



Kateri symposium

A celebration of indigenous culture and faith was on display at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Aboriginal Catholic Church in Winnipeg recently, with a wide-ranging look at how native ways of life relate to the teachings of Pope Francis.
— page 3

Premier's Award

Regina Catholic Schools has received the 2016 Premier's Board of Education Award for its Innovation and Empowerment: Continuous Action Planning Outcomes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Education.
— page 6

Raising kids Catholic

In the third of a series on raising kids Catholic, Brett Salkeld talks about some of the particular challenges our culture presents to Catholic parents trying to pass on the faith to their children.
— page 7

Art of listening

"What does it mean to provide a home for the homeless?" asks Tom Saretsky. Sometimes, more than providing shelter, it means to provide a listening heart.
— page 8

Arrival

For depth of meaning from another world to this one, the movie to watch is *Arrival* from Québécois Denis Villeneuve, writes Gerald Schmitz. It is a film that navigates the complexities of the human heart.
— page 9



Refugees and integration

Dr. Doug Gruner says a welcoming approach toward refugees is a key to their successful integration into Canadian life, and access to health care is vital to the process.
— page 11



Anglican and Catholic bishops issue statement

By Gavin Drake
Anglican Communion News Service

A group of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops have acknowledged both churches' failure to protect children, women and indigenous peoples.

In a statement issued by the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (Iarccum) Nov. 25 following the group's historic meeting in Canterbury and Rome last month, they call on the church to repent and seek justice for victims. They say that, "at the foot of the cross we, as bishops, have reflected on an 'ecumenism of humiliation.' We lament our failures and share the brokenness of our church communities."

They continue: "We failed to protect vulnerable people: children from sexual abuse, women from violence, and indigenous peoples from exploitation."

"In this communion of shame,

Gavin Drake is editor of Anglican Communion News Service, in London, U.K. The article is reprinted with permission.

we confess that our own feeble witness to God's call to life in community has contributed to the isolation of individuals and families, and even to that secularization which removes God from the public

space. We, as bishops, are called to lead the church in repentance and to seek justice for the abused."

The bishops have called their statement "an appeal from the Iarccum bishops to the bishops

and the people of the Anglican and Catholic communities."

They say: "we have discovered that as Christ draws us closer to

— EXPERIENCE, page 4

Christians called to interfaith prayer

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A concluding reflection on Christian-Islamic relations by Rev. Bernard de Margerie was presented at the final session of "A Christian Study of Islam: An Introduction" Nov. 15 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

"I want to remind us of (finding) a pathway for Christians to approach our Muslim brothers and sisters and Islam in a way blessed by God," said de Margerie, reviewing the goals for the well-attended Christian Study of Islam series. "In mulling this over, we also listened to adherents of the Islamic faith and we learned a lot — but all of this was introduction."

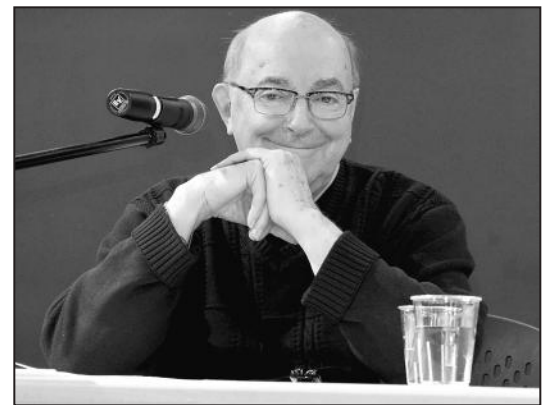
He acknowledged that not everyone's questions about Islam have been answered, saying, "That is the shortcoming of trying

to do too much in five evenings."

Reflecting on the purpose of interfaith dialogue, de Margerie said that the first call offered to Christians is to seize their own faith and live their commitment to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a deeper way.

"The main reason for Christians to get to know and approach people of other religions is to give greater glory

to God," he stressed. "We give greater glory to God when we become aware of — and grateful for — the grace and good he



Kiply Yaworski

CLOSING REFLECTION — Rev. Bernard de Margerie gave a closing reflection Nov. 15 to a five-part series entitled "A Christian Study of Islam: An Introduction," which was presented through the Foundations program in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

accomplishes in people of other religions."

Not every Christian is called to inter-religious engagement or dialogue, de Margerie said. "However, some will be called in the name of our faith, which holds that God loves everyone on earth."

"We say 'in and through Jesus' — that is our faith — but we must not live so hermetically sealed in the Christian silo and the Muslim silo that we never learn to see and give thanks to Almighty God, to Allah, for the good that is done in other religions. That is what Vatican II says: there are 'rays of the gospel' in other religions."

According to the teaching of the church, members of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths worship the same God, though there are major differences, he said. "It is true that our Muslim brothers and sisters don't recognize the divinity of Jesus. For us, that is a major tenet of faith. Our Jewish brothers and sisters also do not recognize the divinity of Jesus, but they are part of our roots."

After 50 years of ecumenical dialogue between Christians there are still fears about Christians of different traditions praying together, let alone praying with those of different faiths, he said.

"But if we worship the same God, surely that should draw us together. This is not to change our religion. The key to authentic inter-religious prayer is a sense of being rooted in one's own tradition and openness to the workings of the Spirit in other traditions."

Vatican II teachings express the conviction that the Holy Spirit

— GRACE, page 8

Anti-trafficking project gets Opus Prize

OMAHA, Neb. (CNS) — Social entrepreneur Sarah Lance has been awarded the 2016 Opus Prize for her work as director of Sari Bari in Kolkata, India, a non-profit anti-trafficking initiative.

The organization offers "opportunity and hope" to women who have been impacted by Kolkata's sex trade, or who are vulnerable to trafficking, said an announcement

on the award. Sari Bari employs 120 women, training them as artisans in a safe environment. The women transform used saris into beautiful handmade products — blankets, bags, purses, scarves, ties and more — while creating new lives for themselves and promoting freedom for other women.

The prize is \$1 million and "will allow Sari Bari to double

the number of women working for the organization, as well as expand critical services for members of the Sari Bari family to heal, support and build with each other," Lance said in a statement.

There were two Opus Prize finalists: Jesuit Father Peter Balleis, of Jesuit Worldwide

— PRIZES, page 15



CNS/Max Rossi, Reuters

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASON — The Vatican Christmas tree is positioned in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 24. As the 25-metre-tall spruce tree was erected, the Vatican released Pope Francis' liturgy schedule for Advent, Christmas and the month of January. The tree is from the Trentino province in northern Italy.

Doubts about faith should spur deeper study: pope

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Everyone experiences doubts about their faith at times — “I have” many times, Pope Francis said — but such doubts can be “a sign that we want to know God

better and more deeply.”

“We do not need to be afraid of questions and doubts because they are the beginning of a path of knowledge and going deeper; one who does not ask questions cannot progress either in knowledge or in faith,” the pope said

Nov. 23 at his weekly general audience.

Pope Francis said that although the Year of Mercy has concluded, he still wanted to continue his general audience reflections on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

With fewer than 10,000 pilgrims and visitors present and with rain forecast, the Vatican moved the audience indoors to the Vatican audience hall.

The pope, with a voice that was a bit hoarse, focused on the spiritual works of mercy of “counselling the doubtful” and “instructing the ignorant,” which he said was not meant as an insult, but simply as a description of a person who does not know something.

Calling a lack of access to education a “grave injustice,” Pope Francis asked those in the

audience hall to give a round of applause to teachers and the “long list of saints, who throughout the ages, brought education to the most disadvantaged.”

Education, he said, is both a work of evangelization and a work of mercy and justice because it recognizes the dignity of the human person, fights discrimination and, by preparing people for jobs, combats poverty.

The work of mercy of counselling the doubtful involves attempting to “soothe that pain and suffering that come from the fear and anguish that are the consequences of doubt” about the goodness of life and God’s love.

“I think someone would ask me, ‘Father, I have many doubts about the faith, what should I do? Don’t you ever have doubts?’” the pope said. “I have many,” he said,

“there are times when everyone has doubts.”

The key, he said, is to see those doubts as a call to deepen one’s faith either through study or through seeking the guidance of another believer.

“To do this, it is necessary to listen to the word of God and understand what it teaches us,” he said. “But, at the same time, an equally important path is that of living the faith as much as possible.”

When faith is seen mainly as “an abstract theory,” he said, “doubts multiply.”

But when faith is lived and shown in service to others, the pope said, “then many doubts vanish because we feel the presence of God and the truth of the Gospel in the love that, by no merit of ours, lives in us and that we share with others.”



