims of trafficking in terms of legal assistance, compensation and resettlement. The Nov. 4 - 6 gathering was organized by the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences and Global Alliance for Legal Aid, a U.S.-based association of jurists providing legal aid to the poor in developing countries.

Hong eventually found freedom, she said, but it came only after she became so sick and weak that her owner sold her to an international adoption agency. She ended up with her adoptive mother in Canada and then the United States. While her adoptive mother helped her, the trauma of her past hindered her future — leading her to not easily trust or communicate with people, she said.

Today, along with her husband, who, as a child ended up ship-

wrecked on a remote island for two years after escaping forced inscription in Vietnam, she leads the non-profit Tronie Foundation to serve survivors and help them join the fight against trafficking.

The success stories and tragedies of victims and survivors offer the next clue in an effective fight against traffickers and in helping those who get caught in their snares, said Margaret Archer, president of the pontifical academy.

In the process of criminalizing, tracking down and penalizing traffickers over the years, “victims got almost left out except as numbers” and their true needs overlooked, Archer said.

The three-day meeting at the

Vatican, she said, was meant to come up with a “victims’ charter,” that is, very concrete proposals gleaned from victims and their advocates to act as a sort of framework for prevention, healing and resettlement.

This is why survivors were part of the conference, Archer wrote in the conference booklet, to “pinpoint what we did that deterred their progress toward the life they sought and what we did — besides providing bed and board — that was experienced by them as life-enhancing.”

When it comes to rescuing and helping resettle victims of trafficking, she said, “there’s a lot of rhetoric about empowerment, giv-

ing voice . . . which don’t really get (survivors) very far in paying the rent, buying the food, finding schools for the children.” One idea, she said, is mobilize the power of Catholic parishes around the world in helping those who have been trafficked.

Hong said no country is immune to human trafficking and educating the public is critical for bringing awareness and stemming demand for forced labour.

“Slavery was never abolished. It’s found new forms in new places” and everyone can play a part in stopping this crime, said John McEldowney, a professor of law at the University of Warwick, England.



CNS/Nick Wagner, Reuters

**TEXAS BAPTIST CHURCH SHOOTING** — Law enforcement officers investigate a mass shooting Nov. 5 at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. A lone gunman entered the church during Sunday services taking the lives of at least 26 people and injuring several more.

## Catholics, Lutherans announce new study

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The official Catholic-Lutheran dialogue will begin a deeper exploration of common beliefs and differences on “church, eucharist and ministry,” the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation announced.

When Pope Francis joined Bishop Munib A. Younan, then the president of the Lutheran World Federation, for a prayer service in Sweden in 2016, the two noted the pain many of their fellow Catholics and Lutherans — especially Catholics and Lutherans married to each other — experience when they cannot share the eucharist at each other’s services.

“We acknowledge our joint pastoral responsibility to respond to the spiritual thirst and hunger of our people to be one in Christ,” the two leaders said in 2016. “We long for this wound in the Body of

Christ to be healed. This is the goal of our ecumenical endeavours, which we wish to advance, also by renewing our commitment to theological dialogue.”

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation announced Oct. 31 that the next task of their formal dialogue commission would be “to discern in a prayerful manner our understanding on church, eucharist and ministry, seeking a substantial consensus so as to overcome remaining differences between us.”

The announcement was part of a statement marking the end of a yearlong joint commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

After 500 years of division and even violent opposition, Catholics and Lutherans and many other Christian communities commemorated the Reformation together,

acknowledging their past sins and pledging to work for full unity, said the statement published on Reformation Day, which recalls the day in 1517 that Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation by publicly posting his 95 Theses.

Over the past year, the statement said, “We begged forgiveness for our failures and for the ways in which Christians have wounded the body of the Lord and offended each other during the five hundred years since the beginning of the Reformation until today.”

But, “for the first time Lutherans and Catholics have seen the Reformation from an ecumenical perspective,” it said. “This has allowed new insight into the events of the 16th century, which led to our separation.”

The mistakes of the past cannot be changed, the statement said, but “its influence upon us today can be transformed to become a stimulus for growing communion, and a sign of hope for the world to overcome division and fragmentation.”

Cantu and Stephen Hilbert, the bishops’ foreign policy adviser for Africa and global development, visited Congo Oct. 27 - Nov. 3 and met with government officials, opposition and civil society leaders, among others.

A two-day visit by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley in late October “seemed to light a fire under the government here, which is encouraging,” Cantu said.

“The church is trying to re-engage with political leaders, especially after Haley’s visit, which has brought a welcome urgency to the government to get the elections done in a timely way,” the bishop said.

Haley, the most senior member of President Donald Trump’s administration to visit Congo, is reported to have told the government to hold elections next year, rather than delay them until 2019, if it wanted to count on U.S. backing.

“I hope the pressure can be maintained until the situation improves,” Cantu said, noting that he plans to follow up with Haley on his return to the U.S.

After a flare in political violence late last year, the bishops helped the government and opposition sign a Dec. 31 agreement that said President Joseph Kabila would remain in office, but elections would be held before the end of 2017. However, Congo’s elec-

toral commission has said elections will be held in 2019, which again has raised chaos in the country.

“Questions being asked here are will Kabila relinquish power, and will the transfer of power be peaceful,” Cantu said.

The bishop and Hilbert met Nov. 1 with the head of Congo’s electoral commission, “who told us that they will publish the electoral calendar within a few days,” he said.

“This would help tremendously to ease tensions,” Cantu said, noting that in terms of the signed agreement the president must state publicly that he will comply with constitutional provisions barring him from a third term.

Kabila “hasn’t yet indicated if he will make this announcement,” he said.

Since October 2016, more than 3,300 people have been killed in the Kasai region in fighting between the army and rebels, Catholic leaders said. The church’s findings, including that 20 villages had been destroyed, half of them by government troops, were released in a June UN statement.

The “atrocities are horrific” and, “as always, the poorest people bear the brunt,” Cantu said. Nearly four million people out of Congo’s 82 million people cannot live in their homes because of fighting.



CNS/Vatican Philatelic Office

**VATICAN STAMP** — A stamp issued by the Vatican commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The stamp shows Martin Luther holding a bible while Philip Melancthon, a theologian and friend of Luther, holds the Augsburg Confession at the feet of a crucified Jesus.

An ant on the move does more than a dozing ox.

— Lao Tzu, philosopher (604 - 531 BC)