

Missionaries to Canada

When Canadian missionaries first went to Nigeria, they probably didn't imagine that one day Nigeria would be sending missionaries back to Canada. The Missionary Society of St. Paul, however, is currently serving in two Canadian dioceses and has plans to minister to Canadian Catholics in other areas in the future.

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Assisted suicide

The legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia in Canada is a sign of a culture that is dying for lack of love, according to Jackie Saretsky, chaplaincy co-ordinator for the Diocese of Saskatoon.

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Ecumenical workshop

Representatives from Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes across southern Saskatchewan met Nov. 19 for a workshop in Regina, where they shared stories of ecumenical action in their areas and learned about Anglican and Roman Catholic dialogues at the national and the international level.

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Catholic fashion

The theme for the 2018 Met Gala, a high-profile fundraising event hosted annually by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, will see gala-goers take inspiration for their wardrobes from Catholic vestments, robes, clerical clothing, artifacts and artwork spanning nearly 2,000 years.

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Worlds of wonders

Worlds of wonders are coming to the big screen, writes Gerald Schmitz. Among them is the first fully oil-painted film, a visual wonder about Vincent van Gogh.

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Bishop Hagemoen installed in Saskatoon

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Bishop Mark Hagemoen knocked on the door of the Cathedral of the Holy Family on the evening of Nov. 23, and was joyfully welcomed by the people of the diocese and the wider community at his official installation as the eighth bishop of Saskatoon.

"May your bishop's heart continue to be shaped by us, the people of the prairies, as it was first shaped by the people of the North," said Rev. Kevin McGee, speaking on behalf of clergy, religious and laity during the two-and-a-half-hour liturgy. Hagemoen comes to Saskatoon after four years as bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

"As I left Mackenzie-Fort Smith, I learned that there is no Dene word for goodbye," said Hagemoen. "The best translation is 'until we meet again.' What an appropriate expression, as we celebrate the end of the church year, and also when bridging and acknowledging the link between great faith communities."

Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi also addressed the assembly: "My dear friends, welcome the new pastor and receive

him as Pope Francis urges, as a father, as a teacher and as a guardian, and together with him continue to build this precious gift, which is the Catholic Church in Saskatchewan, in unity, in friendship, with collaboration with everybody."

Hagemoen was met at the door by representatives of the local and universal church. Elder Irene Sharp of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish presented the incoming bishop with a pair of moccasins as a symbol of walking together into the future. Hagemoen was also greeted by cathedral pastor Rev. David Tumbach, Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, and the apostolic nuncio, Pope Francis' representative in Canada.

Presented with a crucifix, Hagemoen blessed and kissed it, and then moved through the building blessing the people, led by two First Nations dancers accompanied by an honour song.

As Hagemoen stood before the altar, diocesan chancellor Rev. Clement Amofah opened the Apostolic Letter from Pope Francis proclaiming Hagemoen bishop of Saskatoon. Bonazzi and Bolen handed Hagemoen his crozier and accompanied him to



Tim Yaworski

INSTALLATION — Bishop Mark Hagemoen accepts a gift of moccasins presented by Elder Irene Sharp of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, as former Saskatoon bishop, Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, looks on. The presentation was part of the ceremony at the door of the Cathedral of the Holy Family that began the installation celebration Nov. 23, welcoming Hagemoen as the eighth bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

the bishop's chair as a sign of taking canonical possession of the diocese. The bishop then came for-

ward to accept greetings from representatives of groups and communities in the diocese, including Rev. Matthew Ramsay on behalf of the Council of Priests, and Linda Klassen, representing the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Harry Lafond of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner also

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— **PRAYERS**, page 7

Pope meets generals after brief welcome by children

By Cindy Wooden

YANGON, Myanmar (CNS) — Greeted by two dozen children wearing traditional attire and by the nation's bishops, Pope Francis arrived in Myanmar Nov. 27 for a four-day visit.

The arrival ceremony at the Yangon airport was brief and led by an envoy of the president, because the formal welcome was scheduled for the next day in Naypyitaw, which has been the capital since 2005.

However, Pope Francis had a "courtesy visit" with the leaders of the nation's powerful military. The pope and Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who was accompanied by three other generals and a lieutenant colonel, met that first evening in the Yangon archbishop's residence, where the pope is staying.

Greg Burke, director of the Vatican press office, told reporters the meeting lasted 15 minutes. After discussions about "the great responsibility authorities in the country have at this moment of transition," the two exchanged gifts.

The pope gave the general a

medal commemorating his visit to Myanmar and the general gave the pope "a harp in the shape of a boat and an ornate rice bowl," Burke said.

Pope Francis had been scheduled to meet the general Nov. 30, his last morning in Myanmar. Although the country is transitioning from military rule to democracy, the general has the power to name a portion of the legislators and to nominate some government ministers. Although described by Burke as a "courtesy visit" and not an official welcome, the visit seemed to go against the usual protocol, which would dictate that the pope's first meetings with authorities would be with the head of state and head of government.

Burke did not say whether Pope Francis had mentioned in any way the plight of the Rohingya, a Muslim minority from Myanmar's Rakhine state, who are treated as foreigners in the country. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing has been criticized by human rights groups for what has been described as disproportionate-

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Campaign 2000 releases poverty report

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Campaign 2000, a coalition of more than 120 anti-poverty groups, on Nov. 21 called for the federal government to take leadership in addressing child and family poverty.

"With Canada's first Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) on the horizon, government must commit to reverse the effects of decades of austerity budgeting and finally prioritize the prevention and eradication of poverty in Canada," said Anita Khanna, national co-ordinator of Campaign 2000 at a news conference in Ottawa.

"With 1.2 million children and families living in poverty, it's clear that the social safety net is not adequately supporting families who face no choice but to piece together precarious work, struggle to afford quality housing and childcare and scramble to pack school lunches."

Campaign 2000's annual Report Card shows 38 per cent of indigenous children on reserves live in poverty, as do 42 per cent of female one-parent families. One in three children of recent immigrants lives in poverty; and income inequality is growing, the report says.



CCN/D. Gyapong

CAMPAIGN 2000 — Joe Gunn, executive director of Citizens for Public Justice, speaking at Campaign 2000's release of the 2017 Child Poverty Report Card on Parliament Hill, along with other anti-poverty group representatives.

Residents of Philippines mining town make protest

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Residents of a central Philippine mining town have set up camp outside the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Manila to dramatize their opposition to the reopening of a mine in their community.

At least 30 people from Manicani Island in Eastern Samar province want assurances from the government that an open pit mine will remain closed, ucanews.com reported.

Religious leaders expressed support for the protesters by celebrating a mass outside the main gate of the ministry Nov. 17.

Rev. Lenox Nino Garcia of Borongan diocese said the mass was intended for the “enlightenment of government officials” about the effects of destructive extraction of natural resources.

The residents oppose a mining company’s bid for a permit to operate the mine for another 25 years.

Mining on the island was sus-

pended in 2002 after complaints filed by local people, including Bishop Crispin Vasquez of Borongan and other members of the clergy.

The faith-based group Philippine-Misereor Partnership has been calling on the government to declare the island a “no-go zone” for mining operations.

Meanwhile, members of the clergy from Marbel diocese in the southern Philippines issued a statement Nov. 17 warning against a plan to open a coal mine in the province of South Cotabato.

“Whatever damage to be caused by coal mining will prejudice the spirit of the watershed reservation proclamation,” read the priests’ statement.

The statement was aimed at the province’s legislators who are currently discussing a proposal to extract coal deposits in the town of Lake Sebu.

The Department of Energy has issued coal-operating contracts to at least two companies.

Departmental officials have said that coal mining is a major employer and accounts for most of the country’s power generation at 27 per cent. It also noted that coal exports bring the country in much needed revenue. The country has more than 504 million tons of coal reserves.

The church leaders, however, said coal mining should not be allowed in the province because of a standing open-pit mining ban under the province’s environment law.

In a separate statement, Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez of Marbel said if the project is allowed to proceed, it would displace up to 1,300 tribal people.

“It will be environmental plunder if coal mining will be allowed in that locality,” he said.

There is a growing number of proposals for coal plants and coal mines in the country, with 59 coal plants and 118 mine permits at various stages of approval, activists said.



CNS/Francis R. Malasig, EPA

PROTEST MINING IN PHILIPPINES — A Filipino indigenous Igorot tribe member holds a placard as she joins a protest in Manila in early February against large scale mining.

Mass not same as going to a show: pope

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If people really understood that participating at mass is witnessing Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection, then maybe they would stop taking pictures, talking, making comments and acting as if it were some kind of show, Pope Francis said.

“This is mass: to enter into Jesus’ passion, death, resurrection and ascension. When we go to mass, it is as if we were going to Calvary, it’s the same,” the pope said Nov. 22 during his weekly general audience.

If people realize that Jesus is truly present in the eucharist and is letting himself be broken and mercy pouring out his love and mercy for everyone, “would we allow ourselves to chit-chat, take pictures, to be on show? No,” the pope said.

“For sure we would be silent,

in mourning and also in joy for being saved,” he said.

The pope continued his series of audience talks on the mass, reflecting on what mass really is and why it is so important.

The mass, as a “memorial,” is more than just remembering an event from the past, the pope said. It is making that event present and alive in a way that transforms those who participate.

The eucharist is the focal point of God’s saving act, he said; it is Jesus making himself present in the bread, “broken for us, pouring out all of his mercy and love on us like he did on the cross, in that way, renewing our hearts, our lives and the way we relate to him and our brothers and sisters.”

“Every celebration of the eucharist is a beam of that sun that never sets, which is the risen Jesus Christ. To take part in mass, especially on Sundays, means entering

into the victory of the resurrection, being illuminated by his light, warmed by his heat,” he said. Mass is “the triumph of Jesus.”

As Jesus goes from death to eternal life during the mass celebration, he is seeking also to “carry us with him” toward eternal life, Pope Francis said.

By spilling his blood, the pope continued, “he frees us from death and the fear of death. He frees us not only from the domination of physical death but also spiritual death — evil and sin,” which pollute one’s life, making it lose its beauty, vitality and meaning.

“In the eucharist, (Jesus) wants to transmit his paschal, victorious love,” the pope said. “If we receive it with faith, we too can truly love God and our neighbour, we can love like he loved us, giving life.”

When people experience the power of Christ’s love within them, then they can give themselves freely and fully to others, even their enemies, without fear, he said.

Vatican Museums launch joint art shows with China

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As a gesture of openness, co-operation and “cultural diplomacy,” the Vatican Museums have organized two joint art exhibitions with China.

“It is the first time ever the pope’s museums have organized an exhibit in the People’s Republic of China,” Barbara Jatta, director of the Vatican Museums, told reporters at a Vatican news conference Nov. 21.

Art, with its “beauty, is an exceptional vehicle for dialogue” in every corner of the world because it is “without fear, without barriers,” she said.

Following through on Pope Francis’ call to be open to the

world, Jatta said the initiative was a further show of the church’s long tradition of “what we at the Vatican Museums like to call the ‘diplomacy of art.’ ”

The initiative, which will begin in March 2018, reflects an openness to and recognition of “that common identity and friendship” that the museums have begun with cultural institutes in China.

The Vatican Museums will be loaning 40 pieces from its ethnological collections for display first in Beijing’s Forbidden City and then in three other cities, including Shanghai. Likewise, China will be loaning 40 pieces from its collections for display in the Vatican Museums as part of the joint exchange.



CNS/Vatican television

POPE SENDS MESSAGE TO BANGLADESH — Pope Francis delivers a video message to the people of Bangladesh from the Vatican Nov. 21. Pope Francis is scheduled to visit Myanmar Nov. 27 - 30 and Bangladesh Nov. 30 - Dec. 2. What the Vatican described as an “inter-religious and ecumenical meeting for peace” is scheduled for Dec. 1 in the garden of the archbishop’s residence in Dhaka’s Ramna neighbourhood.

Vatican office co-ordinates work of nuncios

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has established a new section in the Vatican Secretariat of State to oversee the training, assigning and ministry of Vatican nuncios and diplomats around the world.

The Section for Diplomatic Personnel will be concerned “exclusively with questions pertaining to the people who work in the diplomatic service of the Holy See or who are preparing to do so,” said a statement Nov. 21 from the Secretariat of State.

The section will oversee “the selection, initial and ongoing formation, the living and serving conditions, promotions” and other matters, the statement said.

The head of the section, Polish Archbishop Jan Pawlowski, also will “convoke and preside over ad

hoc meetings to prepare the nominations of pontifical representatives,” who formally are nominated by the pope and usually are made archbishops with their first posting as a nuncio or apostolic delegate.

The diplomatic staff at the Vatican embassies around the globe and most of the archbishops who serve as nuncios are alumni of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. There, in a community of priests from around the world, the future diplomats receive specialized training even as they complete advanced degrees — usually in canon law — at one of the pontifical universities in Rome. They also must study languages.

Five popes were graduates of the academy; the last was Blessed Paul VI.

The Vatican communiqué said

the head of the new section “will be responsible, along with the president of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, for the selection and formation of candidates.”

The role of nuncios and their responsibility in the process for nominating bishops for dioceses in the countries they serve has been a frequent topic of discussion at Pope Francis’ meetings with his international Council of Cardinals, which advises him on church governance and is continuing work on proposals for reorganizing the Roman Curia.

The new section of the Secretariat of State joins two long-existing sections: the first section, or section for “ordinary affairs,” co-ordinates the daily work of the pope and Roman Curia; the second section, or section for relations with states, is the Vatican’s foreign ministry.

Nigerians now Christ's ambassadors in Canada

By Idara Otu, MSP

TORONTO — Canadian missionary institutes have long served the evangelizing mission of the church both at home and abroad. In Nigeria, the church has been blessed by the presence and generosity of the Spiritans, the Christian Brothers, Our Lady's Missionaries, and others for many years. When these Canadians embarked on their mission to Nigeria, one wonders if they ever imagined that Nigerians would one day be missionaries to Canada.

When he founded the Missionary Society of St. Paul (MSP), Cardinal Dominic Ekandem (1917 - 1995) believed that the Catholic Church in Nigeria, by virtue of its blossoming vocations, had an evangelizing mandate — not only on the African continent, but further afield. In 1976, Ekandem shared this conviction with the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Nigeria, and so began several years of prayerful reflection and conversation.

In 1978, with the endorsement

Otu, a member of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, currently residing at the Scarborough Missions central house in Scarborough, Ont., while studying at Regis College, the Jesuit School of Theology at the University of Toronto.

of the Nigerian bishops, the Missionary Society of St. Paul was erected as a Pious Union. In 1994 the Vatican approved the canonical status of the MSP as a Society of Apostolic Life.

The fundamental characteristics of the apostolate include evangelizing and re-evangelizing communities of faith. Missionaries of St. Paul strive "to be all things to all people" (1 Cor 9:22) in order to proclaim the Gospel and witness to God's love in every context and locale.

Four decades later, the cardinal's vision continues to bear fruit, with some 300 Missionaries of St. Paul serving in pastoral ministries in the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, the United States, and Canada.

Today, the missionaries are serving in two Canadian dioceses: Prince Albert, Sask., and Peterborough, Ont. Revs. Anthony Afangide, Frederick Akah, Peter Paase, and Peter Nnanga serve in the Prince Albert diocese, while Rev. Dominic Mbah serves the Diocese of Peterborough. These five priests bring to their ministries both their homegrown faith and their experiences from previous work in nations such as Liberia, Malawi, and the United States. They are enriched, in turn, by the faith of the people they serve.

In 2015, the General Council of the Missionary Society of St. Paul

created the MSP Canada Mission. MSP priests serving in North America no longer share a common leadership structure based in the United States. MSP Canada has its own leadership and mission office.

Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., of Prince Albert formally inaugurated MSP Canada at a eucharistic celebration in North Battleford, Sask., on Jan. 25, 2017. The Missionary Society of St. Paul is grateful to the bishop for presiding at this memorable event and for providing an initial base for the MSP Canada Mission office in his diocese. Special thanks are due to the faithful of St. Joseph Calasactius Parish for hosting the event. The Canada Mission is also indebted to its board of directors, its legal team, and to MSP friends across the country for their service and support.

The Christian faith is a gift to be shared with all peoples. The Missionary Society of St. Paul has come to Canada bearing this precious gift once received from early missionaries. The presence of MSP priests in Canada testifies to this witness of faith and reciprocates the generosity of Canadian missionaries to the Catholic Church in Nigeria.

By responding to the invitation to serve in the dioceses of Prince Albert and Peterborough, the

Missionary Society of St. Paul is being true to the vision of its founder and following in the footsteps of its patron, St. Paul, as "Ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20).

The MSP Canada Mission is thankful to God for its fruitful pastoral ministries in Canada, and looks forward to collaborating with other dioceses in the future, ministering to Canadian Catholics.



Tim Yaworski

APOSTOLIC GRATITUDE — During the installation mass for Bishop Mark Hagemoen as Saskatoon's new bishop at the Cathedral of the Holy Family Nov. 23, the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi (left) publicly thanked Rev. Kevin McGee for serving as diocesan administrator since the departure of Archbishop Donald Bolen in October 2016.

Program helps international priests to learn Canadian ways

By Andrew Ehrkamp
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — This winter, Rev. Moses Savarimuthu is ready.

It's been just over a year since Savarimuthu experienced an Alberta winter for the first time. He traded life in the tropical city of Trichy, India — his hometown — for his first assignment in Canada, as co-pastor of Our Lady of Angels Parish.

"When I was in Fort Saskatchewan I was driving out to Lamont, Redwater, and the surrounding communities, sometimes in heavy snow. At first I thought I would drive into the ditch," recalls Savarimuthu, who has since been reassigned to Blessed Sacrament Parish in Wainwright. "Sometimes ice had formed on the road, so when I was driving I was really frightened."

Savarimuthu noted some big differences in church life too. In India there's a 10-day celebration at each parish on its patron saint's feast day; preparation for first communion and confirmation takes weeks, not days; and the church is teeming with kids.

In Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rev. Jean-Claude Ndanga was accustomed to parishioners dancing in church during mass — which might raise eyebrows here in Canada.

To say there can be a bit of culture shock inside and outside of parish life for foreign priests is an understatement. However, the impact is eased a little by their participation in an Enculturation Program offered through Newman Theological College to international priests who serve across Western

Canada. It's roughly four weeks of classroom and practical instruction on topics ranging from Canadian and First Nations culture and church history to how to enunciate when preaching in English.

Each year, 20 to 25 priests participate in the program, which

Catholic Social Services.