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE MEETS SCIENTISTS — Pope Francis greets British theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking, during an audience with participants attending a plenary session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at the Vatican Nov. 28. The pope asked the experts to discuss the impact of scientific knowledge and technology on people and the planet. He explained: “We are not custodians of a museum and its masterpieces that we have to dust off every morning, but rather collaborators in the conservation and development of the existence and biodiversity of the planet and human life.”

Need co-ordinated, creative approach to stem drug abuse

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The growing problem of drug abuse and increasingly creative and sophisticated ways suppliers reach users call for increased co-operation in preventing and stopping substance abuse, said several speakers at a Vatican-sponsored workshop.

More than 50 experts in medicine, science, the judicial system, government and social policy, and pastoral care were invited to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences to discuss innovative and effective solutions to drug use, abuse and prevention.

Pope Francis himself requested the special study session, which convened Nov. 23 - 24, and he was expected to speak to the gathering the last day.

During the meeting’s opening session, Queen Silvia of Sweden spoke about the importance of focusing on young people and helping them make decisions and cope in ways that promote their well-being. That approach is central to the work of Mentor International, the organization she founded with the World Health Organization, she explained.

Education and information alone are not enough to keep people from abusing drugs and alcohol, she said; prevention also requires “strengthening societies, families and children to choose healthy lifestyles.”

Sweden has highly restrictive laws aimed at cutting the illegal drug supply and demand, and it has extensive programs for preventing and treating addictions. The UN Office on Drugs and

Crime says Sweden has one of the lowest drug-use rates in the world and attributes it to the country’s unique approach to the problem.

Robert DuPont, who was the first director of the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse, told Catholic News Service that Sweden’s drug policy is a model for the world.

“What’s key about it is that across the political spectrum, from the left to the right, they agree that drug use is a bad idea,” and they also restrict its use without incarceration, he said.

DuPont, who is a medical doctor and psychiatrist, said Sweden uses its police force and criminal justice system to encourage users to begin, remain in and complete drug treatment programs.

In fact, no drug policy can work if it’s only about law enforcement or only about treatment, he said, explaining, “You need both.”

DuPont, who said he has spent decades working with the White House and federal government on drug policies, including the “Just Say No” campaign, said U.S. policies have worked in limiting the problem.

“When people say ‘the war on drugs’ hasn’t worked, what they mean is there’s still a problem,” he said. What isn’t being considered, he said, “is that it could be a lot worse.”

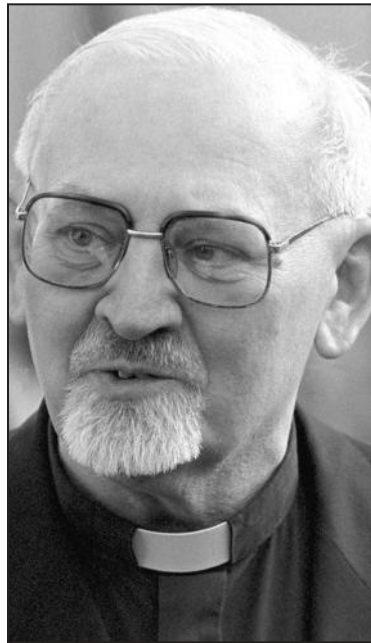
The drug problem has ballooned in recent years, he said, because the supply of drugs has increased “exponentially” because drugs are low cost “and people have more access,” especially through the Internet, including receiving anonymous home delivery “like a pizza.”

Condolences over Fidel Castro’s death

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In a video message, Cuban President Raul Castro announced the Nov. 25 death of his 90-year-old brother and longtime Cuban leader and communist icon whom many in Latin America know by just one name: Fidel.

“It is with great sorrow that I come before you to inform our people, friends of our America and the world, that today, Nov. 25, 2016, at 10:29 p.m., the commander in chief of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro Ruz passed away,” said his brother Raul, who took over control of the island in 2006, after Fidel Castro, became too sick to govern.

Until that year, Fidel Castro had ruled Cuba in some form since 1959, the year he led a revolution that toppled the government of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. Over the years, he survived attempts to be toppled by others, including the United States. He gained fame throughout Latin America, where many saw him as a David-against-Goliath figure each time he denounced the commercial, “imperialist” interests of the U.S. as attempts to rob the region of its riches.



CNS 2004 photo/Greg Walker

KOLVENBACH DIES — Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, former superior general of the Society of Jesus, died in Beirut Nov. 26, four days before his 88th birthday.



CNS/Alex Castro, Reuters

CASTRO DEAD — Pope Francis and former Cuban President Fidel Castro grasp each other’s hands at Castro’s residence in Havana Sept. 20, 2015. Castro, who seized power in a 1959 revolution and governed Cuba until 2006, died Nov. 25 at the age of 90.

But for others Castro was a menace and a dictator, particularly those whose properties were seized when his regime nationalized homes and businesses on the island nation without compensation. Over the decades, he was accused of a range of wrongdoings, from unjust imprisonment to executions to religious persecution. Others lauded him and pointed to Cuba as a model for other Latin American countries to emulate in the areas of education, medicine, and gender and racial equality. Many also blamed the U.S. embargo against Cuba, not Castro’s governance, for the island’s financial woes.

Recognizing the complexity of the different feelings the Cuban leader evoked in life — and now in death — Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, where many Cuban exiles live, released a brief statement Nov. 26.

“His death provokes many emotions — both in and outside the island. Nevertheless, beyond all possible emotions, the passing of this figure should lead us to invoke the patroness of Cuba, the Virgin of Charity, asking for peace for Cuba and its people,” Wenski said.

He repeated the words later that day during a mass “for peace in Cuba” at the *Ermita de la Caridad* in Miami, a shrine devoted to the Virgin of Charity of El Cobre, the patron saint of Cuba, and a place, he said, built by the sacrifices of Cubans in exile.

“On the eve of this first Sunday

of Advent . . . we have learned that Fidel Castro has died,” Wenski said during the homily. “Each human being, each one of us, will die and we will all be judged one day. And now it’s his turn.”

In a telegram in Spanish, Pope Francis extended his condolences to Raul Castro on the “sad news” of “the death of your dear brother.” The pope, credited with the rapprochement between the U.S. and Cuba, also expressed condolences to the government and to the Cuban people, and said he was offering prayers.

Catholics, like other religious groups in the country, witnessed the seizing of church properties, including schools, churches and other centres used for religious gatherings, following the 1959 revolution. Some locales were closed; others were put to non-religious uses. Priests and religious suspected of being against the revolution were jailed or expelled and practice of the Catholic faith dwindled on the island, particularly when the nation, under Soviet influence, was for a period an officially atheist country.

In recent years, however, the government allowed physical reconstruction of church buildings and some properties were returned to the care of the church. In 2015, the government granted permission for the construction of a new Catholic church on the island, something it hadn’t allowed in more than five decades.

Kateri symposium celebrates indigenous culture

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — A celebration of indigenous culture and faith was on display at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Aboriginal Catholic Church in Winnipeg recently, with a wide-ranging look at how native ways of life relate to the teachings of Pope Francis.

OMI Lacombe Canada’s Office of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), in partnership with St. Paul University in Ottawa and St. Kateri Parish, created the symposium: “Bringing Into Dialogue Native Ways of Life and the Teachings of Pope Francis About Our Common Home: the Mother Earth/Creation.”

Organizers said their intent was to foster dialogue about the problems facing indigenous peoples in Canada and to bring forth awareness and collective responsibility of the issues presented.

Archbishop Richard Gagnon spoke on Pope Francis’ Encyclical letter *Laudato Si’*, On Care for Our Common Home, and its timely references to human mistreatment of the earth.

The archbishop said Pope Francis quotes the Vatican II definition of the common good, and in the archbishop’s words, “the common good can only be properly achieved if there is peace, good order, security and stability and a concern for justice for all. Justice must be distributed, not



St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish

WINNIPEG — The women of St. Kateri Tekakwitha Church in Winnipeg gather for a water ceremony, specifically entrusted to women for the replenishing of blessings from the sacred waters.

kept for a few. Whenever these factors are violated, the result is unrest and violence. Therefore, the role of the state and politics is to practise distributive justice and to promote the common good. The role of religion is not political, per se, but to act as the elder voice to help purify our understanding and practice of justice.

“One need only look around our world,” the archbishop said, “to see the countless examples of unrest, pain, violence and open war as examples of the failure of building

the common good among mankind’s poverty, and poverty can take many forms. This is why the Second Vatican Council declared that the church must have a preferential option for the poor. This not only entails the proper destination of the world’s goods but a deep appreciation of the profound dignity of the poor. This is essential for the attainment of the common good. Pope Francis believes that his role as pope is to provide a clear pastoral example of what is necessary if we are to do this.”