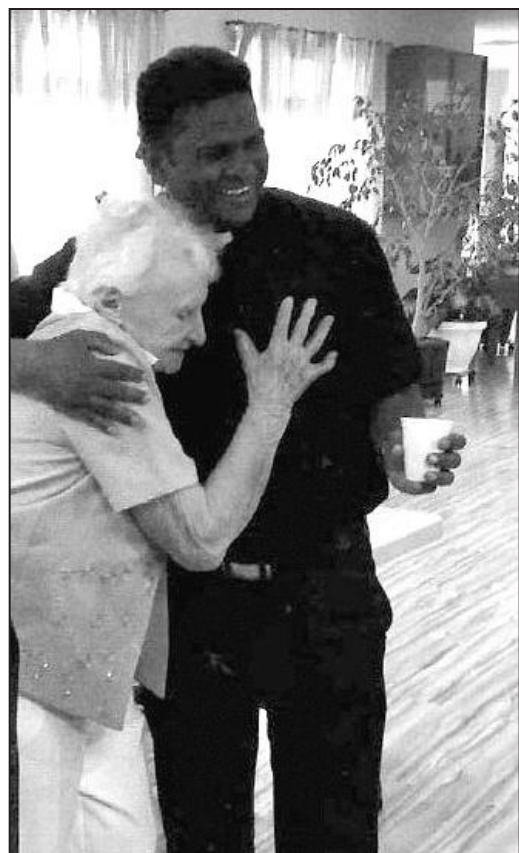
Since then, 17 dioceses in Western Canada have sent priests to Edmonton for enculturation. More than 235 priests from 22 countries have taken the program.

"Catholic churches give birth to vocations, but not enough," says Rev. Robert Gauthier, co-director of the program. "So they need to rely on foreign priests, who come here for three, four, five years."

"The program is to facilitate the transition before being launched into their parishes. You have to have an awareness of the society that you are working in."

Even though all priests share a similar theological background, there is a steep learning curve. The Enculturation Program teaches about Canadian culture, church history, and liturgical practices as well as social topics such as appropriate personal space and behaviour in a pastor that might turn Canadians off. Some of the students also gain a greater appreciation for human rights.

"Freedom is not always respected," said Ndanga, the new associate pastor at Our Lady of Angels Parish who arrived from Congo in September. "The respect for human rights is not



Alan Schietzsch

LIFE IN CANADA — Rev. Moses Savarimuthu with a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Wainwright. The priest from Trichy, India, has noted many differences in church life between his home country and Canada.

began in 2004 through the work of Rev. Jack Gallagher, who was president of Newman at the time, and Alice Colak, who was in charge of immigration and settlement with

always observed, but I see I can learn more from Canadian people. Many questions were coming into my mind about what was going to happen there. It was very, very helpful for me, because I realized that I needed to know more about Canadian people, especially their culture."

Gauthier said each individual needs to adapt to the Canadian church, just as Gauthier himself did when he was a young missionary navigating the ethnic tensions in Rwanda.

"The program doesn't prevent you from making errors, but at least you have an awareness," he said. "There is a red light that will come on in your mind, (asking) 'Is this exactly how we do things?'"

"We don't want them to become Canadian. Enculturation is not a process of denying yourself. But you understand there's part of your culture that needs adaptation to the new culture you're serving in."

In addition to classroom work at the Basilian House of Studies, priests visit Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Enoch to experience worship in an Aboriginal setting, and the Youville Seniors Home in St. Albert.

Speakers also address sensitive topics such as gender roles in Canada — which may be different in a priest's home country — as well as racism, transgender identification, and same-sex attraction.

If there are priests who are resistant to the Enculturation Program, they are a minority, Gauthier said.

"At the beginning the first presenters are bishops, in order to show to these priests that this is important. You're here and you're not wasting your time. But on the

whole, they come here motivated. They see the purpose. It's very concrete."

Gauthier describes it as a learning process that works both ways. "The adaptation is not only in one direction. The adaptation is for the priest, but the community also has to adapt."

To that end, a large part of the Enculturation Program is focused on enunciation. Priests spend more than seven three-hour sessions on accent clarity. Gauthier said it's much more important than people think, especially when preaching a homily.

"This is one of the major public challenges in their communication," Gauthier explained. "We tell them, 'Your communication has to be clear.' You could do a very substantial homily, very spiritual, but if we don't understand you, that's a major issue."

Ndanga agrees. "The biggest challenge for me is to make myself understood and welcomed by people. I know I'm not a born English man. French is my mother language."

A year after graduating from the Enculturation Program, Savarimuthu laughs, saying he's learned to keep his sermons short and to the point.

"Be brief. Be clear. Be seated! They want some jokes. It makes the priest more human."

The Enculturation Program includes a visit to Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Enoch, to observe how mass is celebrated by First Nations, and a learning session with Gary Gagnon, the Aboriginal relations co-ordinator for the Archdiocese of Edmonton.

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Alberta education minister stresses Catholic support

By Andrew Ehrkamp
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — Alberta Education Minister David Eggen offered full and vocal support for Catholic education recently, but he did little to allay concerns that the province's human sexuality education curriculum will conflict with Catholic teaching.

"As we develop the new health and wellness sexuality curriculum, we will work with all schools — including Catholic schools — to ensure we are meeting the safety standards for individuals and for our society as a whole," said Eggen, commenting at the annual meeting of Alberta Catholic school trustees.

"I know that all of us, including Catholic schools, have the health and welfare of students at their very heart. We'll work through it. I'm very confident that all of my friends here today will help us achieve that goal."

Addressing trustees from across the province, Eggen offered his government's commitment in no uncertain terms: "You have my full support as minister of education and the government of Alberta and Premier Rachel Notley to ensure the integrity of Catholic education in this province, to ensure the strength of faith-based education in this province of Alberta, and to ensure that it is fully funded through all forms of our government."

His comments came just a day

after Bishop emeritus Fred Henry of Calgary addressed the same meeting over concerns about the human sexuality curriculum currently being revised and the future of Catholic education in Alberta.

In response, Eggen said, "those naysayers shouldn't be construed as being what we feel as a government, which is to support choice in education, which includes strong Catholic education."

"We're working closely with Catholic school boards. You saw the response in the room here today. They recognize our sincerity to move forward and ensure the integrity of Catholic education every step of the way."

Eggen's statements followed a media firestorm last month after publication of a working document by Catholic superintendents that identified for government officials possible areas of concern in the human sexuality part of the health and wellness curriculum.

The superintendents said their input was meant 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, but also teach why the church opposes these measures. They would teach about different sexual orientations, but also teach the Catholic view of marriage as a sacramental bond between a man and woman.

They would teach that consent is "always necessary" in a healthy sexual relationship, and that there are also other factors to consider in sexual decision-making.

In media interviews Eggen called the document "unacceptable," and Premier Rachel Notley pledged that such ideas that "attack or hurt others" would never be taught.

Adriana LaGrange, president of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association, stressed that Catholic schools teach the full provincial curriculum in all subjects, but supplement it with a Catholic perspective, and she expects that to continue.

"We will continue to be able to teach the approved curriculum in all aspects, including health and wellness, and will also be able to supplement it with Catholic resources," LaGrange said.

The ACSTA continues to meet with Eggen and provincial education officials as they design the new curriculum, she said. Asked about the potential conflict between the new human sexuality curriculum and Catholic teaching, LaGrange said those details are still being worked out.

"We are not making any presuppositions about what will be in the curriculum. We look at what comes as it comes, and we will supplement it with our Catholic resources," she said. "We always look at our programming through our Catholic worldview."

Eggen said he doesn't anticipate any conflict, but he expects



David Eggen

all school boards to continue to teach the provincial curriculum regardless.

"I've had no problems with any of my schools, mostly, and that expectation remains the same," he said, adding "Catholic schools have been doing a good job to make sure they do teach to the curriculum and everybody is compelled to do so."

Trustees have also raised concerns about Bill 24, which would

prohibit school authorities from notifying parents of their child's involvement in a gay-straight alliance or related activities. The bill passed third and final reading this week, despite objections raised by parents, superintendents, and trustees.

The bill is expected to become law in April, and LaGrange said the ACSTA plans to work with the provincial government on implementing it.

"We haven't always seen eye to eye, but we can agree on our common goals of providing the best possible education in a welcoming, caring and safe environment for all our children, for all our students," LaGrange said.

"I believe there's always a need to be vigilant and to look at any concerns that people raise very thoughtfully. But our publicly funded Catholic education system in Alberta has been here for 170 years, and we're confident that we'll be around for another 170 years."

Eggen said the province is committed to growth, noting the Alberta government opened a record 53 new public and Catholic schools this fall.

Child poverty should be priority for government

Continued from page 1

poverty line, as well as for our entire society," said Joe Gunn, executive director of Citizens for Public Justice, a member group of Campaign 2000, and a faith-based social justice think-tank. "Poverty, beyond the statistics, represents the lives and unique experiences of our neighbours — but with a common point: the loss of access to chances of realizing not only economic potential, but human potential."

"This loss rests on individuals, but also weighs on all of society," he said. "We see more economic inequality, more societal fracturing, lessening of social confidence and success at school, higher rates of criminalization, more health problems, even financial crises hit harder. This isn't just a political issue — it is also a moral challenge."

"We call upon the government and each political party to ensure the passage of a national anti-poverty plan based on human rights, not charity," Gunn said. "It is necessary to include timetables and goals, focused on persons with a lived experience of poverty."

Entitled "A poverty-free Canada requires federal leadership," the 2017 report card offers a detailed set of recommendations for a national anti-poverty strategy with clear "targets and timelines," "developed in consultation with provincial and territorial governments," and funded in the next federal budget.

Khanna said the national strategy is necessary "to level the playing field" across the country. It also calls for consultation with First Nations leaders, and enhanced employment insurance to help with maternity leave and sick leave for those without dis-

ability insurance.

Among the recommendations: the creation of good jobs and the implementation of a \$15 minimum wage across the country; enhancing the Canada Child Benefit; increasing the Working Income Tax Benefit; a universal child care program; enhanced medical coverage to include vision, pharmacare, rehabilitation services and dental care; programs to address housing and food insecurity and income inequality.

Linda Woods, co-chair of the United Church of Canada's Bread Not Stones, a grassroots organization, told the news conference MPs and many senators would receive a "Rag Doll of Hope" to remind them of the importance of addressing child poverty.

We are asking politicians to close the funding gap to all First Nations children; to close tax havens at home and abroad to address income inequality, and to lead by example in encouraging the implementation of a \$15 minimum wage across the country, Woods said.

"They are asked to keep our children in poverty on the front burner," she said.

Though studies highlighted by Cardus Family show most families would prefer a parent or a close relative provide child care and institutional daycare is the last choice, Khanna said the call for a universal child care program is based on "world evidence" that affordable child care reduces child poverty.

Canada's child poverty rate is 17 per cent, Khanna said, meaning almost one in five children lives in poverty. Denmark's poverty rate is only five per cent, and it has affordable child care spaces. "Choice is a key component," she said.

Kindness can transform our relationships

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Kindness is a superpower with a miraculous ability to transform us and our relationships, says author Shaunti Feldhahn.

The bestselling American author of *For Women Only* and *The Kindness Challenge* was in Ottawa Nov. 17 as part of the Neejee Association for Women and Family's annual parenting seminar.

"Everyone has a relationship we would love to improve," Feldhahn said. Kindness can improve any relationship or make an already good relationship great.

Feldhahn said she began her study of kindness after speaking at a women's event in Colorado about her book *For Women Only*, which studies how men think, and "what's really important" to them but "they can't articulate."

A woman stood up in the question and answer session at this event and said, "I know you say my husband needs to know I appreciate him, and respect him. What if I don't?" she said.

Feldhahn recommended something she had learned from author Nancy Leigh DeMoss about a challenge of interacting with her husband in a different way for a period of a month.

After that conference, she outlined The 30 Day Kindness Challenge.

Three years later she was in another part of Colorado and

someone asked a similar question and she gave similar advice. The next woman who stood up, said, "If you will do what Shaunti just said, you'll find it changes everything."



CCN/D. Gyapong

Shaunti Feldhahn

It turns out it was the same woman who had asked a similar question three years previously. She told Shaunti, "Everything in me wanted to ignore everything you said."

"I did it," she said. "I had no idea it wasn't just about him. I saw things I was doing to hurt him every day."

The process started softening her heart, and eventually her husband's. Three years later, they were happily married after having been on the verge of divorce. The process didn't fix the underlying

problem or solve it, but "it made it so much easier to work on it together," Feldhahn said.

What happened in her and her husband's life was "supernatural and miraculous," Feldhahn said. "That is the power of kindness."

In order to dig out these truths Feldhahn has done eight research studies to find out the common denominator of what helps people thrive in their lives and relationships.

"How well you thrive in life is far more correlated to how you treat other people than how you are being treated," she said. "It's all about being kind."

Kindness helps make a better marriage, a better parent, and a better leader in the workplace, she said.

"There's a catch," she said. "You have to be kind when you don't want to be, when your spouse is insensitive or your boss is cruel, or your daughter is rolling her eyes at you."

"This is when it matters most and has the most power," she said.

"The problem is we already think we are kind," she said. "We think someone else needs to do this."

"We have no idea," she said. "We are completely deluded. We are not as kind as we think we are."

Kindness involves: withholding unkindness, saying kind things, and doing kind things.

In the Kindness Challenge, you say nothing negative to the person

— VENTING, page 5

Religious freedom in Canada under attack: Bennett

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Most Canadians respect religion, believe it is relevant and think it benefits society, according to a new Angus Reid Institute poll.

But despite those positive findings, religious freedom expert Andrew Bennett is worried about Canada's acceptance of religion and religious diversity.

"My fear is that increasingly the public square is becoming this gated community, where the only people who can inhabit it are those who adhere to this new type of secular orthodoxy," Bennett told *The Catholic Register*.

In a public lecture sponsored by the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute, Bennett made the case that religion in general and Christianity in particular are being shoved aside in the media, the courts and legislatures. Bennett argues religious freedom is under attack and Canadians no longer understand or respect the contributions religion has made to Canada's social fabric.

"We may not have red martyrdom in this country, but we will experience white martyrdom — shaming and disavowal," Bennett told an audience of about 40 at the annual CCBI lecture at St. Michael's College on Nov. 16.

The Angus Reid poll on Canadian attitudes toward religion surveyed 1,972 Canadian adults between Oct. 16 and 23. It found that only 14 per cent think religious contributions to public life are a bad thing and more than twice as many, 38 per cent, see religion's contribution as good. A big mushy middle of 48 per cent opt for a "mix of good and bad."

Additionally, roughly half the population believes religion remains as relevant or more relevant as ever, and a majority support maintaining tax exempt status for churches.

The poll was commissioned by the Christian think-tank Cardus for its Faith in Canada 150 project. Bennett is the law program director at Cardus and the former Canadian ambassador for religious freedom.

"You have to ask yourself when people are answering this question (about positive or nega-



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM — Andrew Bennett, Canada's former religious freedom ambassador, fears the public square is becoming increasingly cut off to religious Canadians.

tive contributions of religion), what are they imagining? What are they thinking about when they say religion?" said St. Jerome's University sociologist of religion David Seljak. "I think they're thinking about hospitals, health services, social services, education. And they're thinking about the fact that religion provides people with meaning, direction, a moral compass."

This positive assessment of religion has nothing to do with the specific moral positions of churches on end-of-life care, abortion, sexuality — most of them unpopular or misunderstood by the general population, Seljak said.

"People are less interested in what the church teaches and what theologians say," he said. "But they are appreciative of what the churches are doing."

Bennett acknowledges that most Canadians are positive about individual people of faith and religiously inspired institutions, from hospitals to universities. "My concern is at the elite level," he said.

Court rulings, new legislation and a disdainful tone in the media have conspired to marginalize traditional religious views on marriage, homosexuality, transsexuals, abortion, suicide and the permissibility of voluntary euthanasia, he said.

"Government is taking action proscribing a certain morality," said Bennett. "Both proscribing — saying that if you hold a particular moral view that is no longer

tolerant — and also prescribing a particular morality through laws on a whole range of issues."

But if Bennett feels besieged it's not because Canadians are against him, said Seljak.

"I have heard some people say that Christianity is persecuted," Seljak said. "That is again an inference that conservative Christians are picking up from the United States. Canadian Christians sometimes feel that — the dynamics of that culture war that is occurring between conservatives and liberals in the United States, between Christians and

secularists as some groups imagine. I think this poll shows that simply isn't happening."

What has changed is that under the constitutional order of the last 35 years, courts and legislatures in Canada no longer favour Christians.

"The government is refusing to legislate Christian morality and the Supreme Court has adamantly said it will basically strike down any legislation that attempts to legislate morality for individuals," Seljak said.

While Canadians tell pollsters they're in favour of religious freedom and view religion positively on a general level, they are decidedly negative on Islam. Almost half (46 per cent) told Angus Reid they view the overall presence of Islam in public life as "damaging" to Canada and Canadian society. Only 13 per cent were willing to say the tiny minority of less than four per cent of Canadians are "benefitting" Canada.

On the specific issue of Muslim women who wear veils in public, 87 per cent of Quebecers and 70 per cent of Canadians outside Quebec said they favour legislation limiting these Muslim women's access to public services and their employment in the public sector.

Both Bennett and Seljak bemoan ignorant, xenophobic attitudes toward Muslims prevalent throughout Canada.

"The root cause of people's opposition is ignorance — ignorance of what Islam is about," Bennett said.

People can't demand religious freedom for themselves and turn around and deny that same freedom to a tiny minority of new Canadians, he said.

"We have an opportunity to champion the human dignity and the religious freedom of all religious communities, including Muslims," said Bennett. "I would be a pretty funny Catholic if I was opposed to what a woman wears on her head, given religious (nuns') habits."

"Generally, people don't have complaints about their Muslim neighbours. But this mistrust occurs mostly at the level of imagination," said Seljak. "We're dealing at the mythological level."

In contrast, Catholics are the most positively viewed religious subset of Canadians. Twice as many Canadians say Catholicism is "benefitting" Canadian society (35 per cent) as those who say it is "damaging" society (17 per cent). More than half of those surveyed said they understand Catholicism either "quite well" or "very well." At the same time, 47 per cent said Catholic influence in public life is shrinking, with only five per cent saying it's on the rise.

— TAX-EXEMPT, page 17

Ethical training for nurses in short supply

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Legalized euthanasia in Canada is putting nurses — and their consciences — in tough situations, said University of Alberta nursing professor Christina Lamb.

"A lot of nurses are switching their clinical areas or even leaving the profession," said Lamb in a speech to a crowd that included medical professionals and students at the annual deVeber Lecture in Toronto Nov. 14.

Lamb is one of the few bioethicists who has studied conscientious objection and conscious objectors in depth since the law in Canada changed in 2016. Figuring out whether health systems can adapt when conscience prevents nurses from participating in so-called medical assistance in dying has to involve more than just surveys and raw numbers, Lamb said.