The symposium did not avoid the centuries of struggles faced by indigenous people in Canada. Dr. Niigaan Sinclair, head of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, said Canadians like to refer to themselves as a country of immigrants. “We forget that we are also a country of partnership. The problem is one of misunderstanding, of relationships that are unbalanced and hierarchical. Every aspect of this country is based on violence in regard to indigenous people,” but, he

added, there is no one individual or individuals to blame.

“In Anishinaabe love is defined as how someone opens us up. This is the biggest struggle, we love each other differently.” Sinclair said as native people continue fighting for their rights, the laws of the land are on their side. “Canada,” he said, “is on a massive losing streak of court trials.”

The pastor at St. Kateri, Rev. Nicanor Sarmiento, himself an indigenous person of an Andean tribe in Chile, and author of *Andean Christian Theologies, Elements of a Rainbow of Theological Voices*, said that by the mere fact that all people stand on the ground “we are all attached to the cosmos, you cannot separate from it. Everything and everyone in this world is interconnected.”

Sarmiento spoke of the Dene of the boreal and Arctic regions of Canada who believe “everything has a spirit; everything has the breath of God within it.”

He said the parishioners of St. Kateri have incorporated important indigenous symbols and rituals into the life of the church, such as drumming and smudging.

Later in the morning a group of women conducted a sacred water ceremony performed for special events and feast days. The water ceremony is entrusted to women for the replenishing of blessings upon them from the sacred waters.

Integrating Catholic and indigenous identities part of reconciliation

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Reconciliation between the Catholic Church and indigenous peoples has been a life’s work for Harry and Germaine Lafond, one that started with integrating their own dual identities.

The Lafonds say Our Lady of Guadalupe may provide a key to reconciliation.

Harry Lafond belongs to the Muskeg Cree First Nation in Saskatchewan where he grew up in a Catholic family with a Cree father and a Métis mother. “I always had a need to be involved with the church in some way or another even as a child,” he said. He has played a leadership role as a member of the Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council and executive director of the Office of Treaty Commissioner in Saskatchewan. In 1997 Lafond was invited to the Vatican to attend the Synod of the Americas as an observer.

As a young man, Harry joined the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and began to prepare for the priesthood.

At university, while studying English literature and anthropology, Harry developed an interest in his indigenous roots and began asking questions about his Cree background.

Though Cree was his mother tongue, he had nearly lost it, he said. “We lived on the reserve, but we were not encouraged to be too involved in the Cree ways,” he said. So he began to educate himself about the Cree worldview and Cree ceremonies that had

been largely set aside.

The turning point came when he and another Oblate scholastic took a journey to northern Alberta to the land of the Nakota people who were holding an ecumenical gathering of many different nations and tribes along with the established church to talk about spirituality. “From that point on I realized very clearly the Cree way of believing and the spirituality of the Cree people was not something to be ignored, but something to be explained,” Harry said. “I haven’t looked back. It’s been a continuous journey.”

The journey has involved speaking to elders, learning ceremonies and protocols and studying the Cree language, to the extent he is now studying at the University of Saskatchewan to be qualified to teach it.

Lafond has found the Catholic faith and the meaning he has discovered in Cree spirituality are not “mutually exclusive.”

His wife, Germaine, grew up in a Métis family that spoke a patois of French and Cree at home. She attended a Catholic school run by the Sisters of Providence, a French order. Her mother died when she was eight, so Germaine went to live in residence. The experience was so positive she eventually joined the order and trained to become a teacher.

Harry met Germaine while she was a nun but both of them left consecrated life well before their friendship led to marriage. The couple has five children.

The Lafonds hope to find ways

of further integrating elements of indigenous spirituality that respects the diversity of expression in one Catholic faith.

At Duck Lake, Sask., there is a shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes where indigenous people have gathered on July 16 every year for the last 100 years, Harry said. There, they were able to organize what he described as a “Cree mass” that began with a pipe ceremony by one of the elders who is considered a “knowledge keeper of his people.” Then a priest celebrated the eucharist in the Cree language. When the mass ended, the elder “closed the service by putting the pipe down.” Though it is not always easy to find a priest who speaks Cree, they have tried to continue this tradition.

While there is growing curiosity about indigenous spirituality, passing the Catholic faith on to the next generation is not easy. “There’s a lot of anger about the residential schools,” Harry said. “People are expressing their anger by letting go of everything.”

Because the church exercised such control over our communities for a number of years, with missionaries exerting authority and almost becoming the governance, many are expressing their freedom, he said. The younger generation is saying: “We really don’t need the church. Our spirituality has been given to us as a statement of emancipation.”

“I don’t know where that’s leading us in terms of a healthy Catholic Church in our community,” he said. “In our own parish, it’s just a small group in our gen-



CCN/D. Gyapong

WORKING TOWARD RECONCILIATION — Germaine and Harry Lafond during a visit to the Apostolic Nunciature in Ottawa in November. Reconciliation between the Catholic Church and indigenous peoples has been a life’s work for the Lafonds.

eration that continues to go to church.”

Young people bring their children in to be baptized and come once in a while, he said.

Our Lady of Guadalupe may provide a key.

“We need to peel back the leaves and explore the depths of Our Lady of Guadalupe’s message,” Harry said. “I think there is something there to lead us forward.”

The apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico 500 years ago and her miraculous image captured on the *tilma* or cloak of a St. Juan Diego led to the conversion of millions of Aztecs in Mexico 500 years ago. The cloak was recognized by the Aztecs as a pictograph using symbols understandable to their culture and por-

trayed the Virgin Mary as a pregnant indigenous woman.

“If we explore our Lady of Guadalupe, in my personal opinion, we only understand a shallow part of who she is to us, as someone who delivers a message,” he said. “I think we get the headlines. We have to discover the content, the details, the gift, the spirituality she came with.”

“What message is she delivering about indigenous cultures and Christ’s message of salvation and resurrection?” he asked. “I think it becomes part of the reconciliation process within the Catholic Church itself in North America,” he said.

Reconciliation as a foundational belief system needs to be

Polls: Canadians demanding better palliative care

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — If there's anything that unites Canadians, it's their overwhelming support for something few of us have.

National polls have continued to highlight the desire for more and better hospice and palliative care for the dying, yet only 16 to 30 per cent of terminally ill Canadians have appropriate access to such services, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

How strongly Canadians feel was revealed in a Nanos-Globe and Mail survey conducted at the end of October. Almost 60 per cent of Canadians said they would pay higher taxes if the public health system paid for in-home caregivers, financial support to families caring for loved ones and palliative care, according to the poll.

That backs up a Harris/Decima poll from 2013 when 96 per cent of Canadians said they support hospice and palliative care for the dying. In Parliament, a private member's bill calling for a national strategy for palliative care has been gaining widespread support.

Catholic health providers are demanding a change. At the end of a Nov. 7 - 9 conference in Ottawa organized by the Covenant Health Palliative Association, Catholic

health care institutions came away asking for changes to the Canada Health Act that would see home and palliative care covered by provincial health plans — just like X-rays, blood work and family doctor visits.

The Catholic institutions have popular opinion on their side. More than four out of five Canadians (85 per cent) told an Ipsos survey in August they wanted palliative care to be an insured service under the Canada Health Act.

Home care is currently not covered under the Act. What financial support there is varies by province, said Covenant Health's Karen MacMillan, senior operating officer of acute services at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital in Edmonton.

"The Health Act was written in the '60s. Really, what it covered was acute care services," MacMillan said. "There are some who are worried that if you open up the act that it becomes a huge negotiation and it's years in the making and it just bogs down, versus amending the act to include palliative home care."

People would rather die at home, but Statistics Canada reports 70 per cent of deaths in Canada happen in hospitals.

"They're dying in the most expensive setting," said St. Elizabeth Health Care spokesperson Madonna Gallo. "It's obvi-

ously not simple or straightforward or it would have happened already, but if we could shift some of those resources into other areas of the system and proactively provide more palliative care sooner, and in other types of environments like home and residential hospices — quality palliative care can save the system a lot of money over time."

Even if Canadians are willing to pay higher taxes to access palliative care at home, they might not have to, according to St. Elizabeth senior vice-president Nancy Lefebvre.

"People always talk about not having enough money in the health care system. And the concern is, is that a reasonable goal? Will it bankrupt us?" said Lefebvre.

"I think we need to be looking at the fact we already spend \$220 billion in health care, of which home care is only five per cent. We have the money. It's how we currently utilize the money."

Just declaring home care services covered under the Canada Health Act doesn't magically make non-existent services available, warns Catholic Health Association of Canada executive director Michael Shea.

"There are other factors in terms of the co-ordination and delivery of palliative care that need to be addressed and understood within the sys-

tem as well," Shea said.

"It's going to cost us more money to set it up, but then if you set it up you (will) start to see the flow then happening into the community and you can actually take some resources out of the more costly system," said MacMillan.

Today, the palliative care system relies heavily on the labour and the bank accounts of ordinary Canadians caring for their parents and other loved ones at home. Half a million Canadians are purchasing home care services. The Covenant Health Palliative Care Association estimates that fami-

lies typically shoulder 25 per cent of the cost of palliative care at home.

With Canada expected to be home to 3.3 million seniors over the age of 80 by 2036, compared to just 1.3 million in 2009, demands on family are rising fast. St. Elizabeth Health Care research suggests 58 per cent of Canadians expect to become caregivers in the near future.

In 2012, Statistics Canada reported almost half a million Canadians needed help with a chronic health condition but did not receive that help.

Experience of communion is communion of poverty

Continued from page 1

the full visible unity which is his will, we are led to the foot of the cross, where we stand together with the One who bears the pain of broken humanity. This too is a deep experience of communion which some have described as a communion of poverty, of persecution, even of blood.

"During these days together, we have shared testimonies from both communities, struggling in dire circumstances in our respective regions. These included environmental degradation; mass migration; war and persecution resulting in refugees, displaced populations, and post-conflict trauma; societal decisions eroding the dignity of human life from beginning until natural end; human trafficking and modern slavery. This 'ecumenism of the cross' unites us as we bear together the plight of our people who face the challenges of our troubled world.

"An essential dimension of our 'communion of the cross' is standing with the poor, and reaching out together to reveal Christ's presence among those at the margins of our world. South Sudan, Pakistan and other places of conflict were very much in our prayers.

"In the Middle East — the place where the Word became flesh — the very life and witness of Christian communities is threatened. The changes in our world since the inauguration of Iarccum in 2001 call for deeper commitment to work for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, where the meaning of the cross is a concrete

reality for millions, in what is now an age of terror and destruction."

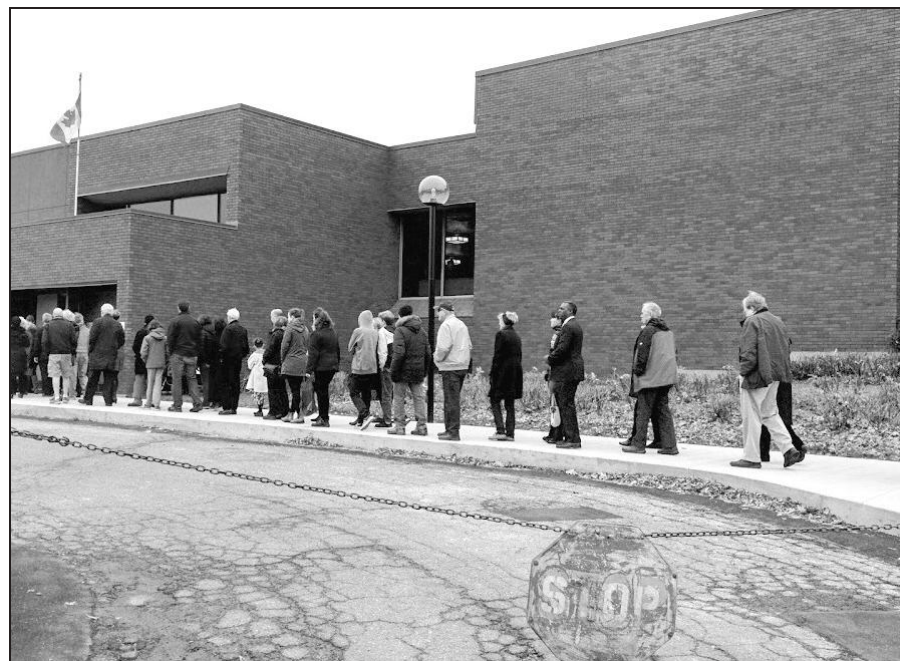
During their meeting, 19 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops were "sent out" for joint mission by Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury from the very place from where Pope Gregory sent Saint Augustine to be the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

"As Anglicans and Roman Catholics have done in their local contexts throughout the world, in our sharing with one other in conversation and in prayer, we found ourselves living the real but incomplete communion that exists between our churches," the bishops said. "The unity we seek is a unity which, to a significant degree, we were already experiencing. . . .

"Gathering for Vespers at the Church of San Gregorio in Rome, from which Pope Gregory sent Augustine of Canterbury to England at the end of the sixth century, Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin commissioned us to be artisans of healing and reconciliation in the power of the Gospel, and to go forth as pairs of pilgrims, returning to our home nations and regions to encourage common prayer, mission and witness. . . .

"Mindful that Jesus sent his disciples forth in pairs, we as pairs of bishops . . . go forth now motivated by our commission to continue our pilgrimage to unity and mission, developing plans of action, spreading the vision we have shared among our episcopal counterparts, our clergy, and our lay faithful.

"We go forward together summoned to extend the mercy and peace of God to a world in need."



Dennis Gruending

SOLIDARITY GATHERING — People wait in line for a standing-room-only multi-faith solidarity gathering of 600 at Machzikei Hadas Synagogue in Ottawa on Nov. 19. Earlier in the week, someone painted racist and Nazi graffiti on two synagogues, a mosque and a United Church, as well as on a Jewish woman's home. Rabbi Reuven Bulka, the spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas, greeted those present and welcomed Anglican religious figures, among them John Wilker-Blakley — ecumenical interfaith officer for Ottawa diocese and president of the Capital Region Interfaith Council (CRIC) — as well as Rev. Rhonda Waters, rector of the Church of the Ascension, and other United Church ministers, and imam Samy Metwally. A 17-year-old boy is facing charges after being arrested by police.

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Blanket Exercise reveals painful Aboriginal history

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — While playing the role of an Aboriginal being stripped of her land as part of an educational exercise, Danielle Duggan found herself fighting back real tears.

“It was very powerful,” said the Grade 11 student from Jean Vanier Catholic Secondary School. “I asked the lady as she was removing the blankets (which symbolized land) ‘why are you taking my lands’ and she told me ‘just keep walking.’ That made me feel really heartbroken because the native people, that is probably what they went through.”

This emotional experience took place Nov. 16 at the Mary Ward Centre when the Jamaica-born Duggan, along with the 19 other Jean Vanier students in the First Nations literature course, took part in the Blanket Exercise.

Developed by the multifaith group KAIROS in response to the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Blanket Exercise aims to shed light on the interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous people from the founding of Canada to present day.

The blankets represent the lands once inhabited by native peoples. As the exercise unfolds over about an hour and a half, the blankets are removed one by one as the history of Canada through Aboriginal eyes is recounted. Afterward, the group gathers in a traditional talking circle for a



Photo courtesy of the Mary Ward Centre

BLANKET EXERCISE — Students take part in a Blanket Exercise at Toronto’s Mary Ward Centre. The Blanket Exercise initiative was developed by the multifaith group KAIROS in response to the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

reflection period directed by an elder.

The Blanket Exercise has been an educational tool for almost 20 years, but was only recently introduced to Toronto’s Catholic students, thanks to a partnership between the board, the Mary Ward Centre and KAIROS.

“I appreciate having the chance to learn about what happened and the history behind everything,” said Duggan, who immigrated to Canada in May. “To understand someone you have to know what they’ve been through to see if you have any common ground with them.”

But the history she has learned rocked her image of Canada.

“I was shocked because Canadians treat immigrants so nicely, but they don’t even treat their own people with the same respect,” said the 16-year-old. “If you can treat some stranger like they’re the best person on earth, like they’re equal, why can’t you do that for your own people?”

Bob Phillips, the elder who facilitated the reflection period with Duggan and her peers, says he also knew nothing about the treatment of his people, which many have called “cultural genocide.”

“Growing up I didn’t learn anything about Indians,” said Phillips, who grew up in Toronto’s west end after moving

from Nova Scotia. “There was a great deal of denial within my own family.”

He recalled some advice received as a young boy from his mother.

“‘Don’t tell anyone you are an Indian,’ she said. ‘You tell them you’re English, French or Scottish,’” remembered the 71-year-old. “If you said you were a native person, there was a racism that instantly kicked in.”

Although the impacts of that racism are still felt today, Phillips said he’s hopeful for the future.

“In 10 or 15 years those kids will be in charge of our society. (So) with the changes that are happening today thanks to allies

like those sitting around the room today, I am very optimistic,” he said.

Vanessa Pinto, Toronto Catholic’s acting First Nations, Métis and Inuit program support teacher, said the Blanket Exercise perfectly aligns with the vision of Catholic education.

“Having our students acknowledge the wider story of Canada is what our call as Catholic educators in Catholic education is all about,” she said.