Lamb conducted in-depth interviews with eight Ontario nurses who objected to a procedure or a course of treatment on patients near the end of life (seven of the eight objected to euthanasia).

Their answers revealed a lot about the ethical training of nurses and the capacity of health systems to accommodate objections, said Lamb.

"This health care community is tearing apart a little bit," she said.

Ethical decisions are not frills or rare occurrences for front-line nurses, yet the state of ethical training in most nursing programs is almost haphazard, according to Lamb.

She reached back to the origins of modern nursing to point out

how central conscience is to the life and work of nurses.

"Nursing education has to be of a continuing, practical and especially moral nature," Florence Nightingale wrote in *Notes on Nursing: What Nursing Is, What Nursing is Not* in 1859. In Nightingale's day, most people thought of nurses as either drunks

research has shown that hospitals, nursing homes and other employers have been able and willing to accommodate objecting nurses, but not all nurses are confident they will get that consideration. Lamb wants employers to be more forthcoming about how they will help nurses who object to any course of treatment on moral grounds.

"We need to create morally supportive environments," she said.

As a bioethicist and nursing professor, Lamb encouraged any worried nurses in her audience to call her. "I will come talk to your managers," she said.

Nurses today are under pressure, given the rising tide of demand for medically assisted suicide from Canada's rapidly aging population of baby boomers, said second-year Ryerson nursing student Douglas Naus at the end of Lamb's lecture.

"There's definitely a fight now and more in the future," he said.

Dr. Paul Zeni, a palliative care physician in Georgetown, Ont., was happy to get an overview of conscience rights from a non-doctor in health care.

"We all have a right to be conscientious objectors," Zeni said. "We should have the support of whatever professional organization we're in."

Lamb is currently working with the Canadian Nurses Association on conscientious objection issues.



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

ETHICAL TRAINING — Nursing professor Christina Lamb delivers the annual deVeber Lecture in Toronto Nov. 14.

or prostitutes. No educated woman of standing in society was permitted to work outside the home.

If nurses today really are professionals, then they have a right to their own code of ethics which presumes they have a right to exercise their conscience, said Lamb.

For the most part, Lamb's

Venting is not healthy

Continued from page 4

and you say nothing negative to anyone else about the person, she said.

When I vent to another person about my husband or boss, "I'm sabotaging how I feel about him," she said.

Instead, you find one thing every day you can sincerely affirm and tell them, and tell somebody else, she said. And third, "you do one small act of kindness or generosity."

"You will start to see that it changes your feelings about the other person," she said.

When you start withholding the negative, "you start to see how often that kind of stuff comes out of you," she said.

Feldhahn debunked the idea that it's healthy to vent and let a little steam out of the kettle. Instead what we're doing is "turning up the heat under the pot."

Refusing to share the negative is like turning the heat down, she said.

"If you do this, you're going to start to see how often you are unkind without even intending to be," she said.

Feldhahn has targeted seven "unkindness negative patterns." They are exasperation; suspicion; sarcasm; pessimism, complaining; bitterness and anger.

The Neejee Association for Women and Family is a Catholic women's group that offers spiritual and educational support for women and families.

Hagemoen emphasizes call to live in righteousness

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — In his first homily as the bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, delivered during the Nov. 23 installation mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, Bishop Mark Hagemoen emphasized the call and the challenge to live in righteousness, following the example of Jesus Christ.

Hagemoen cited Pope Francis' message on the World Day of Consecrated Life in which he calls for overcoming "the temptation of survival (which) turns what the Lord presents as an opportunity for mission into something dangerous, threatening, potentially disastrous." Followers of Christ

are called to look deeper, and discover the hope provided by living beyond survival, said the bishop.

This is a way of life that calls for "ongoing healing," he said, expressing appreciation for his time among the indigenous peoples in the north, "for what they have taught me about faith and our common journey, of healing and growth as we come to know the heart of the one God."

Hagemoen described how his appointment to Saskatoon came unexpectedly, and there was a bittersweet quality to it as he bade farewell to the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, "where there is much work yet to do." He expressed his appreciation for the welcome and support he has

received since his appointment, and for the pastoral leadership that has formed the church in the Diocese of Saskatoon.

"I am very grateful and wish to acknowledge the pastoral leadership of this diocese's recent shepherds: Bishops James Weisgerber, Albert LeGatt, and Donald Bolen" — three of the 20 bishops attending the installation. "I come to a diocese that is in good shape, in large part because of them, and of course the excellent work of a committed and dynamic people of God."

Hagemoen asked for prayers and patience as he takes up his new role, pledging "to serve this local church to the best of my ability, with God's help."

At the conclusion of the celebration Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, the Apostolic Nuncio, brought greetings from the pope: "It is a joy for me to transmit to you as a representative of Pope Francis in Canada, the closeness, the prayers, the affection, the benediction of Pope Francis to each one of you, to the Diocese of Saskatoon and to the dioceses of all Canada."

He encouraged the diocese to welcome its new shepherd, as they have welcomed others. "This diocese, along with the wider community, has welcomed the stranger, the immigrant, and the refugee, making true the motto of the province: *Multis e gentibus vires* — from many peoples, strength."

Saskatoon is a diocese that embraced the Second Vatican Council. "It is a diocese with a tradition of healthy relations between clergy and laity, where the gifts of

laypeople have been summoned forth," the Nuncio said, turning to Hagemoen. "Please continue fulfilling this witness which I have received and which I pass on to you."

Bonazzi encouraged the diocese to continue to treasure and protect Catholic education, noting that, with the new bishop's love for education and youth, he "will accompany with great interest and support this important tool for evangelization."

Bonazzi quoted from testimony received during the time of discernment prior to Hagemoen's appointment: "One of the major social and pastoral challenges for the Diocese of Saskatoon and the upcoming bishop will be the ongoing challenge of building healthy relations with the indigenous population and guiding the church in learning to walk with indigenous people in addressing the systemic injustices and social challenges they face in Saskatchewan. This is a major challenge facing the people of Saskatchewan, and it is also a great pastoral challenge."

The Nuncio urged the faithful to continue to pursue "this mutual desire within the Catholic Church, within society and within the indigenous population — this desire for a new friendship, this process of reconciliation — that it may grow for the benefit of all."

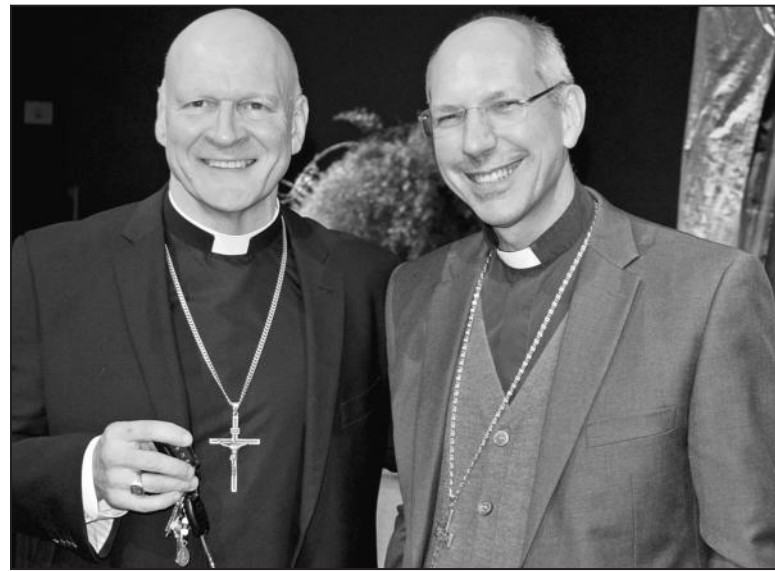
Rev. Kevin McGee addressed the new bishop on behalf of the people of the diocese. "As we began our celebration this evening



Kiply Yaworski

GIFTS FROM THE DIOCESE — Bishop Mark Hagemoen holds up a Saskatchewan Roughriders jersey presented by Christine Scherr of the Catholic Pastoral Centre, one of two gifts presented to the new bishop by the Diocese of Saskatoon to mark his installation Nov. 23. The other gift is the sponsorship in his honour of a day at Friendship Inn Dec. 8.

you were welcomed by a number of individuals and groups who represent the diversity of our diocese and the unique gifts and culture of the province of Saskatchewan," he said. "Many hands extended themselves. From this moment on, these and many more hands will extend themselves to you and invite you into their lives as our shepherd. You will find much support here. You will be much loved. And I assure you that, wherever you go, you will find an open door."



Kiply Yaworski

PASSING THE KEYS — Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina (right), former bishop of Saskatoon, presents a symbolic set of keys to Bishop Mark Hagemoen during a dinner held before the installation mass Nov. 23 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Lack of love behind assisted suicide

By Paul Paproski, OSB

HUMBOLDT, Sask. — The legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia in Canada is more a sign of a culture dying for lack of love than a nation being open to choice, said Jackie Saretsky at a "Dying Healed" workshop held Nov. 15 - 16 at St. Augustine parish hall in Humboldt. The sick and the elderly may actually have less choice and feel pressure to end their lives prematurely, said Saretsky, chaplaincy co-ordinator with the Diocese of Saskatoon.

Modern attitudes about independence and success have led many to believe that their lives are worthless or have less value as they age or become ill. People feel they have become burdens to their families or society when they are unable to work or need the assistance of others. Saretsky recalled a conversation with a patient who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and was terrified at the thought of needing help to bathe or use the bathroom. The idea of wearing a diaper was humiliating.

"At what point in life do we become undignified?" Saretsky asked.

She is aware of another person who had been recommended for euthanasia after being misdiagnosed. The family was aware of the doctor's mistake, but did not report it.

The legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide is being inter-

preted by some as proof that humans have less dignity as they age, contract a terminal illness, or suffer from depression or some other debilitating illness. When conditions seem hopeless, people feel pressure to choose death. The decision to end a life becomes easier to accept when it is softened by



Paul Paproski, OSB

Jackie Saretsky

terms such as "dying with dignity." Death may appear to be the only option for people who are vulnerable, isolated, or alone and unable to express their fears and needs.

Physical pain can make life unbearable, especially when the situation seems hopeless. The issue is the pain and how to control it. Health care must be designed to relieve pain and not kill the person.

Palliative care is centred on helping ease pain, Saretsky said. It cannot end all suffering, but it is a way of affirming life. It is only a small percentage of people who suffer from intractable pain.

Caregivers can make a tremendous difference for people who are facing life-changing illnesses by offering a loving presence and affirming their dignity and worth, Saretsky said. "Volunteers need to witness to the fact that those with poor physical or mental conditions are wanted, loved, possess dignity, and deserve respect. The sick are an integral part of our human family, precisely because they call us to compassion."

Suffering and end-of-life situations can be meaningful because they bring people to reflect on choices they have made in the past. Acknowledging previous failures and conflicts can bring healing and forgiveness. Spiritual healing is possible when one surrenders to the past and prepares for the next life with God.

Palliative care volunteers "have the opportunity to be a part of that healing process by reminding the suffering of their worth and dignity," she said. "The suffering person, through humiliation and powerlessness, may understand for the first time that dignity is not connected to autonomy."

The very presence of compassionate volunteers will communicate the value of the suffering person.

Sister Winifred dies

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Sister Margaret Winifred Brown, known to students and friends as Sister Winifred, died peacefully Nov. 8 at the Santa Maria Senior Citizens Home in Regina, where she had been living as well as dedicating service and care to the residents.

Sister Winifred was born and raised in Estlin, a village about 10 kilometres southeast of Regina. She attended high school at Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox, Sask., then joined the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM) in 1946. Over the years she served in local and national leadership roles as well as General Secretary of her community in Rome.

She earned her BA and master's degrees from Notre Dame College at the University of Ottawa, and a BED from the University of Manitoba. Her career in education spanned some 23 years, beginning with Lebreton High School, then Sacred Heart Academy and Marian High School in Regina, where she served as vice-principal and principal.

Deeply involved in her religious community, Sister Winifred also served on a number of Regina archdiocesan committees. She was a recipient of the pontifical medal *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* for her service to the church.

The Resurrection Mass was celebrated Nov. 14 at Christ the King Church in Regina, with Winnipeg Archbishop Emeritus James V. Weisgerber presiding.



RNDM

Sister Winifred Brown, RNDM

Anglicans and Catholics meet for workshop

By Joanne Shurvin-Martin

REGINA — More than two dozen representatives from Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes across southern Saskatchewan met Nov. 19 for a workshop, in which they shared stories of ecumenical action in their areas and learned about Anglican and Roman Catholic dialogues at national and international levels.

Rev. Rick Krofchek, a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant Implementation Committee (ARCCIC), opened the gathering with prayer in the hall attached to St. Paul's Cathedral. Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen then recounted how the covenant between the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle and the Archdiocese of Regina had come to be: it was built on relationships that had been developing since the 1960s, he explained, and was signed in January 2011.

Bolen has been involved in ecumenical relations at all levels, including the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity at the Vatican from 2001 to 2008. "We were created for community, with God and with one another," he said, adding that the ecumenical work in Saskatchewan is "a good example for the rest of the country, although we still have more to do."

Susan Klein, co-chair of ARCCIC, said they were encouraged to start small — "You can't do everything at once" — but she has been surprised by how much has been accomplished already, with many parishes working together in a variety of ways.

Recent actions in the town of Qu'Appelle were presented as a case study. Chad Geis of Immaculate Conception Parish, and



Joanne Shurvin-Martin

ARCCIC — Co-chairs Susan Klein and Canon Michael Jackson describe the many joint activities initiated by the Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant Implementation Committee at a workshop for parish representatives held in Regina Nov. 19.

Eileen Herman and Bruce Farrer of the Anglican churches in Qu'Appelle and Vernon, described how the Roman Catholic parish has come to worship in the Anglican building of St. Peter, Qu'Appelle. When faced with costly repairs to their building, Immaculate Conception parishioners had several options: travel to Indian Head to worship, hold services in the local seniors' centre, or use the Anglican building.

"I'm glad we chose St. Peter's," said Geis. "It's worked out well. They've been extraordinarily welcoming."

Herman and Farrer described what their congregation had to do — chiefly, adjusting their own schedule in order to fit the Catholic services in. Minor alterations were made to the lectern to fit a larger book, and hymn boards were added. The changing service schedule has meant that some people have come to

church at the wrong time, but they often stay for whatever service is being celebrated, and have learned that there are many similarities in the two traditions. ARCCIC member Susan Rollins of Plain and Valley Parish, Lumsden, commented that people get attached to their church buildings, "but if we are worshipping God, we can do that anywhere."

Elsewhere, there have been many examples of the churches working together, sometimes with other communities. Many parishes have held joint events, including programs and special services during Advent and Lent, delegations attending each other's services, vacation Bible schools, and prayer services, especially during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Other examples include a joint marriage preparation course, potluck dinners, youth groups, and events focusing on First Nations.

At the diocesan level, there have been annual joint prayer services, with the 2018 service planned for May 13, with Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon as the homilist, at St. Paul's Cathedral in Regina. Joint workshops for intercessors and lectors have been well attended, and deacons from both traditions have attended various gatherings and programs.

Anglican delegations attended the funeral of Archbishop Daniel Bohan and the installation of Archbishop Donald Bolen. The episcopal ordination of Anglican Bishop Rob Hardwick was held at Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, with Bohan and other clergy attending. ARCCIC also sponsored a workshop on indigenous ministry, with Rev. Dale Gillman and Sister ReAnne Létourneau.

St. Mary's Anglican in Regina, with the help of Holy Family Parish, organized a study evening on the place of Mary in the two traditions. Keynote speaker was Brett Salkeld, archdiocesan theologian, who based his talk on the 2005 international ARCCIC agreed statement, "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ."

ARCCIC member Nick Jesson, ecumenical officer for the Archdiocese of Regina, placed the

local covenant in the international and national context. He pointed out that, when it comes to theological issues, Anglicans and Roman Catholics "are a lot farther along than some other denominations. For example, we don't have to discuss baptism or the Creed, because we are already in agreement."

Jesson discussed the first agreed statement — on the eucharist — which was issued in 1971, and was followed by statements on ordination and ministry, authority in the church, and, most recently, the statement on Mary. Jesson provided handouts with excerpts from the statements and the history of the many documents prepared by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission and the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM), which is a joint commission of the Anglican Communion and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Bolen is international co-chair of IARCCUM.

Toward the end of the workshop, Canon Michael Jackson, ARCCIC co-chair, led a tour of the Anglican cathedral, which was followed by mid-day prayers. Archdeacon Catherine Harper offered a closing prayer.

Prayers in many languages

Continued from page 1

greeted the new bishop, accompanied by Carol Zubiak of the Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation (DCTR). Other DCTR members present were Parish Life Director Debbie Ledoux, Elder Michael Maurice, and Elder Gayle Weenie of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

Representing the laity were Caitlin and Graham Hill and their six children, while religious were represented by Sisters Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, and Dolores Bussière, FDL, Brother Kurt Van Kuren, OSB, and Rev. Iheanyi Enwerem, OP.

Representatives from other Catholic rites brought greetings as well, including Rev. Janko Kolosnjaji, vicar-general for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon; Kaesir Istifo of the Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic community; and Rev. Anthony Plagen of the Syro-Malabar Catholic community.

Several people came forward representing Catholic education and health care, including Dr. Terrence Downey of St. Thomas More College; Diane Boyko and Greg Chatlain of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS); David Hardy of the GSCS Foundation; Jim Anderson and Vicky Serblowski of St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission; Robert Harasymchuk of St. Peter's College; Scott Irwin of Emmanuel Care; and Sandra Kary of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan.

Bishop Sid Haugen of the Saskatchewan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Rev. G. Scott Pittendrigh of the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon, and David Smith and Jeromey Martini of the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Commission for Com-

munion Witness also came forward to greet the bishop. Ron and Jan Gitlin of Congregation Agudas Israel brought greetings, as did Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark, representing elected officials across the diocese.

Diversity was the hallmark of the prayers of the faithful, which were presented in Cree, French, English, German, Tagalog (Philippines), Vietnamese, Spanish, Bari (South Sudan), Ukrainian, and Polish. Leading the music for the celebration was the diocesan choir, with members of other parishes and groups from across the diocese.

Hagemoen gave the homily and Bonazzi spoke at the conclusion of the celebration. Some 1,200 people were in attendance, and the mass was live-streamed on the diocesan website.

Events earlier in the day included a meeting between the apostolic nuncio and the clergy of the diocese, and an installation dinner that began with Chief Gil Ledoux of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and his wife, Debbie Ledoux, extending a welcome to Treaty 6 territory. Sister Teresita Kambeitz said grace before the meal.

During the program, Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB, expressed thanks to McGee for his 13 months of service as diocesan administrator. Winnipeg Archbishop Richard Gagnon brought greetings on behalf of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the bishop's brother, Dan Hagemoen, spoke on behalf of the family. Bolen welcomed Hagemoen with a symbolic "passing of the keys."