For Duggan, Catholic educators have a larger responsibility than many to address First Nations issues, considering the church ran some residential schools, where indigenous children suffered abuse in a system designed to strip them of their culture and traditions.

“It was the Catholic culture that caused the residential schools,” she said.

Ann McGowan, director of the Mary Ward Centre, says dealing with our own social injustices against Aboriginals is a matter of education.

“Education is what got us into this mess and education is what will get us out of it,” she said.

Siobhan Rowan, a spokesperson for KAIROS, said the Blanket Exercise is a proven vehicle to increase understanding.

“We’ve had amazing response across the country,” she said. “It is being done in every corner of the country with students, adults, government officials, with church groups, community organizations, government agencies.”

Climate change conference failed to address small farmers’ needs

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (Nov. 7 - 18) in Marrakech failed to address the needs of small farmers, says a representative from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

“There are a lot of politics around financing and mitigating,” said Genevieve Talbot, advocacy officer for Development and Peace, in an email interview from Marrakech. Developing countries, including China, were not willing to negotiate on anything regarding the mitigation of climate change through reducing emissions unless Canada, the United States, the EU, Australia and New Zealand increase their funding to help countries adapt to climate change, she said

“These kinds of political games have stalled negotiations on agriculture, for example, where an agreement could not be reached on what can be done,” she said. “And this is really worrisome, since agriculture is greatly impacted by climate change and developing countries need support, i.e. funding, to be able to adapt their agriculture to be able to survive.”

“Agriculture can play an important role in mitigation, (reduction of emissions) so we were hoping the G77 (Group of 77, a coalition of development nations) would agree to a compromise but

unfortunately not,” she said.

“We have to admit that developed countries are pushing for agriculture that is more in line with agro-business as a mitigation approach, which would kill local agriculture and small-scale family production in the Global South,” she said. “So the decision was to postpone the negotiations until the inter-session in Bonn in May 2017.”



CCN/D. Gyapong

Marie-Claude Bibeau

On Nov. 16 Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna and International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau announced \$1.8 billion in funding “to mobilize private-sector support for developing countries’ efforts to transition to cleaner,

more sustainable economies.”

The funds will “leverage private-sector investments in areas such as clean technology, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forestry, and climate-resilient infrastructure,” the government release said. “Canada will deliver this support through a range of trusted partners, including multilateral development banks, with demonstrated expertise in innovative finance solutions to address climate change.”

Talbot said there is not much information on how the \$1.8 billion will be spent, though a stress on “clean innovation” might skew the balance between mitigation and adaption, “especially after you factor in leveraging from the private sector.”

The money was part of Canada’s previous \$2.65-billion pledge to help countries “pollute less, be better equipped to resist the effects of climate change, and make a positive contribution to the global clean economy,” according to the news release.

Talbot said Development and Peace’s current ecological justice campaign is asking the Canadian government to devote half of its \$2.65-billion pledge to adaption projects that would help small farmers by “defending safe access to land for small family farmers; supporting agricultural practices that are good for the land such as agroecology; and ensuring farmers have a voice in political decisions that affect them.”

“What we would like to see is investment in climate resilient agricultural projects,” she said. “To be efficient, these funds must be disbursed through flexible financial mechanisms, not only through large multilateral platforms or banks.”

“Working with NGOs and other civil society organizations would definitely contribute to making sure that this funding is reaching communities and having a real impact on the day-to-day life of the most vulnerable people,” she said.

Development and Peace and its partners could offer expertise in addressing climate resilient agriculture, Talbot said. “We could, for example, support the recovery of Haiti through that kind of funding.”

“We could launch a project that would contribute to rebuilding the peasant economy and peasant agriculture in Haiti after Hurricane Matthew,” she said. “Most of our partners are already working on agriculture-related projects, for example, in Burundi, Paraguay and Indonesia, so it could also help to maintain projects that are contributing to the capacity of small family farmers to feed their families and their communities, as well as to increasing the capacity of soil to absorb CO₂ emissions, which would reduce the amount of GHG emissions that are usually produced by the agricultural sector.

On Nov. 19, Bibeau announced



Art Babych

Catherine McKenna

\$54 million to support humanitarian and development projects in Haiti, that includes \$2.65 million for humanitarian assistance, \$1.4 million to support the election, and \$50 million toward projects to strengthen agriculture.

“The damage caused by Hurricane Matthew severely affected Haiti’s local food resources, including fishing and agriculture,” a government news release said. “Canada has been one of the top donors in responding to the effects of the hurricane. Today’s additional humanitarian assistance funding will help provide emergency food assistance and respond to the agricultural needs of the most vulnerable.”

Regina Catholic Schools receive Premier's Award

By Joe Couture

SASKATOON — Regina Catholic Schools has received the 2016 Premier's Board of Education Award for its Innovation and Empowerment: Continuous Action Planning Outcomes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) Education.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association co-ordinates the Premier's Award each year. The award was presented on behalf of Premier Brad Wall during the SSBA Annual General Assembly.

"Regina Catholic Schools has been working more than a decade to achieve this within their division and has seen significant success improving their First Nations, Métis and Inuit students' reading levels, enrolment retention, credit attainment and graduation rates," Deputy Premier and Minister of Education Don Morgan said. "The Education Sector Strategic Plan has prioritized the need to reduce the disparity in graduation rates between indigenous students and their non-indigenous peers, and I thank Regina Catholic Schools for their

leadership in this area and the great work they do every day."

In its application for the award, Regina Catholic Schools described establishing a standard where innovation, empowerment and action have become the operating norms for addressing approaches to FNIM educational needs over the past 15 years.

Success for FNIM students is not the result of a single program or initiative; it is the outcome of ongoing planning efforts and sustained practices driven by targeted allocation of resources, professional expertise and well-forged partnerships, according to the division.

"To see the shared dedication from many stakeholders who together want to see success for our First Nations and Métis students is the reward," said Donna Ziegler, chair of the Regina Catholic Schools board of education.

Ziegler said that improved board policies, utilizing best practices, hearing from First Nations and Métis community leaders, engaging parents, working with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and empowering the

division's Circle of Voices Committee has provided a successful pathway for staff and students.

"It's an integrated approach that shows our commitment as a board, empowers staff to lead and supports students to be successful," she continued. "At least two-thirds of staff have received treaty rights training and we have treaty catalyst teachers in every school. Listening, actualizing and empowering has allowed our staff to be supportive and our students to flourish."

The \$3,000 award is sponsored by Xerox Canada. The award re-

cipient is recommended by a panel that includes representation from the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Education, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents of Saskatchewan.

"Xerox Canada commends the Regina Catholic School Division for its continuous innovation, empowerment and excellence in elevating the learning environment for First Nations, Inuit and

Métis students," said Mario Poirier, vice-president, Xerox Canada. "You are joining a well-respected list of past winners and are part of Saskatchewan's inspired educators who are helping students reach their full potential."

Developed in 1999, the Premier's Award recognizes educational innovations and improvements focused on student achievement that have been advanced or directed by boards of education. The prize is to be used to support or extend the innovation or project.

Introduction to Islam series concludes

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Three Christian panelists offered reflections on Christian-Islamic relations during the final session of "A Christian Study of Islam: An Introduction" Nov. 15 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

The five-week diocesan Foundations series included presentations by scholars and faith leaders, as well as a guided visit to a local mosque. The final session opened with a presentation by Rev. Bernard de Margerie, one of the organizers. Panelists then offered reactions and insights.

Sarah Donnelly — who offers spiritual direction, retreats, workshops and grief support groups to the ecumenical Christian community — began her reflection by recalling the five pillars of Islam: faith, prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage. She connected these with four non-negotiable pillars of Christian life outlined by Rev. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, in his book, *The Holy Longing*: nurturing a personal prayer life, worshipping in community, charitable and social justice actions, and cultivating a grateful and generous heart.

"We see that we share much in common with our Muslim sisters and brothers," Donnelly said.

"The three monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — teach that we must nurture the balance between praying as individuals and praying in community."

There is also a shared commitment to charity and social justice across both faith traditions, she stressed. "This pillar is our commitment to care for the poor."

She said that it is essential to Christian spirituality to live out of a spirit of gratitude and generosity. "The people who are true agents of transformation in our world are those who hold a lovely balance of truth and energy, and their graciousness, humour, humility, wisdom and courage draw people to them."

Gathering together over the five weeks of the series has been a time of learning, listening and prayer, Donnelly said. "This has been a privileged time for us. We commit ourselves to the practices and traditions of our own spiritual tradition, and at the same time we intentionally walk alongside and learn from those of different practices and traditions," she concluded.

Ponder and prayer were the two words offered by the second panelist, retired Lutheran Bishop Allan Grundahl. He described how he has been pondering and praying on the extravagance of God's love for all, and on the words of Jesus about "other sheep that I have who are not of this fold," as well as "in my Father's house are many rooms."

He posed some of the questions this has raised: "Can we really think that our God of love could possibly exclude any of God's created beings? Or do we Christians believe that only Christians are included in God's family?"

He also observed that in his daily Bible readings, he has increasingly noticed the word "all."

"God repeats it over and over again: 'I will gather all peoples to myself,' 'I will gather all nations to myself.' What does that mean for all religions around the world?"

Grundahl said he also prays and ponders about the tantalizing words near the end of John's Gospel where Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. "Obviously there is more for us Christians to learn," he said, reflecting on how Christians are challenged by "new stuff."

"One of the great temptations of all human beings is the temptation to limit the guiding of the Holy Spirit," he said. "Certainly we Christians are centred in the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, but we must also be ready to learn more from God's Spirit guiding today."

Grundahl concluded with a call for Christians and Muslims to continue to walk together. "Let us keep on being friendly with one another, and at the same time freely express to each other what are the most meaningful aspects

— TRUST, page 7



Frank Flegel

COOKING TEAM — Eight teams of four each from grades 10, 11 and 12 used the commercial cooking facilities at Miller High School in Regina to cook up a beef dinner with appetizers and desserts, working against a 90-minute deadline. The above photo shows the winning team from O'Neill High School.

Miller High hosts cooking competition

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — They all looked like professionals engaged in serious cooking competitions. Eight teams of four each from grades 10, 11 and 12 students from four Regina Catholic high schools used the commercial cooking facilities at Miller High School to cook up a beef dinner, complete with appetizers and desserts, working against a 90-minute time constraint. From 9 a.m., when the competition began, to 1:30 p.m. savoury scents wafted throughout the school, enticing some additional spectators from a basketball game going on in the gym.

"They all did so well that I could give a professional critique," said Lindsay Adams of Skills Canada, one of the judges. "There were no poor meals today. They were all great meals but obviously varying degrees of skill were displayed so I was able to give the students I would say professional levels of criticism,

which is awesome."

The idea for the competition came from Joanne Beach, a teacher/librarian at Riffel Catholic High School, from a similar competition she observed in Saskatoon. "I just thought it was such a good idea that we should do something like it at Regina Catholic."

She began organizing and recruited Richard Donnelly, the division's business partnerships consultant who approached several of his contacts as sponsors. Beach contacted the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association who agreed to sponsor the competition using Saskatchewan beef.

"It sounded good right off the bat," said Ryder Lee, CEO of the Cattlemen's Association. "The people preparing the beef of tomorrow are here in school, whether it's at home with their family or in restaurants."

Chef Martin Turcotte teaches the cooking program at Miller High School. Students had to use ground beef in their appetizer and

a striploin for their main course. Dessert was whatever they wanted. Teams practised at their own schools prior to the competition.

"All the teams succeeded very nicely. I was very impressed with the quality of the meal they put out for their age and their knowledge and their skills."

Turcotte said they were so good that next year he may "kick it up a notch." He and Adams judged the quality of the meals, including taste and presentation. Chefs came from four of Regina's top restaurants as well as one from the commercial cooking course at Saskatchewan Polytechnique at Moose Jaw. Each judged a team on their kitchen skills, including organization and teamwork.

The competition ended with the announcement of the top three winners. O'Neill Catholic High School team won first and a \$500 cheque with two teams from Miller High School taking second and third place and cheques of \$300 and \$200.



St. Philip Neri Parish

FUNDRAISER — St. Philip Neri Parish in Saskatoon held a steak night and silent auction fundraiser in support of a planned residential hospice, raising some \$10,000 that was recently presented to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation CEO Bruce Acton (right) by parish council chair Art Evoy (left) and parish nurse Ethna Martin. Still in the planning stages, the scope, vision and opening date for the hospice have not yet been finalized. It would be the first residential hospice in the city of Saskatoon. St. Paul's Hospital manages palliative care across the Saskatoon Health Region, and is home to a 12-bed palliative care unit.

Raising kids Catholic: faith and reason together

By Brett Salkeld

This is the last of a three-part series.

In this third of a series on raising kids Catholic I want to talk about some of the particular challenges our culture presents to us as Catholic parents trying to pass on the faith to our children. Can we identify with some precision certain cultural factors that are working against us, so as to effectively counter them?

It would be too easy to simply compile a list of complaints about contemporary culture. What I hope to do instead is to identify one key issue and show how it relates to several problems. I do not argue that it's the only issue, but that it is a foundational one important for us to understand and address.

We live in a time of confusion about the relationship between faith and reason. For that reason we are seeing both a crisis of faith and a crisis of reason. The Catholic tradition has the best resources for addressing this. I believe our odds of raising our kids in the faith go up dramatically if we get this relationship right.

Young people today face two challenges to their faith that look unrelated at first, but which can both be traced to a breakdown in the relationship between faith and reason. On the one hand, the new atheism proclaims that science has made religion obsolete and that

Salkeld lives in Regina with his family where he is scheduled to teach Principles of Catholic Education in Campion College's Catholic Studies program this winter semester.



Design Pics

QUESTIONS AND DOUBTS — Parents, teachers and pastors need to let kids know that Christian faith is not afraid of questions, writes Brett Salkeld. “When kids have questions or doubts, that should not worry us. . . . Rather, questions and doubts are opportunities to go deeper into the truths of our faith. Even if you don’t have the answer to your child’s question, congratulate them on such a good question and go searching for the answer together.”

faith itself is belief in something even over against the dictates of reason. On the other hand, a relativist culture doubts the capacity of reason to attain truth at all and insists that we have only our own experiences from which to derive our own truths — truths that cannot possibly be shared with others.

If the first imagines that reason contradicts faith, the second imagines that faith cannot be put to any objective standard outside the person, thus isolating faith from reason.

Catholicism insists that faith and reason can never be at odds. If they appear to be at odds, a Catholic takes this as an invitation to deeper reflection and understanding. We

have faith in reason, i.e., we believe truth exists and human persons have access to that truth. And we believe that reason has an important role in clarifying and deepening what we know by faith. In fact, the whole tradition of Christian theology is predicated on the belief that both faith itself and the content of our Catholic faith are reasonable.

This is precisely the antidote our kids need when faced with the claim that religion is irrational and doomed to pass away as our scientific knowledge increases, or that religion is limited to personal, private experience and can neither be shared nor make any contribution to the wider culture.

How can we communicate this antidote?

In the first place, parents (teachers and pastors too) need to let kids know that Christian faith is not afraid of questions. When kids have questions or doubts, that should not worry us. We should certainly never shame a child for questioning or doubting. Rather, questions and doubts are opportunities to go deeper into the truths of our faith. Even if you don't

have the answer to your child's question, congratulate them on such a good question and go searching for the answer together. This is immensely valuable preparation for life in the church.

In the second place, Catholic education has a key role to play here. Our schools need to communicate the compatibility, even the inseparability, of faith and reason. On the one hand, this needs to be done through a careful investigation of their relationship in philosophy or religion class. On the other hand, it needs to be modelled throughout the rest of the curriculum.

What is the relationship of faith and reason in math? Is math purely reasonable? Or are there presuppositions that we must take on faith that show themselves to be true in practice, but which could never be reasoned to from nowhere? (E.g., Euclid's axioms.) How is this faith like Christian faith and how is it different?

What is the relationship of faith and reason in science? How does science actually work? What are its presuppositions? What cul-

tural prerequisites were required for the development of modern science and the scientific method? Why were those prerequisites only ever found in a Christian culture? Why were so many priests (Copernicus in astronomy, Mendel in genetics, Le Maitre in modern physics) groundbreaking scientists?

What is the story we tell about faith and reason in history class? Are we repeating the new atheist mythology around the scientific revolution in our own Catholic schools? How does the Enlightenment's understanding of reason compare with the Catholic view? What role has religion actually played in armed conflict? What role has religion, and Catholicism in particular, played in the development of higher education and health care in our culture?

What is the story we tell about faith and reason in literature and the arts? Do we read the great Catholic novelists and poets who explore the role of faith in human life, showing its compatibility with reason, even the degradation of reason when it is deprived of faith? (Walked Percy springs to mind.) Do we know about the Catholic artistic heritage in the fine arts and in music? Do we know how the Catholic tradition thinks about the relationship between beauty and truth?

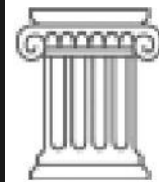
The philosophical distinctions concerning the relationship between faith and reason that I have dealt with briefly risk seeming arid and irrelevant if we don't also show the fruit of that relationship in a wide variety of contexts. When, on the other hand, it can be seen that the Catholic view of faith and reason underlies great achievements in science, culture and the arts, the exercise becomes more than merely academic.