Two gifts were presented on behalf of the diocese: sponsorship of a day of meals at Friendship Inn, and a Saskatchewan Roughriders jersey presented by Christine Scherr of the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

Missionary society serving P.A. diocese

By Donald Ward with Renee Hammer

PARADISE HILL, Sask. — In August 2014, Renee Hammer knew very little about Nigeria and had no clue what "MSP" stood for. Her small parish in the Prince Albert diocese had not had a resident priest since 1985, and the rectory had been converted to a gathering place for catechism and fellowship. They had never had a parish secretary, but as secretary of the parish council, Hammer offered her services.

"MSP," she learned, stands for the Missionary Society of St. Paul, a society of apostolic life founded in response to Pope Paul VI's call for the African church to "become a missionary church," as the Holy Father proposed in his pilgrim visit to Uganda in 1969. Seven years later, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria established the National Missionary Seminary of St. Paul.

"It is timely," wrote the society's founder, Cardinal Dominic Ekandem, in 1976. "The church in Nigeria, by reason of her bright future in vocations, has a responsibility toward the whole of Africa to bring the Good News to all places on the continent, and even further afield."

"Further afield" turned out to be Paradise Hill, a village of some 500 souls in the Diocese of Prince Albert. One of its chief attractions is Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, which was decorated by the German artist Berthold Imhoff early in the 20th century. In 2014, Rev. Peter Nnanga, MSP, arrived as the new pastor.

Nnanga brought to the parish a new spirit of prayer and participation. With his love of music and his community mindedness, he easily blended in, and his desire to spend time with parishioners was heartening — though they were startled by his decision to live in the old rectory, when he could have shared accommodations with another priest in a modern rectory in a neighbouring parish. With labour and prayer, however, the building was made ready for occupancy, and Nnanga soon made it into a home.

The rectory served as both the priest's residence and the parish office, and was used for meetings, Bible study, office work, and fellowship. Conversations there were marked by "laughter and encouragement," Hammer recalled. The priest readily shared his love of his homeland and his love of the work of his missionary society.

As parish secretary, Hammer

worked alongside Nnanga, and it was natural that she would develop an interest in the Missionary Society of St. Paul. She was encouraged to get involved, and willingly assisted the priest as he and his fellow missionaries worked toward establishing a Canadian mission that would no longer be under the jurisdiction of the United States leadership.

To the disappointment of his parishioners, Nnanga was called to serve as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Spiritwood after only a year at Paradise Hill. As Nnanga had begun his mission work in the diocese, however, Hammer had embarked on a journey of her own — one that eventually led her to join the Associate Missionaries of St. Paul (AMSP) in the newly formed MSP Canada Mission.

"From all I had seen and experienced with the priests of the Missionary Society of St. Paul — their commitment to their parishioners, leading by example with faith and humility — I wanted to do what I could to assure that their mission continued," she said.

The inaugural mass of the MSP Canada Mission was celebrated by Prince Albert Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., at St. Joseph Calasancius Church in North Battleford on Jan. 25, 2017.

Scientists worldwide echo pope's global warning

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

More than 15,000 scientists worldwide, including more than 500 Canadians, have issued a "Warning to Humanity" that parallels concerns raised by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

Global ecosystems are reaching their limits and in some cases collapse has already begun, according to the World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice published Nov. 13 by the Alliance of World Scientists in the journal *BioScience*.

"Humanity is not taking the urgent steps needed to safeguard our imperilled biosphere," said the warning, which came with nine graphs outlining the collapse of species, denuding of forests, exponential growth in oceanic dead zones, rising levels of carbon in the Earth's atmosphere and our warming global climate.

"I see great parallels between the *Laudato Si'* (encyclical of Pope Francis) and our scientists' warning to humanity," Oregon State University forestry professor William Ripple told *The Catholic Register*. "Additionally, I see the pope's document as being very important in helping make progress on global environmental and climate issues."

Ripple was one of the principle organizers and authors of "Warning to Humanity." The document follows a similar 1992 warning issued by the Union of Concerned Scientists and signed by 1,575 researchers, including 99 of the 196 Nobel laureates living at that time.

The new warning calls it "a moral imperative" that world leaders, legislators, business, the media and ordinary citizens take immediate action on the environment.

None of the information in the Alliance of World Scientists' warning should come as a surprise, especially to those Catholics who have paid any attention at all to Pope Francis on the issue, said Jesuit scientist Rev. John McCarthy.



CNS/Rebecca Naden, Reuters

GLOBAL WARNING — "Humanity is not taking the urgent steps needed to safeguard our imperilled biosphere," said World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice published Nov. 13, which came with nine graphs outlining the collapse of species, denuding of forests, exponential growth in oceanic dead zones, rising levels of carbon in the Earth's atmosphere and our warming global climate.

"It supports *Laudato Si'* quite a bit — chapter one of *Laudato Si'*, which really takes the science seriously," McCarthy said. "The authors here use the word 'home' too."

The pope subtitled his 2015 encyclical "On Care for Our Common Home."

But the pope and the scientists part company on population. The scientific consensus is that the Earth can sustain no more than 15 billion human beings. The global population stands at 7.4 billion and has increased 35 per cent in the last 25 years. The scientists recommend "further reducing fertility rates by ensuring that women and men have access to education and voluntary family planning services, especially where such resources are still lacking."

While Pope Francis does not dispute the science on sustainable population densities, he abhors the rich world tendency to blame the poor and dictate family size to distant people and cultures.

"Attention needs to be paid to

imbalances in population density, on both national and global levels," Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si'*. "To blame population growth, instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority be-

lieves that it has the right to consume in a way that can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption."

Ripple sees room for dialogue between the church and science on the question of population.

"There should be room for dialogue within and between groups,"

he said. "One of the main goals of our paper is to trigger a global discussion and debate at many different levels on how humanity, in a sustainable way, can move forward for the benefit of all life on Earth."

Science alone can't answer all the questions or provide people with a framework for a meaningful, fulfilled life in a post-consumerist world, said McCarthy.

"It's almost like an anthropology we're trying to craft. What does it mean to be human? Human in a context of a wider world or natural world?" said McCarthy. "The fact is that now you have this kind of human-dominated world and we're kind of recognizing that — we're recognizing the limitations of it in some ways. Once you focus too much on yourself, if you become the centre of the garden if you will — well, you get exiled from the garden in Genesis."

How people can live a meaningful life while consuming less and living in greater harmony with their environment aren't questions science can fully answer, which is why *Laudato Si'* goes on for five more chapters after it acknowledges the scientific facts in chapter one, said McCarthy.

"*Laudato Si'* is much more radical in the sense of including all this but going beyond it in a much deeper and fuller way," McCarthy said.

Nuncio: mercy is rooted in dialogue

By Veronique Demers

QUEBEC CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis' representative to Canada said diplomats today "are called to be peacemakers, in a sincere dialogue."

In a talk at Laval University Nov. 14, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, apostolic nuncio, stressed that pontifical diplomacy aims at serving humanity, trying to be a united family.

He said mercy is rooted in a culture of dialogue, which must be fostered in any peace process. Bonazzi quoted Pope Francis' 2016 meeting in Havana with Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow; the meeting led to important advances in Catholic-Orthodox dialogue.

"The church does not exist to promote itself, but to collaborate with the faithful and realize the aspiration of its founder, Jesus. We must look at humanity through mercy," he said.

Bonazzi and Anne Leahy, Canadian ambassador at the Holy See from 2008 to 2012, spoke about the role of the Vatican in international diplomacy.

"Peace and security between nations is paramount. But diplomacy is much broader than that," said Leahy, now professor at the School of Religious Studies at McGill University in Montreal.

Bonazzi said the Vatican is trying to deploy its human resources to bring comfort and consolation in countries where it has diplomatic relations, in addition to having, when necessary, a mediation role, he said.

Such is the case with the crises

Demers is journalist with Presence info, based in Montreal.



CNS/Philippe Vaillancourt, Presence

MERCY AND DIALOGUE — In a talk at Laval University Nov. 14, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, apostolic nuncio to Canada, stressed that pontifical diplomacy aims at serving humanity, trying to be a united family.

in Congo, said Bonazzi, acknowledging that Congolese bishops were unable to achieve conclusive results as mediators.

The mandate of Congolese President Joseph Kabila expired last December. Since then, elections have been delayed. This postponement has increased tension and anger in the country, while violence continues in the regions of Kasai and Kivu.

"We could not continue the dialogue in these conditions. There was a withdrawal, but not abandonment. The elections will be held in December 2018," said Bonazzi.

He said the nuncio to the Congo recently reminded people that elections must be held before Pope Francis would visit the country.

Bonazzi also noted that good international relations cannot be dominated by military force.

"No nation deserves that. Pope Francis likes to practise unarmed diplomacy," he insisted before reaf-

firming the Vatican's commitment against nuclear weapons. "Weapons are not the way to resolve a conflict. Pope Francis wants to recall that war leads to death and destruction. He invites rich countries to unite with weaker ones and invest in health and education instead of the arms industry."

Questioned about a possible papal trip to Saskatchewan, where Pope Francis has been invited to meet with members of the First Nations, Bonazzi replied that the Holy See "is waiting for the right moment." He said the invitation by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Canadian church authorities was received with "with appreciation and consideration."

"At the end of the month, the Holy Father will be in Myanmar and Bangladesh, where there is no prosperity. He has the desire to repair the wounds of the past, to bring healing and to meet the needs of young and old," he added.

National conference highlights value of liturgy

By Agnieszka Krawczynski
The B.C. Catholic

RICHMOND, B.C. (CCN) — Liturgies and rites are essential in helping Catholics understand who they are, according to liturgy expert Rev. Michael McGourty.

"As people drive by a church, they see the brick and the mortar and they are reminded that there is a community there that makes Christ present," McGourty said at a National Liturgical Conference hosted in Vancouver Nov. 6 - 7.

"So, too, we are reminded that we are to be signs of Christ's presence in the world."

An Ontario priest and professor of liturgy, McGourty led about 120 conference participants through the rite of the dedication of a church and what it means for parishes.

The "beautiful ritual" marks a building as a sacred space, meant for celebrating the sacraments and sending the faithful out on a mission of evangelism, he said.

"By the experience of this ritual, the community is reminded that they are called to live in communion with God and the church is to have, as its final goal, salvation."

Symbols involved in the rite, including anointing the altar with holy oil, blessing the baptismal font, and placing relics in the altar, all point to that reality. "The ritual has made of our building a sign that reminds us who we are."

He added that liturgies themselves do not bring about holiness. "Our holiness is based on the fact that Christ is the cornerstone around whom the entire church arises and is defined."

About 120 priests, deacons, and lay faithful from across Canada arrived in Richmond for the conference, hosted at the Marriott Hotel.

"It's a really excellent conference," said Patty Fowler, a member of the National Council for

— HYMNAL, page 9

Met Museum embraces the art of Catholic fashion

By Meggie Hoegler
The Catholic Register

Catholicism and its fashion have fascinated the secular media for decades.

In last year HBO's TV series *The Young Pope*, several lavish

costumes were used to highlight the extravagance of the fictional young pope played by Jude Law.

Now New York is getting on-board. The theme for the 2018 Met Gala, a high-profile fundraising event hosted annually by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is

"Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination."

Celebrities will take inspiration for their wardrobes from Catholic vestments, robes, clerical clothing, artifacts and artwork spanning nearly 2,000 years.

According to *Vogue*, the gala will "highlight the enduring influence of religion and liturgical vestments on fashion."

Indre Cuplinskas, a pro-

fessor at St. Joseph's College at the University of Alberta, equates the fashion industry's fascination with Catholicism to how vestments were once modelled after the luxurious and dramatic attire of European kings and emperors.

"If you look back at early liturgical garb from the Middle Ages, it was taken from secular rulers. The Catholic Church itself is a very sensuous church. It is sacramental. Beauty is a part of how we honour and worship God," said Cuplinskas, who teaches Christian history at St. Joseph's in Edmonton.

"There are other sectors of Christianity which are very skeptical about ornaments and adornments. If you look at Old Order Mennonites, they don't even wear buttons because it is too prideful. The Catholic Church has over 1,500 years worth of ornamentation that in and of itself is art."

Similar to how trends come and go in the fashion industry, pastoral vestments and clothing have changed over the years. Following Vatican II, attire in the 1960s became less ornate and more practical.

"Along with a simplification of mass came a simplification of vestments," said Cuplinskas. "For instance, the papal tiara has not been worn since Pope Paul VI in 1963."

The papal tiara is a large headpiece once placed on the heads of popes at their coronation. The tiara comprised three layers of gemstones symbolizing the powers as priest, prophet and king. While Pope Paul VI's tiara weighed only two pounds, the papal tiara donated by Napoleon I to Pope Pius VII in 1804 weighed upwards of 18 pounds.



CNS/Paul Haring

Pope emeritus Benedict XVI smiles while wearing a red hat known as a saturno.

Colour also plays a significant role in church fashion. The colour worn by clergy still indicates their place in church hierarchy.

"If you go to the Vatican in 2017, you can still figure out who is who and what their rank is based off of what colour they are wearing," said Cuplinskas.

For instance, a Cappello romano, the once popular hat with a wide brim, comes in different colours — red for cardinals, green for patriarchs, bishops and archbishops, violet for monsignors and simple black or white for priests.



CAPPA MAGNA — Cardinal Raymond Burke wears a cappa magna (literally, "great cape") in this uncredited 2014 photo. A form of mantle, it is a voluminous ecclesiastical vestment with a long train, proper to cardinals, bishops, and certain other honorary prelates. It is hardly ever worn.

While Catholic fashion has significance, clerical attire is not regarded as a sacred object, which is perhaps why the Vatican was open to the idea of a Catholic-themed celebrity function.

Following the gala evening on April 30, the Met Museum will present an exhibition of papal robes and accessories, with items on loan from the Vatican.

"There's an important distinction between symbols and clothing," said Cuplinskas. "In terms of appropriation and disrespecting the Catholic religion, I would find it more significant if people were disrespecting symbols relating directly to God and Christ."

"That being said, I don't expect attendees to be particularly knowledgeable about the significance of Catholic vestments. I think some people will want to play with the theme and shock audiences."

In 2015, the theme for the Met Gala was "China: Through the Looking Glass." The night generated considerable controversy surrounding cultural appropriation and stereotyping of Chinese culture. Celebrities wore kimonos, ornate headpieces and carried jewelled dragon evening bags. Pop singer Rihanna was the only celebrity

who was applauded for honouring the culture. Her yellow silk gown was created by Chinese designer, Guo Pei.

The last celebrity to create major controversy over adaptation of church practices was American rap singer Nicki Minaj. At the 2012 Grammy Awards she performed an offensive skit that included a mock confession, on-stage exorcism and backup dancers dressed as choir boys and monks. She was accompanied to the event by a date dressed as a priest.

Cuplinskas predicts some

Catholics will be offended by the attire some celebrities choose to wear to next May's gala. But overall she thinks the gala and the exhibit are a good thing.



CNS/Paul Haring

A priest wears a biretta with a magenta pompom.

"I tend to look at these kinds of things as opportunities," she says. "People will have a chance to see real vestments and history from the Vatican."

The general exhibit will be open to the general public from May 10 to Oct. 8.

"I cannot predict what the designers are going to do," said Cuplinskas, "but I think there is potential to celebrate the beauty within our church."

When it comes to the church in the media, Sister Helena Burns' philosophy is that all publicity is good publicity.

"It is usually a good thing when the secular world even cares about what the church is doing," said the Toronto-based Pauline sister. "It's when they stop showing you, when we disappear from the media, then I am concerned."

Cuplinskas tends to agree.

"The Catholic Church does not separate itself from the rest of the world, we're very involved," said Cuplinskas. "When you're involved like that, you're always at risk for being misunderstood, but at least you are present."



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

'HEAVENLY BODIES' — An oil on canvas painting, Cardinal Fernando Niño de Guevara (1541 - 1609), by El Greco, circa 1600. It is one of the featured artworks in an exhibition under the 2018 Met Gala theme "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination."

New hymnal expected

Continued from page 8

Liturgical Music and an organist from St. John's, N.L.

"It's giving a real theological underpinning to the whole idea of who we are as church, who we are as temples of the living God. We are a sign of God in our world and we are to be sent."

She added she's looking forward to a new Canadian Catholic hymnal, expected as early as 2018.

"It's important when people take hold of the liturgy and make it our own," said Rev. Jim Richards, a participant and priest from the Diocese of Halifax-Yarmouth.

He said it's important to discuss the relationship between church rites and the people who participate in them. "They are all about being part of the universal church."

The two-day national conference, put on by the National Liturgy Office of the Canadian Con-

ference of Catholic Bishops, came to a climax with mass at Canadian Martyrs Church in Richmond and a banquet at the parish hall.

In his homily, Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, challenged participants to actively respond to the call to evangelism.

"The question for us to ponder is twofold: how am I responding to the Lord's call to celebrate eucharist: Am I indifferent? Do I come lackadaisically and unprepared? And second, do I go out to invite others, those on the periphery, to mass? When was the last time I invited someone to come to church with me?"

He said people with a heart for liturgy should lead evangelizing initiatives.

"To celebrate the sacred mysteries with beauty and authenticity, with God's grace we must do all we can to ensure that the banquet hall is full, for the Lord's invitation extends to everyone."

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The colour purple, for those far from home

By Caitlin Ward

I’ve been sorting Skittles the past few nights. That’s not a metaphor. Literally, I’ve been sorting Skittles. My sister who once again cannot come home for Christmas mentioned a few weeks ago how Skittles were making her homesick. In England, purple candy is usually black-currant flavoured, whereas here it is grape-flavoured, so when she has Skittles in England, every purple Skittle is a reminder that she’s not in Saskatoon.

On the one hand, this sounds sweet and sad, but if you knew my

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

sister you would know that her homesickness can manifest itself as blind rage, so it’s often as funny as it is poignant to hear her rail against purple candy, the abundance of instant coffee, or how

I’ll Be Home for Christmas
Bing Crosby

everyone stops in the road without reference to other people.

Culture shock manifests itself in the strangest ways, sometimes. It’s not the accents, the buildings, the money, or even the weather; it’s the purple candy that doesn’t taste like grape, and the eight-day wait for a temporary parking permit, and the marshmallows that are made with sugar instead of corn syrup, and the perogies that aren’t in the freezer section of the

grocery store. It’s that everything is a little different no matter what, that you are always not from there, and for God’s sake, why does the sun set so early here?

There’s something a little uncomfortable about your existence all of the time when you’re an immigrant. There’s something slightly off. There are always the subtle but constant reminders that, no matter how long you live there, and my sister has lived in England for half her adult life, you are not from there. This is not home.