One of the great challenges facing our Catholic schools, perhaps the great challenge facing our Catholic schools, is the fact that we cover them with posters and statues and crucifixes and fill them with prayer and religious activity and it all seems to have so little impact. Somehow the culture's view that faith is irrelevant or, at best, OK for those so inclined, touches many students more deeply.

On a recent CBC Radio program asking whether Catholic and public schools should be amalgamated, the most vocal proponents of amalgamation were graduates of Catholic high schools who said there was no real difference between their education and that of their friends in public schools. The easiest fix, they suggested, would be to have one system that simply offers religion classes to those so inclined outside the main curriculum.

In other words, many graduates of Catholic high schools had absorbed the idea that faith is easily separated from reason and can be tacked on to a secular education as an afterthought, that faith itself does not have any impact on how any other subject is taught or learned.

Putting faith and reason back together, in theory and in practice, is an essential task if we are to pass the faith on to the next generation.



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Trust in God's Holy Spirit

Continued from page 6

of our own faith, and then trust that God's Holy Spirit will continue to work through our pondering and praying."

The third panelist was Elaine Zakreski, a retired educator, author and parishioner at St. Anne Parish in Saskatoon, who along with her husband Peter founded the Hope for Malawi foundation to provide outreach and support for communities in Africa.

"We have heard many stories about hate and violence and fear," she said. "I think we need some love stories." She described profound and welcoming experiences and encounters among Christians and Muslims in Jordan and in the Malawi communities she has visited in Africa.

This included praying with women raising their grandchildren, relating words that resonat-

ed across cultures and faith traditions: "The light within me is the same as the light within you, and together we are one."

"Last year when we returned again we were joined by Muslim men, and people who didn't look old enough to be grandmas. I'm told that it has expanded in the village and I asked them why they are doing this, and they said 'because we feel good together, we feel at peace, because we feel happier and calmer, and we feel more unity.'"

Rita Taylor, co-ordinator of the Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together program in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, concluded the evening with words of thanks for the hundreds who have attended the series, and noted that many of the supporting documents and resources have been posted on the diocesan website at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/foundations

In listening to the other, we provide a home for them

Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



What does it mean to provide a home for the homeless? Other than providing a physical shelter for someone else, could you provide shelter for a person who needs to tell you their story? A home of the listening sort for the homeless? Some find it easier to open the

doors of their homes than the doors of their hearts. Where do you fit? Like my own father, my father-in-law, Art, was a tremendous listener. It's one of the things I most loved about him, and one of the reasons I miss him so much. He patiently listened to my stories of

struggle and of joy, and without comment or suggestion, allowed me to talk uninterrupted. He mastered the art of listening. To give of yourself demands a great deal of attention and effort so that others may give of themselves. The early 20th century writer Miles Franklin once wrote, "Someone 'to tell it to,' is one of the fundamental needs of human beings." Everyone needs the basic necessities of food, physical shelter, and clothing. However, the emotional necessities of life are just as important and need to be met through our listening, through our attention, and in our companionship to our friends, our families, and even

those we may not know well. A few months ago my wife, Norma, underwent gum-grafting surgery. I've had the same surgery in the past, so I knew how unpleasant it felt. Initially after the surgery the patient has to keep their mouth closed so as not to irritate the wounds or hinder the healing process. The surgery practically renders one mute for the first few days. During Norma's period of recovery I took advantage of her condition to vent my frustrations regarding some rather unpleasant incidents a few weeks before. I was holding onto my anger and agitation and needed to unload. Since Norma was incapable of providing a response, she had no choice but to listen to my story.

In precise detail, I explained how I was going to handle the situation and what I was going to say to the perpetrator of my discontent. I was in fine form, getting more and more empowered by my passion, and I'm sure Norma must have felt like the proverbial lamb in Isaiah: "As a sheep before its shearers is silent, so (she) did not open (her) mouth." In going through my plan, rehearsing my script and unburdening myself of frustration, I entrusted Norma with a sacred piece of my life. I said no more. After a few days had passed, Norma and I sat down to revisit our conversation. By this time, Norma had healed sufficiently enough to respond. I didn't come back to my story to add anything further, to defend my position, or to apologize for how I felt; instead, I used the opportunity to express my profound gratitude to Norma for simply listening to me. I told her that after sharing my story, a peace enveloped me that I never would have expected. Norma did mention that there were many things she had wanted to say; however, she didn't. She couldn't. Her listening, her silence, was the key to my healing. The ensuing days after my venting session allowed me to

process what I shared. I was able to see and think with greater clarity. My anger was replaced with peace, and my frustration was replaced with calm. No longer was I seeking to transmit the hurt I had received. Instead, through my sharing and through Norma's listening, I was transformed, and in that transformation I was receptive to new life — a new life of heart, spirit and attitude. Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, once wrote, "Our listening creates a sanctuary for the homeless parts of another person." Our angers and our frustrations, our hurts and our jealousies can render us homeless. To have someone truly focus and listen, without the need to interrupt or to give advice, gives us the security and shelter we seek; yet, that can be difficult for the listener. There's a propensity in us to want to fix, to advise, to comment, to defend, to justify and even to console. "It takes two years to learn to talk, but 50 to master silence," writes Ernest Hemingway. To "sit up and shut up" and listen to a voice other than our own takes a great deal of self-restraint. That day, Norma's listening gave me a greater, and even stronger sense of home and comfort. For someone to tell you they trust you with their problems and with their struggles is to be paid one of life's highest compliments. When someone trusts you, they are entrusting you with a sacred piece of their life. Your responsibility is to guard their heart and treat them with care, with gentleness, with honour, and with respect, which is accomplished through listening. If you can go through life and someone, even one person, can say they found a home in you, then you will have lived a fulfilling life, regardless of how much money you make, how much popularity you have and how much attention you generate. Popularity, attention and money are fleeting, but providing a safe place for someone, when the storms in their life rage, will stay with you and with them forever. In the words of Emily Dickinson, "I felt it shelter to speak to you." May you find a home in these words so that others might find a home in you.



Paul Paproski, OSB

ADVENT STILLNESS — An Advent wreath in the church at St. Peter's Abbey encourages a sense of silent contemplation. Jeanette Martino Land writes about how difficult it can be to find God in the midst of the busyness of pre-Christmas preparations. She has made a conscious effort to focus more "on preparing my heart for Jesus' birth, rather than getting stressed out with often-unnecessary preparations I forced myself to do . . ."

Advent-Christmas preparations God's way

By Jeanette Martino Land

For too many years the weeks before Christmas were filled with to-do lists to keep me on deadline: buy and wrap gifts, address and write notes on cards, bake hundreds of different cookies, decorate the house, entertain guests, etc. Too often it was difficult to find time to spend with God in the midst of all this busyness. Yet, Christmas is the Son of God's birthday!

A giant vacuum created by the commercialism of the holiday season was sucking me in.

I decided to pull the plug. I've made a conscious effort to focus more on preparing my heart for Jesus' birth, rather than getting stressed out with often-unnecessary preparations I forced myself to do. After all, wasn't I the self-appointed vice-president in charge of creating Christmas for my family? Yet, the time and effort I put into "making Christmas just right" for everyone often went unappreciated.

My Advent was spent in watching and waiting for accolades, instead of watching and waiting for Jesus!

Martino Land is a freelance writer from North Palm Beach, FL.

Luckily I grew in grace, as well as age . . . albeit more slowly! Now I've pared down the gift list, preferring to give the gift of time in getting together with family and close friends. All year long I keep an eye out for suitable and meaningful gifts for family and friends near and far. These are stored in one spot, ready to grab and wrap during free snatches of time. I purchase cards during after-Christmas sales and begin to address them during Thanksgiving weekend. Decorating my heart by *refocusing, reflecting, rekindling, and rejoicing* in he who is to come takes precedence, while Christmas decorations are kept to a tasteful minimum. First and foremost, I lovingly place the manger in a prominent spot in the living room, carefully hang a wreath on the front door, and selectively put out a few favourite ornaments and centrepieces.

Now I enjoy baking cookies, for I've stopped holding myself accountable for making the hundreds of different kinds of cookies I once forced myself to do, as if I were running some kind of a race with myself that left me tired and irritable.

I love to entertain and try to offer hospitality . . . nothing elaborate, just simple hospitality of the heart. By welcoming others into

my home, I am welcoming Jesus. I knew I'd made progress the Christmas when arthroscopic surgery on my right wrist prohibited me from writing, wrapping, baking, and entertaining on a large scale. I was tempted to have a pity party for myself and let the holiday pass me by. God had other plans. When I learned good friends would be alone for Christmas, the hospitality of my heart was *rekindled* when I *reflected* on the situation and *refocused* on their needs, not mine. I planned a simple meal I could do one-handed, with my husband's help; graciously allowed my friends to bring some food to round out the meal; and gratefully let go of my pride, and my self-imposed title of vice-president in charge of creating the best Christmas ever, by buying cookies and dessert at the bakery!