This feeling gets a bit stronger for my sister around the high holidays. High holidays revolve around family, and for us, around church, as well. Many of my more vivid memories are wrapped up in those times: me, at four, taking the brass bell my sister picked off the tree at St. Phillip Neri Parish and brought to me because I was stuck at home

with the chicken pox on Christmas morning; standing around the Advent wreath every evening singing “O Come O Come Emmanuel”; going over to my grandma’s house for the Feast of the Holy Family, because we’d had her over for Christmas the week before; breaking down crying in the chapel at St. Peter’s Abbey at the age of 18 or 19 on Good Friday because I really understood, for the first time, what we were commemorating that day.

Time telescopes and it sutures on high holidays, and on Christmas Day we are not just celebrating this year, but also remembering every year that we have celebrated. Our family traditions become rituals that dovetail with the church’s, and it’s a reminder not only of Christ, but of each other.

So I’ve been sorting Skittles. Every year they can’t come home to visit, along with presents from Etsy or Amazon, I send my sister and brother-in-law foods that are hard to come by in England: the cheese packets from boxes of Kraft Dinner, a family-size pack of Bridge Mixture, Cheezies, Kraft peanut butter (smooth, not crunchy), root beer syrup to mix with sparkling water, and this year, a bag of purple Skittles. I picked out the purple ones from six mega packs of Skittles, and put them all in a freezer bag in a box bound for St. Alban’s, Great Britain.

I’ve learned a few things about Skittles in the past week: one, purple candy is seriously underrepresented in most packets of Skittles. I have a two-litre Glad freezer container full of red, orange, yellow, and green Skittles. At best, I have a mediocre-sized bag of purple Skittles. I am tempted to buy more so the bag I send my sister is a more

reasonable size, but that brings me to point two: it is surprisingly hard to give away Skittles. I tell my Ukrainian Catholic friends they’re vegan, so they aren’t breaking the Nativity fast. I tell everyone else that they’re free, and they’re sweet, and who doesn’t want candy? It gets me nowhere. I still have a two litre freezer container full of every kind of Skittle except purple. I’m beginning to wonder if everyone secretly likes the grape Skittles the

I’ll be home for Christmas
You can count on me
Please have snow
And mistletoe
And presents ’neath the tree

Christmas eve will find me
Where the love light gleams
I’ll be home for Christmas
If only in my dreams

Christmas eve will find me
Where the love light gleams
I’ll be home for Christmas
If only in my dreams

best, and they’re resentful I’m trying to force subpar Skittles on them. To be honest, grape Skittles are probably my favourite flavour next to orange ones, so I don’t entirely blame them.

So instead I eat handfuls of Skittles for breakfast along with my coffee. I eat Skittles before bed and try to brush them out of my teeth with limited success. I have grown to hate Skittles on some level, except that I don’t, quite. I know that at some point, in January, they will be a source of comfort for my sister when she’s sad she couldn’t come home for Christmas once again this year.



THE COLOUR PURPLE — Purple Skittles don’t taste the same in every country, and the difference in flavour can trigger intense homesickness.

Books

Book is a journal of a poet in love with creation

DECOYS by William Robertson. Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 2017. Softcover, 80 pages, \$17.95. Reviewed by Edwin Buettner.

William Robertson is a Saskatchewan writer, reviewer, broadcaster, and university teacher. In this collection of well-crafted and easily accessible poems, Robertson invites his reader on a kind of exploratory hike guided by verse that “goes down easy.”

This book is the journal of a poet in love with creation. At times, however, one can sense a degree of tension, if not guilt, between the intimacies of the poet’s heart-knowing and his impressive taxonomic knowledge of the natural world: “. . . time was, birds were all just birds / undifferentiated animals that flew and made / noise above till someone had to name them” (*Bush League Adam*). Evoking the Book of Genesis, it seems, for Robertson, “naming” is risky in that, unchecked, it leads to greater alienation from nature and even other people. For example, in *Taxonomy*, a local girl returns from university armed with “new names for old things.” This newfound power leads to a rift in relationship when she says hurtful things to a beloved elderly uncle. Her insensitivity “wip(ed) the smile off his face with her word . . . / she tells him, use the proper word, and feels the first little hurt / of loneliness”

Robertson takes many opportunities to give the lie to humanity’s bold pretense of “ownership” applied to the natural world. In *Any Tree*, he poignantly captures nature’s inexorable triumph: “. . . a farm gone back to ground, the trees still / hanging on to their human roots, planted / by hand against the long view of open ground.” Yet the poet intimates that there exists a deeper and more authentic kind of ownership: “In my small town I own / so much more of the

moon” (*Trespassing*).

Many of the poems in this collection explore points of tension among nature, humanity, and technology. There is a comfortable reciprocity in some, while others bristle with the energy of conflict. For example, *Brook Trout* touches on the complexities of the human/nature relationship involved in the act of fishing. Initially, the “fish wasn’t going to be interested / in what I was throwing at it,” yet it eventually takes the bait and things escalate to a pitched battle. Though ultimately victorious, the fisher pays silent homage to the spent warrior he has landed: “I fall/before it. muddy bloody crazy / both worn out, I rub away the muck / to shine its silver.”

Robertson understands that poetry is most effective when its focus is on the particulars — a thing’s distinctiveness — details that elude the non-poetic eye and ear. His work fairly teems with expressions of the exquisite uniqueness of things: “the hard denim edge / of a pocket”; “boathouse with its leaky canoe, crazy tools / and milk cartons of old records”; “Robins . . . / redbreasts puffed with lust.” In sharp relief, the “local guys” in *Not Saying a Word*, reveal a certain blindness when they refer to an injured moose as “just one / of thousands on this island.”

While evocative of an intricate arc of spiritual connection between humanity and nature, these poems are solidly grounded in ordinary reality. Like St. Francis of Assisi, Robertson views the natural world as revelatory of a creative and loving force that infuses all things: “. . . the same thing that guides / the fish . . . tells us who to seek out / and love.” As above, so below.

Foreign priests face isolation, homesickness

Continued from page 3

Gauthier says: “If you want to serve people from First Nations, if you don’t know their background, you don’t know their history and the challenges they are facing now, you could have a very good heart but it could be very difficult.”

Foreign priests face the additional challenges of isolation and homesickness, so they are paired with a mentor priest in the same diocese to share experiences and thoughts. Thousands of kilometres from home, the foreign priests keep in contact with family and friends in their home country, and some of them think about them a lot.

“It’s my country. I miss my family, my friends, my land and my culture,” Ndanga said, adding they have questions about life in Canada as he becomes more and more comfortable here.

“I’m feeling at home with Canadian culture. I have to make myself Canadian among Canadians. I came to work with people. I came to be one of them, to work with them.”

Savarimuthu admits he did get emotional last year when, as he was boarding a flight to Canada, his 86-year-old mother asked him to promise to return to officiate at her funeral.

Since then he has adapted to his new home. An avid athlete,

Savarimuthu said he’s been able to join in volleyball, soccer and other sports in his local parish — and he’s even watched his first hockey game at Rogers Place, although he hasn’t played the game himself yet.

Gauthier said he “can’t imagine” that a foreign priest who spends several years in Canada would not return to his home country as a changed man who will enrich his home country.

“The experience they will have here could change their mind, change their vision, and I don’t think they would be the same priest.”

By the same token, local parishes in Canada won’t be the same, either.

“The priests come with their ecclesial experience and their social and cultural experience, and I would say this exchange can enrich our church,” Gauthier said.

“A positive sign with the coming of these priests is that ‘Catholic’ means universal. Canadian churches are multinational, so it’s good that we have priests from abroad. They bring not only their experience of Jesus Christ, but they also bring their sensitivity.”

Ndanga agrees, adding that he may be new to Canada, but he brings a universal gift to his new home.

“What I bring from Congo is my experience of God.”

Worlds of wonders are coming to the big screen

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Woody Allen’s newest annual feature *Wonder Wheel* won’t reach theatres until next month. But wonder is a theme that runs through a number of recent movies.

Wonder isn’t in the title of *Loving Vincent* (<http://lovingvincent.com/>), but this first fully oil-painted film, a Polish-British co-production directed by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman, is certainly a visual wonder. The subject is the reclusive Dutchman Vincent van Gogh who died in a small French village in 1890 at age 37 of a bullet wound to the stomach after producing some 800 paintings in eight years, but only selling one. This is the van Gogh who became one of the most celebrated painters of all time, whose coveted art fetches fortunes, and who remains a figure of enduring controversy over whether the fatal wound was self-inflicted.

Over six years 125 painters laboured to produce 65,000 painted frames in van Gogh’s strikingly distinctive impressionist style. That work has been transformed into a moving posthumous mystery and story arc by means of animation techniques including live action and digital rotoscoping. The story has Armand (Douglas Booth), the son of local postmaster Joseph Roulin (Chris O’Dowd), tasked with delivering a letter from Vincent to his brother Theo (Cezary Lukaszewicz). Armand’s investigation into the murky circumstances of the artist’s demise brings into the picture other figures, notably Doctor Gachet (Jerome Flynn) and his daughter

as a blockbuster superhero, the timing could not be better for writer-director Angela Robinson’s *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women*, which recounts the history of her creation as a popular, and controversial, comic book figure. In the late 1920s William Moulton Marston (Luke Evans) was a psychology professor to bright female students at Radcliffe College. His book *Emotions for Normal People* posited four primary human behaviours: dominance, inducement, submission, compliance (known as DISC theory). Marston’s wife and collaborator was the blunt-spoken

Loving Vincent
(Poland/U.K.)
Professor Marston and the Wonder Women
(U.S.)
Wonderstruck (U.S.)
Wonder (U.S.)

Elizabeth (Rebecca Hall), a fellow psychology academic resentful of Harvard’s refusal to grant her a doctorate. The couple invented a lie-detection apparatus based on measuring subliminal physiological responses. Their own emotional relationship was tested when Marston was drawn to an attractive student, Olive Green (Bella Heathcote), whom he engaged as an assistant.

Although the daughter of a radical feminist and niece of contra-

comics sold like hotcakes but were also condemned for alleged moral perversions, even burned in public protests. By 1945 Dr. Marston was on the hot seat, defending himself to Josette Frank (Connie Britton) of the concerned Child Study Association of America. What does he have to say about the comic strip’s scenarios of bondage, suggestive deviant sexuality and undercurrent of sadomasochism?

The story flips back and forth between that interrogation room and the unfolding *ménage à trois* involving Marston with Elizabeth and Olive as bisexual lovers. The subject of scandalous rumours, William and Elizabeth lost their teaching posts and, having failed to patent the lie detector, needed another source of income. While Elizabeth worked as a secretary, William came up with a novel way to explore female desire and power, which he saw as confirming his DISC theory. Why not a fighting female heroine? Not coincidentally, Wonder Woman (like Superman’s Clark Kent) conceals her identity as a secretary. And she has a golden lasso that compels men to tell the truth.

The threesome indulged in some kinky behaviour while raising two sons. Elizabeth and Olive briefly separated, but reunited before William died of cancer in 1947, and spent the rest of their lives together. Though the accuracy of their sexual bond has been questioned, the movie makes one wonder about the unusual human affairs in the genesis of cartoon characters.

Director Todd Haynes’ *Wonderstruck*, adapted by Brian Selznick from his 2011 novel, tells one of the year’s most unusual and beautiful stories through alternating narratives set a half-century apart that parallel the experiences of two deaf children in New York City until ultimately they intersect.

In 1977 in Gunflint, Minnesota, 12-year-old Ben (Oakes Fegley) has nightmares about wolves as he mourns the loss of his single mother, Elaine (a brief appearance by Michelle Williams), the local librarian. One day Ben discovers a book with the title “Wonderstruck” about the origins of museums as “cabinets of wonders.” Inside is a bookmark to Elaine signed “Love Danny” with the address of a New York City bookstore. Just as Ben thinks he may have found his father, a lightning strike renders him deaf. Ben is hospitalized but, undeterred and with a little help, hops a bus to the Big Apple in search of the bookstore and Danny.

In 1927 in Hoboken, New Jersey, a deaf girl, Rose (played by Millicent Simonds who is deaf), leaves her stern father’s household and takes the ferry to the marvels of Manhattan seeking



lovingvincent.com

LOVING VINCENT — The film *Loving Vincent* brings the paintings of Vincent van Gogh to life to tell his remarkable story. (Café Terrace at Night).

a favourite famous actress, Lillian Mayhew (Julianne Moore), a star of the stage and the silent screen just as the “talkies” are about to take over. Although that doesn’t turn out so well for the star-struck Rose, she discovers other wonders in the American Museum of Natural History where her brother Walter works. A promising door has opened.

For young Rose’s bustling New York of the Roaring Twenties, Haynes and longtime ace cinematographer Edward Lachman create the silent black-and-white world that she witnesses. Ben’s 1970s New York is a multiracial polyglot place viewed in Technicolor and showing the scars of urban blight. In addition to evocative music by Carter Burwell, the visual contrasts are accompanied by David Bowie’s Space Oddity and a version of Richard Strauss’s *Also sprach Zarathustra* (the famous theme of Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*). This city turned toward the future seems to embody a repeated phrase from Oscar Wilde: “All of us are in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.”

Wandering its strange crowded streets, Ben is soon robbed. But he still has the bookmark and a fortunate encounter with an African-American boy of similar age leads to the Museum of Natural History where the boy’s father works. Further discovery takes Ben to a relocated bookstore run by a man named Walter and a meeting with his deaf sister Rose (Moore again), whose only son, Daniel, had travelled to Gunflint Lake as part of creating a diorama of wolves for the museum.

Rose tells Ben of her work as a maker of models for museums, and takes him to see a miniature panorama of New York built for the 1964 world’s fair in which she had hidden mementos of Daniel. Outside, the great blackout strikes and the stars come out over the darkened skyline.

So ends a wondrous fable in which the stars seem to align as we look up at them.

Vancouver child actor Jacob Tremblay, Oscar nominated for 2015’s *Room*, has had mixed success in several roles since — in the overlooked *Burn Your Maps*

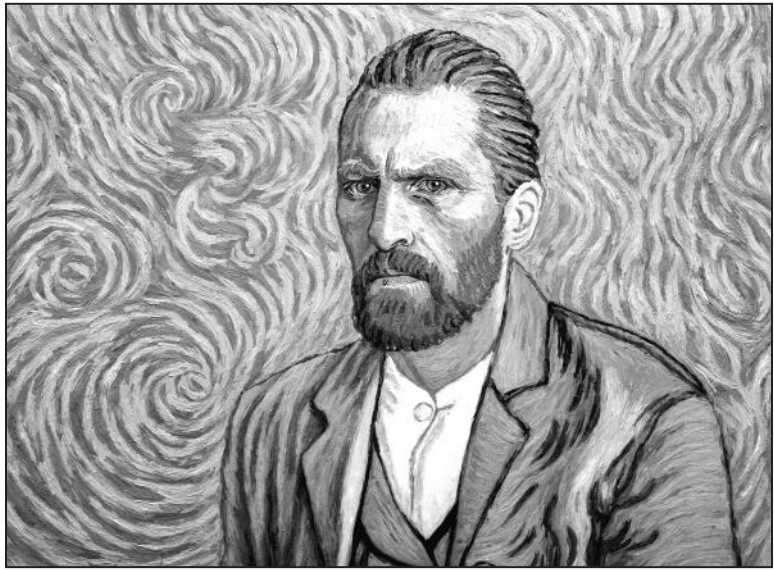
(good) playing a kid who imagines himself to be a Mongolian goat herder, and in *The Book of Henry* (not so good). But he will star in Xavier Dolan’s first English-language film, *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan*, scheduled for a January release. And, now 11, he is a wonder in the director Stephen Chobosky’s aptly named *Wonder*, adapted from the novel by R.J. Palacio.

Tremblay plays August “Auggie” Pullman who was born with a rare condition known as mandibulofacial dysostosis, which affects the face and ears. Even after 27 corrective surgeries marked facial deformities remain, and Auggie, stargazer and *Star Wars* fan, takes to wearing an astronaut helmet to hide from the world. It’s also a reason he loves going about masked on Halloween.

Auggie is lucky to have two loving parents, Isabel (Julia Roberts) and Nate (Owen Wilson), a kind adolescent sister, Olivia “Via” (Izabela Vidovic), and family dog Daisy. But after early years of home schooling, Mom decides it’s time for him to enter fifth grade with regular kids at Beecher preparatory school.

The principal, Mr. Tushman (Mandy Patinkin), tries to ease that process and Auggie’s homeroom teacher, Mr. Browne (Daveed Diggs), is a cool black dude. But the whip-smart Auggie sticks out, and kids can be insensitive and cruel. A rich, overbearing classmate, Julian (Bryce Gheisar), is a particular teasing tormentor, treating him as a freak. Auggie thinks he’s made a friend of another boy, Jack Will (Noah Jupe), but is heartbroken when something is said behind his back. An African-American girl named Summer (Millie Davis) then reaches out to him. Meanwhile, Via struggles with her own issues, feeling left out and abandoned by best friend Miranda (Danielle Rose Russell). When she and an African-American boy, Justin (Nadji Jeter), become close, she pretends to be an only child.

A series of small dramas ensue, but with kindness as the theme, things eventually work out. Indeed, together with some endearing fantasy touches, this is the kind of movie described as heartwarming, and that’s OK.



lovingvincent.com

OIL PAINTING ANIMATION — *Loving Vincent* was first shot as a live action film with actors, and then hand-painted over frame by frame in oils. Robert Gulaczyk appears in his first film role as Vincent van Gogh.

Marguerite (Saoirse Ronan), immortalized in van Gogh portraits. The film leaves unresolved the enigma of the painter’s tormented character and the manner of his passing. Its main effect is to inspire a fresh appreciation for the wondrous power of a unique artistic vision.

Following this summer’s return of *Wonder Woman* to the big screen

ception advocate Margaret Sanger, Olive tells them she was raised by nuns. As bizarrely, if less than fully convincing, is that the young sexual ingénue soon enters into an unconventional love triangle with her mentors that is a prelude to the circumstances for Marston’s later comic inspiration.

The movie tries to hook us into that consequential narrative from the start by jumping ahead to when the wartime *Wonder Woman*

At Advent we renew our pledge to not settle down

Over the next few months the *Prairie Messenger* will occasionally feature writing from past contributors and editors. The following editorial by Andrew Britz, OSB, is titled “Advent dares us to dream,” and was originally published in the Nov. 29, 2000, issue of the PM. It is also included in his book *Rule of Faith: as we worship, so we believe, so we live*.

Advent is a time of longing, longing for the kingdom made present in Jesus Christ.

It is not a time to pretend that Jesus has not yet come. We do not long for someone whom we do not know. It is precisely because we have already come to know and cherish Jesus as our Lord and Saviour that we can truly long for his presence.

God with wisdom divine made us a mystery unto ourselves. Every time we come to a new level of self-awareness we also awaken to the fact that there is much more about ourselves that we do not know.

And so, even our self-acceptance becomes an act of faith in the God who created us. So it is not just Jesus whom we now know only in faith and hope. Advent tells us not to be afraid to hope for the kingdom, a kingdom of justice and peace, a kingdom of self-fulfilment, a kingdom in which the church itself is known not so much for its propensity to point out sin but, rather, for its marvellous ability to reveal to us that goodness made obvious in Jesus Christ.

Advent flies in the face of 11-o'clock news broadcasts. What is good in our world is not news. Almost by definition news has become “bad news.” By wallowing in the bad, we can justify that weakest of human responses — cynicism.

Cynicism is beguiling. Before we know it, our cynicism has not only involved the world — especially, these days, the world of politics — but also has come to include our views about ourselves, our church, our God.

There is a hollowness in our hearts, and any self-examination

worth its salt invariably leads to the discovery of new “crud.” Thus it is easy to be cynical, to see only smallness of spirit if not outright self-serving sin in others. And, perhaps saddest of all, we choose the personal path of least resistance and become cynical about ourselves.

Rather than truly face that alarming emptiness in our hearts, that deadening hollowness, we proclaim it to be normal. We conveniently decide that we should not expect more of ourselves.

Advent dares us to dream. The eighth chapter of St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans provides us with a wonderful Advent meditation. The apostle reminds us bluntly what the first fruits of the Spirit will mean for us. The Spirit, he says, will help us groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free. “For we must be content to hope that we shall be saved; our salvation is not in sight — we should not have to be hoping for it if it were — but as I say, we must hope to be saved since we are not saved yet; it is something we must await in patience.”

Paul uses some difficult concepts: groaning, not yet in sight, patience. We do not want to groan inwardly; we want instant gratification; patience comes hard for all of us.

Advent does not provide ready answers; it calls us to faith. A line often used in the Advent liturgy should become a mantra for us: “O, come, Lord Jesus; O you heavens, rain down your salvation. Lord, just let it pour upon me.”

Texts such as these are put not just on the lips of individual Christians. In the liturgy the whole church cries out longing for fullness. During Advent the church



Design Pics

ADVENT PROCESS — “We should take consolation that the church in its Advent liturgy admits to its incompleteness, its smallness of spirit, its temptation to settle down and idolize its current structures as nigh-on perfect. . . . Advent reminds us that we can change and move beyond what satisfies us today. Advent also assures us that our church can change, can change even those structures it has so carefully divinized. In this Advent process we come to notice that our very concept of God also changes.”

itself makes its own the words of the prophet Isaiah, words spoken during some of Israel’s most difficult years. How can it be, we ask, that the church makes its own the pathos in Isaiah’s heart as he cried out in the wilderness of his being for consolation, for a path of salvation in his personal desert?

Yes, the church cries out: “Come to us, Lord, with your peace that we may rejoice before you with our whole heart.” Freely, openly, the church admits that it is restless. But what else is to be expected since the church is not yet fully at home with its Lord?

And so we shun the temptation to cynicism, the temptation that

makes our smallness of spirit the norm. Because we know Jesus, we hope for more. We should take consolation that the church in its Advent liturgy admits to its incompleteness, its smallness of spirit, its temptation to settle down and idolize its current structures as nigh-on perfect.

During Advent we as individuals and as church renew our pledge not to settle down, not to make our home in the present age. We promise not to attempt to fill our incompleteness with anything and everything that is handy.

Advent reminds us that we can change and move beyond what satisfies us today. Advent also assures us

that our church can change, can change even those structures it has so carefully divinized. In this Advent process we come to notice that our very concept of God also changes.

With the new freedom that comes from facing our deepest fears, we can with St. Paul realize that our patient groaning has been changed into the new song of the kingdom: “For I am now certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, not any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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We should keep our traditions, but lose the idols

Liturgy and Life

Joe Gunn



OK, I admit it — I just love preparing for Christmas! I start getting ready in November, collecting the innumerable ingredients needed to bake my famed Christmas fruit cakes, putting up the various decorations my mom and dad left us, and constantly playing Christmas music (which drives my kids to distraction). Although I no longer have any wee ones of my own, there are eight kiddies among my colleagues at work (and another on the way), so, somebody has to make sure that the office party is fun for them. I guess I've gladly become a bit of a Yule fool.

It wasn't always that way.

When I lived in Nicaragua, I chose to spend Christmas holidays differently than most aid workers. Every year I'd travel to the mountainous northern border areas and volunteer to pick coffee. Sleeping on the ground, eating rice, tortillas and beans three times a day, trudging out in the rain, wasn't exactly "a holiday." But selling this export crop meant hard foreign currency for the country, and a better life for the peasants who had benefitted from land reform and the creation of their new co-operatives. Somehow, in spite of the fact that foreigners weren't nearly as efficient harvesters as my Nicaraguan hosts, I was always made to feel that I was contributing. And I'd never have understood the struggles for survival of these *campesinos* had I not spent those weeks

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

with them in the forgotten reaches of the countryside.

Reflecting on the Advent readings while remembering my time in Central America now, though, I wonder if my more recent North American Christmas traditionalism has led me astray.

Isn't John the Baptist meant to be a model for me, and all Christians, this Advent? While I'm not ready to eat locusts, or forego my winter coat for camel hair, John's proclamation of "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" challenges me today. How should I "prepare a way for the Lord?"

Perhaps the answer doesn't lie with Bing Crosby . . .

I saw people "prepare the way of the Lord" this week by organizing concerts for worthy charities. I saw young "John the Baptists" visiting nursing homes to sing Christmas carols and deliver sweets. Others prepared the way of the Lord by advocating with their member of Parliament for greater social justice. Human rights "baptists" wrote Christmas cards on International Human Rights Day to those unjustly imprisoned.

Advent seems to be calling us to a more radical living of the Gospel. Isaiah wanted to "comfort" his people, which likely meant liberating them from the Babylonian captivity.

Second Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 Psalm 85 2 Peter 3:8-14 Mark 1:1-8
December 10, 2017	

The people rushed to hear John the Baptist, and have the love of God poured on them in baptism — in the wilderness, in the desert. That is, they went to seek God on the margins of society, not in the temple. And certainly not in the shopping malls.

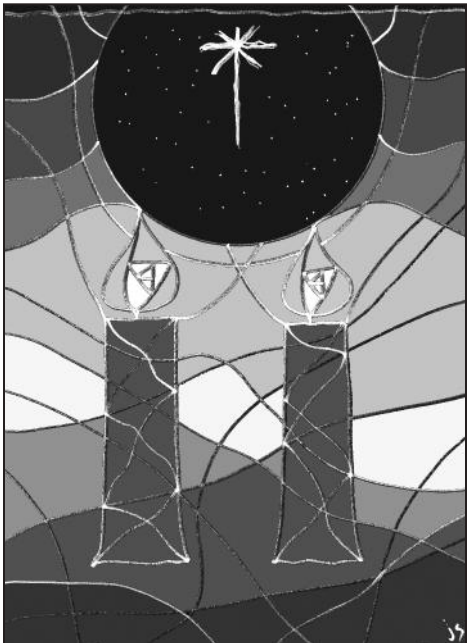
Advent is a time to prepare for a renewed encounter with Jesus. To create space in our busy lives for the arrival of the Saviour, we probably don't have to give up all our traditions, but we must give up our idols. Idols are those things we place above our relationship with Our Lord, anything that keeps us from becoming all we can be in relationship with Jesus. In North America, most of us could do well by foregoing any of the competitive consumerism, the wasteful consumption, or ecologically ruinous behaviour that every tele-

vision ad seems anxious to foist upon us. We could become the people of Good Friday (and Easter), not Black Friday; celebrators of Christmas Day, rather than Boxing Day.

A priest friend, now in his 70s, tells me he's spent enough time in the confessional to be able to say, "I've heard it all" — except for one thing. There is one sin he has never, ever heard confessed. Which one? The Second Commandment. Are our idols invisible to us?

The Greek word *metanoia* speaks of a change of mind, the suggestion of an expansion of horizons. Advent would seem to be a perfect time to be about *metanoia*. Accepting the coming of Christ into the world would mean acceptance of that radical change in our lives that would see the little ones, the marginalized, the widows and the orphans, the lonely and the forgotten, the refugee and the violated person — all those who enjoy God's favour — newly perceived as "Emmanuel," or "God among us."

So, this Advent, let's spend some quiet time discerning all we need to do to truly prepare for the moment of Our Saviour's arrival in our lives. Let's identify our "idols." And let's refuse to place them where that Child, born in a manger, rightly belongs.



Stushie Art

Mystery of God's intimate presence inside us is beyond our imaginations

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



There's a growing body of literature today that chronicles the experience of persons who were clinically dead for a period of time (minutes or hours) and were medically resuscitated and brought back to life. Many of us, for example, are familiar with Dr. Eben Alexander's book *Proof of Heaven*:

A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife. More recently Hollywood produced the movie *Miracles from Heaven* which portrays the true story of a young Texas girl who was clinically dead, medically revived, and who shares what she experienced in the afterlife.

There are now hundreds of sto-

ries like this, gathered through dozens of years, published or simply shared with loved ones. What's interesting (and consoling) is that virtually all these stories are wonderfully positive, irrespective of the person's faith or religious background. In virtually every case their experience, while partially indescribable, was one in which they felt a warm, personal, overwhelming sense of love, light, and welcome, and not a few of them found themselves meeting relatives of theirs that had passed on before them, sometimes even relatives they didn't know they had. As well, in virtually every case, they did not want to return to life here but, like Peter on the Mountain of the Transfiguration, wanted to stay there.

Recently while speaking at a conference I referenced this literature and pointed out that, among other things, it seems everyone goes to heaven when they die. This, of course, immediately sparked a spirited discussion: "What about hell? Aren't we judged when we die? Doesn't anyone go to hell?" My answer to those questions, which need far more nuance than are contained in a short soundbite, was that while we all go to heaven when we die, depending upon our moral and spiritual disposition, we might not want to stay there. Hell, as Jesus assures us, is a real option; though, as Jesus also assures us, we judge ourselves. God puts no one to hell. Hell is our choice.

However, it was what happened after this discussion that I want to share here. A woman approached me as I was leaving and told me she had had this exact experience. She had been clinically dead for some minutes and then revived through medical resuscitation. And, just like the experience of all the others in the literature around this issue, she too experienced a wonderful warmth, light, and welcome, and did not want to return to life here on earth. Inside of all of this warmth and love, however, what she remembers most and most wants to share with others is this: *I learned that God is very close. We have no idea how close God is to us. God is closer to us than we ever imagine!* Her experience has left her forever branded with a sense of God's warmth, love, and welcome, but what's left the deepest brand of all inside her is the sense of God's closeness.

I was struck by this because, like millions of others, I generally don't feel that closeness, or at least don't feel it very affectively or imaginatively. God can seem pretty far away, abstract and impersonal, a Deity with millions of things to worry about without having to worry about the minutiae of my small life.

Moreover, as Christians, we believe that God is infinite and ineffable. This means that while we can know God, we can never imagine God. Given that truth, it makes it even harder for us to

imagine that the infinite Creator and Sustainer of all things is intimately and personally present inside us, worrying with, sharing our heartaches, and knowing our most guarded feelings.

Compounding this is the fact that whenever we do try to imagine God's person, our imaginations come up against the unimaginable. For example, try to imagine this: There are billions of persons on this earth and billions more have lived on this earth before us. At this very minute, thousands of people are being born, thousands are dying, thousands are sinning, thousands are doing virtuous acts, thousands are making love, thousands are experiencing violence, thousands are feeling their hearts swelling with joy, all of this part of trillions upon trillions of phenomena. How can one heart, one mind, one person be consciously on top of all of this and so fully aware and empathetic that no hair falls from our heads or sparrow from the sky without this person taking notice? It's impossible to imagine, pure and simple, and that's part of the very definition of God.

How can God be as close to us as we are to ourselves? Partly this is mystery, and wisdom, bids us befriend mystery because anything we can understand is not very deep! The mystery of God's intimate, personal presence inside us is beyond our imaginations. But everything within our faith tradition and now most everything in the testimony of hundreds of people who have experienced the afterlife assure us that, while God may be infinite and ineffable, God is very close to us, closer than we imagine.

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Developed world does not recognize food insecurity

By Phyllis Zagano

Luxury predicts downfall, and when food preparation gets too fancy, the society is about to crumble. That's an idea related to the fall of the Roman republic that some credit to the Roman historian Livy (Titus Livius). Others credit Cyrus the Great. No matter who, it is something to think about as we see shows on the Food Channel or follow the latest celebrity chefs. There is something wrong with the developed world's priorities.

I've got nothing against Wolfgang Puck, or Rachael Ray, or even Martha Stewart. But intense interest in Kobe beef and fertilized duck eggs is a little over the top, especially since about 10 per cent of the people on the planet suffer food insecurity. That means hunger, malnutrition, wasting, stunting, disease, and downright misery.

Zagano is senior research associate-in-residence at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. Her books include Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future and Women Deacons?: Essays with Answers. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, the Vatican's publishing house, has just published her The Light of the World: Daily Meditations for Advent and Christmas in Italian.

Being hungry is worse than being poor, but the two so often go hand in hand that Pope Francis recently hosted lunch for about 1,200 people in the Paul VI Audience Hall, following his celebration of mass at St. Peter's for the first World Day of the Poor. Nearly 2,800 others were served Sunday *pranzo* at pontifical colleges around Rome.

The idea was to focus on the needs of others, especially the poor.

Around the globe, some dioceses and parishes picked up the pope's lead, but the developed world does not always see the realities of poverty. That's not to say the church doesn't kick in its fair share. It's just that we do not always see the poor among us.

Moreover, the developed world generally does not recognize the incredible food insecurity knocking at its own back door. Statistics gathered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 2016 count 12.6 per cent of American households worried about the next meal, or at least the next one after that. According to Campaign 2000, Canada's child poverty rate is 17 per cent. Africa and Asia count many more starving people, from 15 per cent to 20 per cent of their various national populations. Pockets of real poverty cause awful conditions in Oceania, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

So, what to do? Many years



CNS/Justin Lane, EPA

POVERTY AND HUNGER — There is poverty, hunger, and homeless worldwide, and also in our own neighbourhoods.

ago I shared lunch with Sir Arthur Lewis, Nobel Prize-winning economist and expert in development issues. Sir Arthur explained that there was enough food in the world, but that combined problems of transportation and politics kept individuals, even nations, starving. While things have improved since then, it is increasingly clear that the same troubles infect the attempts of individuals, organizations, and even nations

that seek to alleviate suffering.

Why? Aside from the systemic difficulties that keep bread away from starving children, the insanities of war rip it from their mouths. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization states that 489 million of the world's 815 million chronically food insecure people live in places torn by conflict.

That's war with all the trap-pings: killing, burning, looting, raping — just about any heinous crime you can think of. When the marauding army shoots your livestock, there's no milk or meat. When the bombs and rubble ruin the stream, there's no fish to be caught. When the sky is falling and you're constantly on the move, there's no time to harvest the crops.

And that, by the way, is what is happening to the Rohingya in My-

anmar, home to the world's longest-running civil war. Myanmar, where Buddhist majority forces are pushing Muslim Rohingya across to Bangladesh, is hosting Pope Francis this week. How many people are suffering there? The numbers range from 400,000 to 600,000 people on the move or already refugees. Horror stories abound; how about the woman, whose child was pulled from her back and tossed into the flames of her burning village, and was then raped by soldiers?

She is just one person. She is poor. She is hungry. She is homeless.

She is legion.

So, before you pass up Aunt Rose's creamed spinach this week, remember there really are people starving in China. And in Myanmar. And in Bangladesh. And maybe just next door.

We are each a work in progress

Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



"The student of utopias knows the weakness that lies in perfectionism . . . what is lacking in such dreams is not a sense of the practical; what is lacking is a realization of the essential human need for disharmony and conflict, elements whose acceptance and resolution are indispensable to psychological growth." — Lewis Mumford

Considering that inner and outer conflict characterizes much of our individual and collective lives, one has to wonder about the gospel injunction "Be ye perfect." It can't mean faultless or flawless, because "As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one" (Rm 3:10).

As more accurate translations and nuanced readings would have it, each of us is still very much a "work in progress" and under the grace of God "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" and shaping us in his image. That makes the perfection in question more a matter of the *completion* we envision and embrace as our divine destiny, than any meeting of high standards. Otherwise the command to be perfect is prone to the biggest trap for the religiously inclined:

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>

self-idealization. Otherwise known as being "above it all" with one's belief system providing a kind of divine immunity to the down side of the human condition, inside and out.

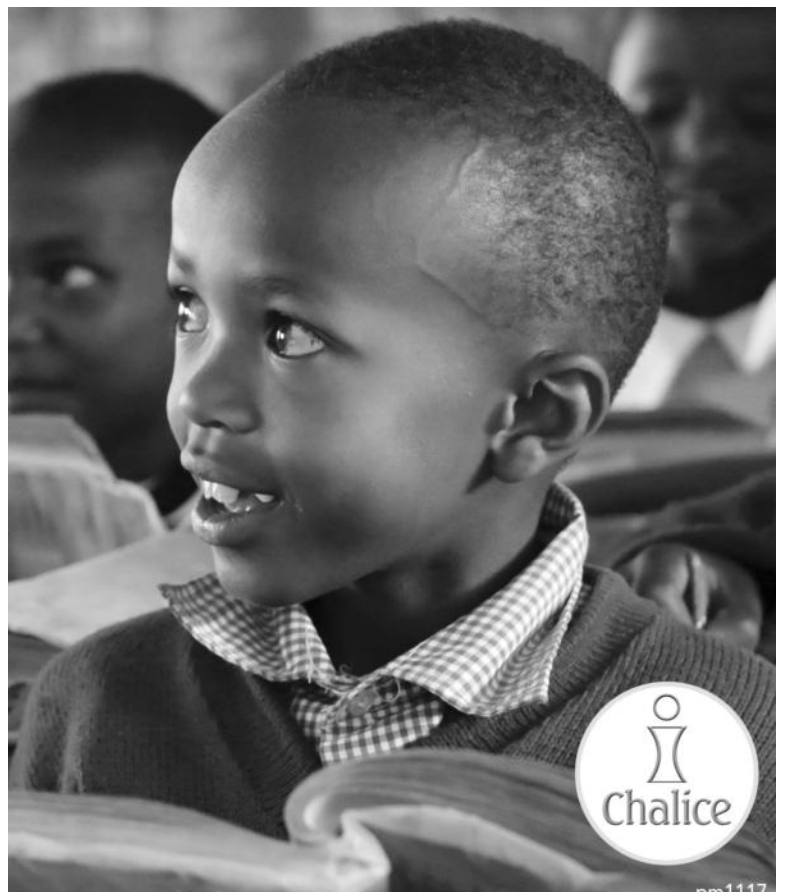
There is no seal of godly approval. There is no perfection making us acceptable to God that we can achieve or accomplish on our own. There is only the perfect finished plan for humanity, paradoxically accounting for all in need of redemption.

One of the funniest moments we've ever had in the locker room at the gym where I go is when we were teasing one of the guys about how much time he spent preening in front of the mirrors. I asked him during the banter why he didn't seem offended when labelled a narcissist. To this day, I don't know how consciously clever and ironic his reply was intended to be, or how half-serious his response. In any case, without missing a beat he quipped, "I don't mind because I'm not just any narcissist. I'm a flawless narcissist."

The paradox is that we can't be purified without getting our hands dirty, because that's how the work gets done, including the soul work. That doesn't mean we can't be perfect in our hoped-for life purpose. Alfred Adler, who along with Freud and Jung was part of the original trinity of modern psychology, spoke of a fictional final goal or guiding fiction as indispensable to mental health. By that he meant the optimistic intention to hold the vision of what we can be at our best, however that is imagined by the individual. It's a positive, teleological approach to personality, emphasizing the higher calling of a person under their unique life circumstances.

Adler's theory diverged from Freud's exposure of the underbelly of humanity, covered up by a thin veneer of civilization. The truth lies between the two. When asked about religion, Adler said, "we try to live in a way that, if there is a God, he must be satisfied with us."

It's when the fiction of the envisioned final goal (in that it's always yet to be fulfilled) is displaced by reification of the idealized self, and an "elected" spiritual stance, that the story of religious hypocrisy begins. There are many great movies on the subject — see the films *Rain* (Joan Crawford, 1932), *Susan and God* (Joan Crawford, 1940), *Elmer Gantry* (Burt Lancaster, 1960) and *The Apostle* (Robert Duvall, 1997) for how the religiously perfect can be the enemy of the providentially possible, and how much mayhem that can cause.



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Hindu-Catholic dialogue: on love of neighbour

Challenge of Ecumenism

Thomas Ryan, CSP



"Respect for the dignity of the human person is the foundational principle. The crown of creation is the human person," said Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Vatican Ambassador to the United States, at the Nov. 11 third national Hindu-Catholic dialogue meeting. "The human person bears the divine image and is made for communion — union with God and with others. Dignity is not based on what the person has or does, but on what the person is," he said.

The meeting, which took place at the Shri Siva Vishnu Temple in Lanham, Md., began with a video communication to the dialogue participants from Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard in Hawaii: "The more we grow in love of God, the more we will love our neighbours, and the less we will see war as the answer to our problems. We cannot cultivate our love for God independent of the well-being of others who are all God's children. What could be more pleasing to God than caring for God's children? This is the solution to all of our problems," said Gabbard.

In his keynote address on the theme of the gathering — "Love of neighbour in the Catholic and Hindu traditions: Reflections on War, Nationalism and Poverty" — Archbishop Pierre stated that love is a choice for the good of others, the common good, and that this is the proper context for discussing nationalism.

He cited Pope Francis' state-

ment in the past month that politics needs leadership that functions in a spirit of conciliarity and solidarity. While the church is supportive of patriotism and cultures, she rejects nationalism. She proposes the culture of encounter.

"Before war can be engaged," said Archbishop Pierre, "all other means of seeking to resolve the conflicts must have been tried first. The weapons of truth and justice must be used. One is morally bound to confront others who commit genocide. This is a crime against God and humanity."

In her keynote address, Swamini Svatmavidyananda, a professor in Berkeley, Calif., and spiritual director for Hindu educational communities in Maryland and Oregon, said "The right to practise one's own faith does not include making it difficult for other faiths to practise theirs. Freedom of religion enjoins upon everyone the responsibility to respect, and never to denigrate or vilify, others' faith and practice."

"Everything for us Hindus is a manifestation of God," said Swamini. "The air we breathe, trees, clouds, all created beings are just manifestations of that one God. We do not worship idols or graven images; they are simply expressions of the One. And that Presence is not outside of who you are."

On the topic of war, Swamini noted that the Hindu tradition is committed to *ahimsa*, non-violence. "Our whole life is governed by non-violence. If we had to pick out one value in all the values of Hinduism, it is non-violence. The Veda encourages its practice in all transactions. Using arms comes only at the very end when all other possibilities have

been exhausted," she said.

"We have to engage in dialogue with traditions other than our own," Swamini reflected. "In the past, Christianity was used as a tool of colonialism in India and other parts of the world. We need a new covenant of relationship so that we go beyond this history and the pain of the past. We need to reset the button on new ways of interacting and respecting one another."

Swamini cited climate change as a domain of collaboration. "There is a lot that Pope Francis is doing to respond to climate change. This is something Hindus would be happy to engage with. We have a lot to explore in common, and we can work together to promote understanding and harmony among all religions."

Jesuit Father James Redington of the University of Scranton, Pa., one of the panel respondents to the keynote speakers, observed that solidarity is a real help for common action in overcoming poverty, making peace, helping refugees, offsetting climate change.

"If we act together in solidarity, that will deepen and make more effective our work. Good Christians should have the courage to tell other

Christians who denounce Hinduism that they are demonizing a very good religion," said Redington. "Tolerance is necessary as a minimum. At a middle level is respect for religions other than our own. The highest level is friendship. Aspects of another's religion can enrich me and my own religion."

Another panel respondent, Anuttama Dasa, director of a Hindu international commission, shared that the Christian respect

for the dignity of life expressed in church-sponsored hospitals, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other charities, challenges Hindus to ask: "Do we serve enough?"

"Catholics are so caring for unborn life," said Dasa. "Should we Hindus not become equally advocates on this issue? You challenge me to be deeper and more self-disciplined about my own faith. To not just study it, but to live it! We can both do better in word and deed, starting today."



Tom Ryan, CSP

HINDU-CATHOLIC DIALOGUE — A Hindu-Catholic dialogue meeting took place at the Shri Siva Vishnu Temple in Lanham, Md., recently. "The more we grow in love of God, the more we will love our neighbours, and the less we will see war as the answer to our problems" said Tulsi Gabbard, a Congresswoman from Hawaii.

Educate with passion, to instil passion



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

Besides being wise, the Teacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs. — Ecclesiastes 12:9

In the hilarious television program *Mr. D.*, the titular character expounds a basic philosophy about teaching. "Mark the smart kid's exam first and use it as an answer key." He explains in another episode about the mentoring of practicum students — basically, throw them into the deep end and take a day off. In his standup routine he once told a group of teachers, "I saw a seminar recently, 'Engaging Students in the 21st century.' It was cancelled. You can't engage them anymore! Teachers saying, 'I'm not going to that! That's impossible.'"

Needless to say, Mr. D. is not actually a role model for us as teachers, though in the way of great

parody, he often builds on real situations to make his humour more identifiable. While all of us no doubt prepare diligently for each class, it's true to say that the workload for teachers is at times overwhelming. And teaching isn't just about the material anyway. As teachers everywhere understand — it's *how* you present information, and how you connect to your students, that can be the difference between failure and success. All this is compounded by the different learning needs and styles of the students themselves. Clarity for one individual can be gobbledygook to another.

For all of these reasons, I think teaching is one of the toughest gigs on the planet. And yet, the world over, masochists keep presenting themselves to take on this challenge. Why? I truly believe that most individuals turn to this remarkable profession because they want to make a difference in the lives of others. Teaching, in the context of a faith tradition, can be even harder. We live in a secular society,

and the dynamic messaging of today's technology, and the contradictory information that flows to our children, is overwhelming.

The Calgary Catholic Education Foundation is one organization that understands the challenge for both teachers and students. Founded in 2008, CCEF is a charitable organization that raises funds for schools in need — innovative educational experiences, technology, literacy projects, and educational environments — to ensure that no child is left behind. And once a year, on Catholic Education Sunday, the organization rallies to raise funds through parishes and the community to help support educational opportunities and initiatives that are otherwise not funded.

I'm proud to say that this year our bachelor of education students will be playing an active role in helping to promote the foundation's objectives, and indeed that one of our education students, Vanessa Bitoni, is on CCEF's board of directors. Together I am sure that we will work together to ensure that this is one of the most successful years to date for CCEF.

Our job is not just to educate, but also to do this with passion, so that we can help students find theirs. Aristotle once said, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." To which I think we can all say: Amen!

Turcotte is president of St. Mary's University in Calgary.

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Meeting the Calls to Action, one step at a time

Catholic Connections

Joanna Landry



Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chief Justice Murray Sinclair hit the nail on the head when he coined the phrase “Education is what got us here and education is what’s going to get us out.”

These powerful words put things into perspective. How can we realistically move a whole school division to change and acknowledge what we have learned about indigenous people

acknowledge that the foundation of reconciliation is built on relationships of trust and respect.

In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission created 94 Calls to Action to redress the legacy of residential schools so organizations and individuals would have guidelines to create awareness and move forward on making change. The calls specific to education advanced Regina Catholic Schools to create a plan for implementation.

As we gathered to mark the beginning of the new school year on Aug. 31, 2017, Archbishop Donald Bolen reminded us at our opening mass of the importance of our call to reconciliation with our indigenous sisters and brothers. His powerful message has resonated this school year as

we live out our theme of “Let Your Light Shine.” This theme of bringing light when parts of our world are in darkness has never been more important, especially during this time of reconciliation.

Archbishop Bolen’s message started our school year off in a good way, but his ongoing message throughout the year also brought to light our efforts to

and transition into “reconciliation” mode? Well, you accept the fact that it cannot be done overnight, that this is a journey that may take many steps, but most importantly, we need to

Landry is co-ordinator for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Education in Regina Catholic Schools.



Regina Catholic Schools

WINTER COUNT BUFFALO ROBE — In May of 2017 renowned artist and Elder Wayne Goodwill from Standing Buffalo First Nation was commissioned to create an authentic Winter Count Buffalo Robe on behalf of Regina Catholic Schools. At the opening school mass in August the buffalo robe was placed on the altar while Archbishop Don Bolen spoke to reconciliation.

make a difference for reconciliation. In May of 2017 renowned artist and Elder Wayne Goodwill from Standing Buffalo First Nation was commissioned to create an authentic Winter Count Buffalo Robe on behalf of Regina Catholic Schools. At the opening mass the buffalo robe was placed on the altar while Archbishop Don spoke to reconciliation.

The Winter Count Buffalo Robe displays a timeline of historical significance for indigenous people in Canada. It is to be presented as a gift of reconciliation to Pope Francis in Rome in anticipation of his visit to Saskatchewan. It would be a major step toward healing to have Pope Francis acknowledge the TRC Calls to Action #58 where he apologizes to our indigenous brothers and sisters, on our soil.

This project has grown signifi-

cantly and will make its way through the schools, the larger Catholic Community and for anyone wanting to hear the story. This initiative has grown in magnitude and will leave a historic legacy for Regina Catholic Schools.

On Oct. 2, 2017, Regina Catholic Schools marked its annual Orange Shirt Day — Every Child Matters. The wearing of an orange shirt is to honour Phyllis Jack Webstad, a First Nation elder, who on her first day of residential school was stripped of her brand new orange shirt and never saw it again. This day is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the com-

ing school year. Staff and students in Regina Catholic schools began the day in prayerful silence and acknowledged the children who were forced to attend residential schools. Each of our schools marked Orange Shirt Day with a liturgy of remembrance and a variety of learning activities to recognize the wrongs of the residential school system and to honour residential school survivors.

Our school division continues to strive to meet the Calls to Action through various resources and supports provided. One of our most impactful resources is the

— STUDENTS, page 17

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Memories and gifts from 24 Christmases at the PM

Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



Andrew Britz, OSB, was a regular guest in our home from the time I was no more than 12. I remember Andrew as the robust man with the black beard whose presence filled our kitchen. Kids naturally took to him and he loved to tease my brothers, who were much younger than I, by twisting their words and making them laugh. It makes sense. As anyone who followed Andrew’s 21 years as editor of the PM knew, he was a wordsmith.

Andrew often arrived at our home unannounced. He’d ring the doorbell repeatedly — his trademark — knowing it was kind of annoying, but also knowing he was

always welcome. Sometimes he’d pop in for a few minutes en route to somewhere else. Often he came for meals, and even more often he came for evening visits with my mom and dad, scotch in glasses as they talked late into the evening about church, theology, baseball, life’s absurdity, and life’s grace.

Kids are especially good at eavesdropping, and overhearing bits of their conversations was my first dip into the pool of deep discussions that ripple beyond midnight. I don’t know if it was the memory of Andrew’s visits with my parents, but the enjoyment of talking late into the evening has stayed with me, and something I

have apparently passed along to my children. Whenever they come home we vow we won’t stay up as late as the last time. First night of the Thanksgiving weekend, visiting until 2:40 a.m. Next night 2:15. OK, a bit earlier.

One evening years ago Andrew rang my doorbell, not my mom and dad’s, and sat in my kitchen, and offered me a job. Would I join the *Prairie Messenger* staff as associate editor? *No. Don’t want it. Can’t do it.* It was my mind’s default position. Reluctantly I said yes. I didn’t think it would be a good fit.

This will be my 24th Christmas with the PM. The lights of the season are already twinkling (some say too early, but not I) and, with this last Christmas here, I’ve been thinking about gifts. Here’s the thing with some gifts — you don’t always see them that way at first.

The early years at the paper were hard — coming to terms with a more hectic home life, having less time with the kids and for myself and with my husband, feeling clumsy and inept in a new workplace and making mistakes (getting the paper temporarily banned in Winnipeg comes to mind). Andrew’s legendary standard of excellence and attention to detail was now experienced first-hand, and I learned workplace personalities don’t necessarily match that of a friend’s.

Andrew was blunt but fair. Were my headlines really stupid? Mentors are tough because they push your limits — because they believe in you, even when you don’t believe in yourself. It took awhile to learn that making an error, even a big one, didn’t cause me to break, though I often felt I might.

Christmas is a season of gifts. Have you ever answered your door to find someone unexpected standing there with a present, and

then feeling ashamed you don’t have anything to give back? Gratitude just feels puny. You want to run out to find something bigger, and drop it off later.

But gifts aren’t meant to be balanced out, compared, repaid, or one-upped.

One of my favourite Christmas memories from my time at the PM was the staff party Andrew hosted at his parish. It’s flat country and Russ and I drove to St. Anthony’s in Lake Lenore under a dome of starlit midnight blue. The dinner in the church basement was served, with lights dimmed, by Father Demetrius, who was commis-

sioned to help Andrew with the meal — lasagne and Caesar salad. Afterward we walked a few steps out the church over to the rectory where we enjoyed drinks from Andrew’s well-stocked bar. It was the only time I visited him in his own home. There was the friend who loved to celebrate, talk, welcome and be welcomed. Christmas is when I miss him most of all.

Andrew showed up at my door once upon a time, bearing gifts that have taken 24 years to unwrap. They turned out to be a good fit.

I have nothing to give but gratitude. It’s not puny.

Tax-exempt status supported

Continued from page 5

Most Canadians understand the seal of the confessional, with 72 per cent saying priests should not be forced to disclose what they hear in confession.

The big divide on religion in Canada’s public life is between the believers and the unbelievers. While 71 per cent of religiously committed Canadians say that religious and faith communities are making a “very good” or “more good than bad” contribution to the country, only 13 per cent of non-believers say the same thing.

A clear majority of 54 per cent of non-believers say the government shows “too much” or “way too much” respect for religion.

Only 12 per cent of religiously committed Canadians say the same.

In the population as a whole, 34 per cent say the government overdoes respect for religion. One in six say the government shows too little respect for religion and nearly half (49 per cent) think the government gets the balance about right.

The 19 per cent of Canadians who are non-believers also disagree with their fellow citizens about the tax-exempt status of religious foundations. Almost eight in 10 non-believers want their local churches, synagogues, mosques and temples taxed. But the majority of survey respondents (55 per cent) support tax-exempt status for organized religion.



M. Weber

PM AT CHRISTMAS — A look across the *Prairie Messenger* editorial office, with fond memories of Christmases past. This year will be our last.

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Students, staff eager to learn

Continued from page 16

relationship sustained by indigenous elders in the schools. The support, teaching and knowledge they share is a powerful resource for our students. The support they provide through curricular connections, traditional perspectives and cultural practices has grown immensely over the years.

The eagerness and willingness to engage and learn has had an impact on many of our students and staff members’ lives. A wonderful example is our resident elder, May Desnomie. She has provided an oral comparison of Christian versus First Nations traditional ways of praying. This video footage will be used for the Grade 4 Pearson religion resource to connect the content in the student book. This resource will be used in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

There is no doubt that we have embraced the calls to action and much is a-buzz in our schools as

we internalize the learning. The Regina Catholic Schools Circle of Voices First Nations, Inuit and Métis Advisory Committee created a Truth and Reconciliation symbol that will become a visual reminder of our commitment to ensure that we share the truth and become models for reconciliation.

The learning continues to grow for Truth and Reconciliation, and our school division will come full circle as we acknowledge June 8 as a Day of Education for Truth and Reconciliation. June 8 is marked as an annual event within Regina Catholic Schools to make a solid commitment to meeting the Calls to Action. By taking this proactive approach we focus on learning Canada’s collective history of indigenous peoples.

Every school participates in different ways. The learning is meaningful, authentic and engaging. Our steps might be short but we will work toward covering the distance.



Trafficking on a global scale

While the world is witnessing unprecedented numbers of displaced persons and refugees, a recent UN conference highlighted a troubling side-effect: human trafficking.

“Wars and violent conflicts have become the biggest driving force of forced human displacement,” Archbishop Bernardito Auza said in a recent address to the United Nations. The Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN noted that traffickers take advantage of the chaos of war to exploit vulnerable people, using them for sexual slavery or forced labour.

In recent years, Europe has been experiencing a refugee crisis at a level unseen since the Second World War, with millions fleeing violence and instability, largely in the Middle East, leaving hundreds of people, particularly women and children, vulnerable to trafficking. The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, issued by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, reports that increasing numbers of victims trafficked from Iraq, Syria and Somalia are appearing in Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

The Report stated that the most common type of human trafficking (79 per cent) is for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The victims are overwhelmingly women and girls. The second most common form of trafficking is aimed at forced labour (18 per cent). Worldwide, almost 20 per cent of trafficking victims are children.

“To eradicate trafficking in persons, we must con-

front all its economic, environmental, political, and ethical causes,” Auza said, “but it is particularly important to prevent and end the wars and conflicts that make people especially vulnerable to being trafficked.”

In his Nov. 21 address, the UN secretary general said, “Criminals and terrorists are capitalizing on, and perpetuating, the disorder and mayhem of conflict. To fund their crimes, they prey on the vulnerable. Their brutality knows no bounds: sexual exploitation, forced labour, the removal of bodily organs and slavery are the tools of their trade.”

António Guterres named some of the groups he was referring to: “Terrorist groups such as Da’esh, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and the Lord’s Resistance Army are forcing women, boys and girls into dehumanizing servitude.” African migrants, he reported, have been sold as “goods” in Libya.

“It is our collective responsibility to stop these crimes,” he said.

In Canada, Global News reported that people under the age of 18 made up about a quarter of recorded human trafficking victims in Canada between 2009 and 2014.

Statistics Canada, meanwhile, has noted that minors not only make up a significant portion of the victims of forced labour and sex trafficking but that they also make up around seven per cent of the perpetrators.

The 18 - 24 age cohort was even more startling, with nearly 50 per cent of the victims and 41 per cent of the perpetrators falling into that range.

Nicole Barrett, a human trafficking expert at the University of British Columbia’s Allard School of Law, said that anecdotally 12 or 13 years old was a common age for young women to be forced into the sex trade.

She added that, much like the overall picture of human trafficking in Canada, the data related to the ages of the victims and their abusers is hobbled by the fact that only a fraction of trafficking crimes are ever uncovered or reported.

A Wikipedia article quotes The Native Women’s Association of Canada as saying that Aboriginal women and girls are significantly over-represented in the statistics on sexual exploitation and trafficking in Canada. The association identified the root causes of the crisis as the ongoing impact of colonialism on “Aboriginal societies, the legacies of the residential schools and their inter-generational effects, family violence, childhood abuse, poverty, homelessness, lack of basic survival necessities, race and gender-based discrimination, lack of education, migration, and substance addictions.”

Traffickers mask their crimes by appearing or claiming to care about these girls. The relationship may start with promises and expensive gifts, but it soon degenerates into exploitation fuelled by greed. Often girls are forced to recruit other girls, fearing violent retribution from their trafficker if they refuse. Girls are moved across provincial borders until they become completely disconnected from friends and family.

It is a crime that cries to heaven for redress. — PWN

The Amazon effect initiates the slow death of the grocery store

**By Sylvain Charlebois
Troy Media**

The bricks-and-mortar food retailing model is losing its lustre in Canada.

The signs are everywhere.

Loblaws is the latest grocer to commit to home delivery. Starting in December, the leading food retailer in Canada has an ambitious plan to deliver food for a fee from coast to coast.

The company has spent millions to make many of its stores cathedrals for food — like the

Maple Leaf Gardens store in Toronto. But suddenly, serving up President’s Choice in people’s homes seems like a better idea.

Basically, the socio-economic fundamentals that supported big-box stores are weakening rapidly. Real estate isn’t cheap, increasing in-store sales is difficult and find-

ing good labour to cover large spaces is challenging. As higher minimum wages add to the pressure, grocers need to think of ways to make their equity and human capital work more efficiently. What’s more, a good portion of the Canadian population is becoming less independent. By

2025, more than eight million Canadians will be 65 or older.

Add Canada’s unpredictable — and sometimes horrid — weather and all indicators point to one thing: the traditional food retail structure is less attractive to a growing number of Canadians.

Our lifestyle is also a factor:

time-strapped consumers want convenience. Those who can’t or don’t want to cook are looking for quick fixes. So that’s exactly what the food retail industry is trying to offer.

Grocers are essentially trying to chase down the money that

— CANADIANS, page 19

It’s the religious who tend most to favour diversity

**By Ray Pennings
Troy Media**

Throughout autumn, the soup of our multicultural society has almost boiled over with questions about

Pennings is co-founder and executive vice-president of the think-tank Cardus. www.troymedia.com

secularism and religion — of what is and isn’t allowed in contemporary public and common Canadian life. Efforts to relegate religious expression and thought to the margins have been ramped up. Those efforts, however, are out of step with broader Canadian society.

So, what evidence is there of the secularist push? In September, some openly questioned whether a turban-wearing Sikh who heads a major political party is an acceptable national leader. In the same month, niqab and burka-wearing Muslims felt targeted by a Quebec law that seeks to expunge public spaces of their particular religious expression. Just a couple of weeks ago, Gov. Gen. Julie Payette mocked those who believe life is a divine creation. And at the end of November, Trinity Western University will appear before the Supreme Court of Canada as law societies challenge the private Christian school’s right to set religious standards for its faculty and student community.

est Angus Reid Institute (ARI) poll conducted in partnership with the think-tank Cardus suggests those who are anti-religious are the outliers.

Almost half of Canadians (48 per cent) tell ARI the overall contribution of religion and faith communities to Canada is a mix of good and bad. Another 38 per cent say their contribution is either very good or more good than bad. Only 14 per cent take a negative view overall. And the same poll suggests almost half of Canadians are open to religious communities having influence on Canadian public life.

Where things get dicier is when Canadians are asked to gauge the overall presence of a particular religious community as benefiting or damaging the country overall. Here, Canadians in general have a net positive view of the country’s various streams of Christianity, as well as Judaism. They’re neutral on Hinduism and atheism, somewhat negative on Sikhism, and heavily negative on Islam.

However, when the poll examines the attitudes of religiously committed Canadians (most of whom identify as Christians of one sort or another) it reveals a net positive view of every religious community save Islam — and even then, they’re a lot less negative than Canadians in general. They save the strongest negative response for atheism. It’s those in the category of non-believers (those who reject religious belief) who overwhelmingly believe every religious community in Canada, especially Muslims and evangelical Christians, hurt the country. They feel good

only about atheists.

It seems those who are most tolerant of various faith community voices, including those they disagree with, are religiously committed Canadians. By contrast, the non-believers hold that those who espouse a faith are hurting the country. But we know from previous ARI polling that this intolerance belongs to the minority. Only 19 per cent of Canadians identify as non-believers.

Worryingly, the minority belief that religion is harmful to Canada carries over into other policy areas. ARI found that 55 per cent of Canadians support tax exempt status for organized religion, which exists partly because of the religious role in charity. However, almost eight in 10 non-believers say they’d rather see churches, synagogues, temples, mosques and other religious entities taxed. Similarly, 55 per cent of Canadians say workers at a religiously affiliated nursing home should have the right, on moral grounds, not to participate in doctor-assisted death. Almost two-thirds of non-believers would deny them conscience rights.

Could it be that this same anti-religious intolerance is behind the same public issues we’ve been debating over the last months? As alarming as it is to see such intolerance, it’s heartening to know that such voices are the outliers. The polling confirms most Canadians are tolerant and welcoming. If we’re to keep the multicultural pot from boiling over, it seems we’ll need to double down on dialogue and understanding — even with those whose religion we do not share.



ZIMBABWEANS CELEBRATE MUGABE’S RESIGNATION — People celebrate Nov. 21 outside parliament after hearing that President Robert Mugabe resigned in Harare, Zimbabwe. All Zimbabweans should have a voice in the country's governance following Mugabe's 37-year presidency, and the new government should embrace diversity, Zimbabwe's bishops said.

CNS/Kim Ludbrook, EPA

Billboards welcome Pope Francis

Continued from page 1

ly harsh measures against the entire Rohingya community following attacks on security posts by small

groups of Rohingya militants. The pope arrived in Myanmar after a more than 10-hour, over-night flight from Rome. The children in costumes, representing



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE VISITS MYANMAR BANGLADESH — Pope Francis greets children as he arrives at Yangon International Airport in Yangon, Myanmar, Nov. 27. The pope is making a six-day visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh.

only a portion of Myanmar’s ethnic groups, were joined by another 100 schoolchildren wearing white slacks and white T-shirts with the logo of the papal visit.

Banners and billboards along the road from the airport into the city proclaimed: “A heartiest welcome to the Holy Father, Pope Francis.”

Because the flight took off late at night, Pope Francis spent less time with reporters than he usually does. He made no comment about his hopes for the trip, only mentioning that he was told it was very warm in Yangon and he hoped the reporters would not suffer too much.

As is customary, the pope sent telegrams to the heads of state of all 13 nations he flew over on the way, including Italy.

In his message to Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Pope Francis said he was making the trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh Nov. 27 - Dec. 2 as a “pilgrim of peace, to encourage the small but fervent Catholic communities and to meet believers of different religions.”

The majority of people in Myanmar are Buddhist, while the majority of Bangladeshis are Muslim. Pope Francis had meetings with religious leaders scheduled in both countries.



once upon a time

your Tilley hat
sat on the chair
in the cabin porch
where you left it
before you went home
to the city
to die

a rakish hat
with a gull feather
tucked in its sweat band
totem
of the ritual
beach walks
we would take

once upon a time
before the walking stopped

your Tilley hat
so empty now
that I cannot bear to see it
and remember
what it represents
the walks
the gulls
the lake
your face brimming a smile
under the Tilley brim
your hands and heart
in touch with mine

once upon a time
before the touching stopped

you didn’t know that you would not be back
and now
your spirit lingers
when I pluck the hat
from its resting place
set it on my head
and finger the brim as you would do

once upon a time

By Joan Baragar

Canadians spend 30 per cent on food

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shows up less often at their door-steps.

As a result, we’re witnessing — and contributing to — the slow death of the traditional grocery store.

An increasing portion of the average Canadian’s budget — almost 30 per cent of all money spent on food — is dedicated to eating outside the home.

As well, most of us are shopping online for anything and everything. And food is part of that portfolio. Five years ago, barely one per cent of our food purchases were made online. Today, some analysts suggest that’s close to four per cent. We’re catching up to the Americans, who now buy seven per cent of their food online.

And prodded along by Walmart, online grocery shopping is expanding. Walmart’s online sales in the U.S. grew by almost 50 per cent last quarter and a lot of it was food. Canada is seeing similar trends.

Even though Canadian grocers’ balance sheets are in fairly good shape, Amazon — the boogeyman of retailing — has become a legitimate threat since it took over Whole Foods this summer. Amazon isn’t just a business killer, it destroys entire sectors. The bookstore was its first victim. And since its acquisition of Whole

Foods, we can assume that the grocery store is in Amazon’s sights. It’s redefining how the food industry makes transactions in a digitalized, borderless world.

In Canada, Grocery Gateway is a pioneer. For years, this fleet owned by Longo Brothers delivered food products in the Greater Toronto Area but barely made a profit. The company acquired Grocery Gateway in 2004 from a failed dot-com project.

For 13 years, the competition stood back and did nothing, for fear of cannibalizing a fellow market grocer. Several questioned the sustainability of operating a full fleet of trucks while charging a premium of 15 to 20 per cent on an order of \$50. But Grocery Gateway learned and is now expanding.

For Longo Brothers, it was about running a good business.

For Loblaws, it’s about fighting the Amazon effect, which is why we’re about to see a revolution in home food delivery.

Imagine coming home and everything is already done for you. Leveraged by data, food retailers have started to connect directly with homes. In some U.S. cities, Walmart is delivering food to the consumer’s fridge.

In 10 or 15 years, the possibilities seem boundless.

It’s possible, for example, that companies will own the food we

receive and we’ll only pay for what we consume.

It’s also possible that leftovers could be credited, resold on our behalf and used for something else, eliminating waste.

Similar gains can be achieved on the nutritional front. Consumers could wear portable devices that automatically tell their fridges it’s time to be replenished to satisfy customized diets. Or a Fitbit for food could see food retailers deliver healthy choices, directed by a personal tracker.

The new trends will force grocers to deal with better-informed consumers. All the data consumers need is readily available online, where they can also shop at their own pace. That should make consumers more rational, dampening impulse buying — a scary thought for many food companies. Grocers will need to be far more precise in their practices to match higher expectations.

The food retailing industry’s link directly to our homes may seem incredible but it’s only the beginning.

While management at Loblaws and other retailers are kept up at night seeking strategies for long-term survival in the face of the Amazon effect, the opportunities are endless.

At least Loblaws had the foresight to act before it’s too late.

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We cannot publish any letters to the editor unless you give us your full name, your address and your telephone number. (It is especially important to remember this if you are sending your comments by email).

Due to limited space we ask you to keep your letters short — 300 to 350 words maximum. The Prairie Messenger reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space requirements and newspaper style.



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National Geographic tells story of Christ’s tomb

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In the modern age, news about Jesus doesn’t just sell newspapers, it racks up page views, too.

In 2016, when renovations around the site believed to protect the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem were underway, religious leaders agreed to the temporary removal of the marble slab covering the tomb so that restorers could install a moisture barrier to protect it. It would mark the first opening of the space in perhaps centuries.

A team from *National Geographic*, which had been at the site to document the restoration, was allowed, during a relatively short window of time, to document the opening of tomb, in words, photos and video. *National Geographic* noted the interest by the number of clicks on the story and images the team posted about those 60 hours, which appeared on its website, not its iconic magazine, because of its immediacy.

“There was this incredible response to the news story in October (of 2016),” said Kathryn Keane, vice-president of exhibitions for *National Geographic* during a Nov. 9 interview with Catholic News Service.

More than three million viewers worldwide flocked to the *National Geographic* website to read the news documenting the removal of the slabs and to see photos that included images of broken marble around the tomb inscribed with a Christian cross.

“It was one of the highest-rated stories of the year for us,” said Keane. “We got a sense from that, that there would be a lot of interest in this story.”

Though the tomb of Christ had never been featured in the pages of *National Geographic*, the magazine’s iconic yellow frame this December features a Rembrandt painting depicting the face of Jesus on its cover, along with an accompanying story about what archaeology reveals about the life of Jesus.

The organization also had previously published the book *In the Footsteps of Jesus*, which is now being sold in paperback at its store. *National Geographic* also will debut a documentary Dec. 3 on its cable channel about the restoration work at the tomb, and recently opened its “Tomb of Christ: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre Experience” virtual exhibit, which uses 3D and VR, virtual reality, technology to provide visitors to its Washington museum a different way to visit the tomb.

“We have for many years been taking people on journeys to places that they may never get to visit,” said Keane, and with new technology, there are new ways to do that.

“We have many ways to tell a story,” said *National Geographic* archaeologist-in-residence Fred Hiebert. “The exhibition is a chance to walk into Jerusalem and into the church itself, the magazine article is mainly about the larger context of the footsteps of Jesus, we have a book about that, too, with maps, great storytelling, very historical . . . we do the whole story.”

The opportunity to present the story of the tomb arrived when officials from the Greek Orthodox Church asked *National Geographic* if it would be interested in



CNS/Rebecca Hale, National Geographic

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION — The National Geographic exhibition “Tomb of Christ: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre Experience” opened Nov. 15 at the National Geographic Museum in Washington and is on display through the fall of 2018. The historic renovation project will be featured as part of National Geographic magazine’s cover story in the December 2017 issue. Additionally, it will be featured in an upcoming episode of *Explorer*, airing globally Dec. 3 on the National Geographic Channel.

covering the restoration. The Greek Orthodox, along with the Armenians and the Franciscans, share stewardship of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the main structure over the smaller shrine, called the *Edicule* (Latin for “little house”), covering the tomb.

Hiebert, who had worked on a previous exhibition about ancient Greeks, joined a group of engineers, led by scientist and professor Antonia Moropoulou, who directed a team from the National Technical University of Athens, while they

restored the small shrine to structural and physical glory.

“Monuments talk, and the tomb of Christ was talking to us,” said Moropoulou, who spoke briefly at the opening night of the exhibition in Washington. “This was a place full of energy . . . it was a tomb but it was alive.”

And the team from *National Geographic* captured part of that life, with images of pilgrims arriving, the work before and after the restoration, the opening of the tomb, the reopening of the

Edicule and pilgrims crowding around the space once more.

J.J. Kelley, senior producer at *National Geographic Explorer*, had set up cameras inside the small shrine, hanging above the tomb to capture the moment when the slabs were lifted.

“I got chills, goose bumps being inside that space,” Kelley said during a panel at the museum on the opening night of the virtual “Tomb of Christ” exhibition. “It’s one of the most profound assignments you could ask for.”

Archaeologist finds his human side at the tomb of Christ

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Fred Hiebert’s identity is firmly grounded in academia and in his professional work as a scientist.

Over the years, he has studied and taught about ancient trade routes, such as the Silk Road, from China to Europe, and led underwater archaeology projects

beneath the Black Sea.

The lively and friendly archaeologist-in-residence at Washington’s National Geographic Museum is not a stranger, by any means, to ancient treasures and places.

He speaks about communing “like this,” closing his eyes, with objects and in places thousands of years old. He gets excited talking about a 5,000-year-old piece of

pottery or a 600-year-old brick, a piece at his office, which he excavated under water from a palace in central Asia.

“This was a sign of royalty to have that blue glaze,” he explained, holding the decorated brick that is in the shape of a slice of pizza. It’s part of the palace of Tamerlane, also known as Timur, a Turco-Mongol conqueror relat-

ed to Genghis Khan.

“I’ve been to Machu Picchu, I’ve been to the tombs of the Mycenaean kings in Greece and it’s . . . you commune with the past. You sort of close your eyes” trying to imagine cultures and people who lived there long ago, he said about his job.

It was an easy feat until his last assignment, one he wasn’t expecting and which took him in 2016 and 2017 to the bustling city of Jerusalem and the place long believed to be the site where Christ was buried and where Christians believe that he returned to life.

In addition to the quick visit, the tiny space within the shrine, where the tomb is located, snugly holds three or four people at most. But that’s where Hiebert ended up in 2016 after he had worked with National Geographic on an exhibit about the ancient Greeks.

The National Geographic team ended up filming, not just the work of those 60 hours, but also the emotions surrounding the opening of the tomb. Surprisingly, that included the emotions of its archaeologist. Hiebert said his knees started shaking during the opening of the tomb.



CNS/Oded Balilty, National Geographic

RESTORING CHRIST’S TOMB — A conservator cleans the surface of the *Edicule*, the traditional site of Jesus’ burial and resurrection, in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City of Jerusalem.

“In this case, there’s no possible way to close your eyes and commune with the past because everybody’s pushing you,” he said of the experience of visiting the *Edicule*, the small shrine within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, which is the home of the tomb.

“I’ve never been in a place where a Greek Orthodox monk says, ‘You have 30 seconds to be here’ ” and then tells you to exit, he said. That’s the typical experience many pilgrims get when they arrive to venerate the tomb.

“I’m not supposed to be like that,” Hiebert said in a Nov. 9 interview with Catholic News Service. “Earlier in the year, I was all by myself in (King) Tutankhamun’s tomb in the Valley of the Kings. My knees didn’t shake then.”

Though the tomb has many lessons, for Hiebert, it showed him an important one about himself: that even a scientist may occasionally have emotions while at work.

“There is a certain . . . something about the Church of Holy Sepulcher. It’s alive. It’s a living monument,” he said.

If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is “Thank You,” it will be enough.

— Meister Eckhart