At the end of the meal we put a candle on the store-bought cake and sang Happy Birthday to Jesus. It was one of the best Christmas feasts ever, for God had his way when I let go of creating Christmas by myself. Instead, I kept the spirit of Christmas in my heart, and then shared it with others in a truly communal feast . . . a real reason for *rejoicing*. It was a memorable Christmas — God's Way.

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

Grace alive in all humans

Continued from page 1

and grace are at work in the hearts of all human beings of all generations, opening up for them access to salvation in Christ, de Margerie noted.

"In the Catholic Church, recent popes have opened new pathways of spiritual awareness, of faith and hope, relating Christians to sisters and brothers of other religions, including Islam."

He cited the words of St. John Paul II, who said in 1979: "I cannot help thinking that it is urgent, especially today, when Christians and Muslims have entered into a new phase of history, to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds that unite them. As Christians we are invited to pray that we may

learn to interact and live with each other in the manner the Holy Spirit wants to lead us."

Some Christians will be called to explore praying together, said de Margerie — not just for Muslims, but with Muslims.

De Margerie encouraged Christians to build friendships with Muslims: "Seek social justice, reconciliation, peace, and genuine human development together."

As for "all the heavy, negative stuff" — such as terrorism and violence, western frustrations and apprehensions about huge migrations and stereotyping on both sides — de Margerie said: "All this calls for, on the part of Christians, responses that are truly shaped and influenced by Christian faith, hope and love."

Arrival and others: movie visions out of this world

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



There’s a famous verse in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5, that goes like this — Horatio: “O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!” Hamlet: “And therefore as a stranger give it welcome. There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

Doctor Strange (U.S.)
Arrival (U.S.)
Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them (U.K./U.S.)

The big screen has long had a love affair with strange and fantastical things both on earth and in the heavens. Arriving this month are the three big-budget

From a man who has experienced a miraculous cure Strange learns of a mysterious Himalayan sanctuary and journeys to Kathmandu to find it. The hooded robed figure who rescues him from a mugging turns out to be Mordor (Chiwetel Ejiofor), a sort of jedi knight who leads him to the “Ancient One” (a strikingly bald, pale Tilda Swinton), the “supreme sorcerer” and master practitioner of the mystical arts. She makes short work of his materialist skepticism. He becomes her student so that he too may discover his spectral supernatural self and exercise mind over matter-bending energies that include transporting oneself through time and space in an infinity of universes. Of course all is not well in this “multiverse,” setting up a fateful struggle with a rogue ex-student Kaecilius (Mads

from Québécois Denis Villeneuve who continues his rise in the ranks of major Hollywood directors. (He’s currently shooting *Blade Runner 2049*, a sequel to the 1982 sci-fi classic.) Adapted from “Story of Your Life” by Ted Chiang, it begins with quiet scenes from tender to tragic between a mother and daughter. Is this prologue or epilogue?

The mother is Dr. Louise Banks (Amy Adams), a linguistics professor whose skills as a translator have been sought by U.S. military intelligence. When giant pod-like UFOs land in a dozen locations around the globe including one in Montana (although shot in the Montreal area, none in Canada), she’s approached by a Colonel Weber (Forest Whitaker), and along with an ace theoretical physicist, Ian Donnelly (Jeremy Renner), given the most challenging assignment yet — decode any alien communications to discover their purpose.

With the arrival causing suspicion and panicked reactions, the Montana site becomes a military camp. Elaborate precautions are taken as, protected by bulky orange radiation suits, Louise and Ian with army escorts approach the immense grey shell and are able to ascend its low-gravity interior until reaching a transparent wall. Beyond that several dark squid-like creatures with seven tentacles appear wreathed in a wispy fog, making strange low sounds. In response to basic word prompts from Louise, these heptapods extrude an inky form of circular symbols. Nicknaming the aliens Abbott and Costello, Louise and Ian team up, overcoming their fears by shedding their suits, concentrating on interpreting the visitors’ intentions.

Their efforts take place in an atmosphere of escalating global crisis in which communications break down between the affected countries that include China and Russia. As all this is occurring Louise has visionary flashes of life with her daughter. What do they mean? Then, as the pods lift off a short distance, hovering above their landing spots, and the prospect of military action looms, Louise risks taking extraordinary action to prevent it. She is convinced the strangers pose no invading threat; rather their appearance offers a gift from another time and space.

Life, too, is a gift and a risk worth taking, even when we know how the story ends. Villeneuve gives this speculative fiction a profoundly human and one-world sensibility that elevates it to another level. As observed by Maddie Crum, culture writer for *The Huffington Post*, *Arrival* is “a movie that’s ultimately about seeking to understand values and perspectives that look alien to us.”

Fear of the alien and un-



Paramount

ARRIVAL — Amy Adams stars in *Arrival*, a film from Québécois Denis Villeneuve who continues his rise in the ranks of major Hollywood directors. More than “just” a science fiction film, it is a film that navigates the complexities of the human heart.

known is also a subtext of the latest flight of imagination from J.K. Rowling. In *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (<http://www.fantasticbeasts.com/>), written by Rowling and directed by David Yates who helmed the last four Harry Potters, there’s no need to leave the world to go out of it.

The retro setting is 1926 New York where a wizard named Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) arrives from the Old World carrying a briefcase containing a menagerie of magical creatures. A magizoologist devoted to their protection, he finds himself in a time of intolerance when fears are being spread by a “new Salem army” led by an anti-magic zealot, Mary Lou Barebone (Samantha Morton), and America’s secretive “Magical Congress” imposes rules to prevent exposure. Strange creatures manage to escape Newt’s magic case and matters spin out of control when it gets mistakenly switched with a similar one belonging to a hapless aspiring baker, Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler). The unsuspecting “No-Maj” (no-magic human, Yankee-speak for “muggle”) gets swept along on a wild ride.

Newt finds an ally in Tina (Katherine Waterston), an out-of-favour “auror” (a Potter term for a kind of magic police officer and investigator) and her mind-reading sister Queenie (Alison Sudol),

who beguiles Jacob. But they also come up against the darker designs of a powerful auror, Percival (Colin Farrell), who is using a troubled boy, Credence (Ezra Miller), from Barebone’s brood. A subplot involves a powerful Trump-like New York publishing tycoon (John Voight) whose senator son has presidential ambitions.

As Newt and friends try to safeguard and put a lid on the escaped fantastic beasts, the wizarding world erupts in conflict, unleashing a destructive “Obscurus” and conjuring the form of the dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald (a cameo appearance by Johnny Depp). Although the human world is “obliterated” back to a memory-erasing normal from this mayhem by a drenching November rain, such events portend showdowns to come.

The tangle of characters, story-lines and ever stranger creatures gets a bit much to sort out. But with four more films expected in the franchise, perhaps they will become as familiar as those of the Potter universe. Visually there are special effects galore.

Underneath all the spectacle lies a strangely disturbing vision — of threats from fearful No-Maj reaction (one comment describes humans as “the most vicious creatures in the universe”) and the spectre of magic being put to bad ends. Like Harry, Newt is going to need all the help he can get.

Vision of future is grounded in reconciliation

Continued from page 3

incorporated at all levels, from the family, up to a national level, he said.

“My vision of the future has to be grounded on reconciliation, on having the sense of safety to put it on the table, look at it, explore it as a way forward. United we can learn to celebrate diversity instead of fearing it,” he said.

Otherwise we will “continue to suffer the impact of racism, stereotyping, and oppressive beliefs” and not have the ability to deal with the Indian Act, other harmful legislation and barriers that were created to separate people, he said. In the church, there is the same need of some spirit of coming together.

Reconciliation is like what takes place in a marriage when there’s a disagreement, Germaine said. “You don’t walk away, but you look at each other, hold hands and look at it together, eye to eye,” she said. “That way we go beyond the mistakes and see how we can build on the differences.”

In the Cree worldview there’s a strong emphasis on *wakotowin* — the law of seeing relatedness with others, to seek to be related to the person we encounter, Harry said. If we seek our relatedness, then “diversity becomes a way forward of celebrating our humanity.”

Wakotowin is a “powerful driving force for Cree people,” rooted in the whole creation story about everything being related, he said. “It’s a law of love.”



Disney

DOCTOR STRANGE — Benedict Cumberbatch stars in *Doctor Strange*. “Fans of the sci-fi superhero genre will probably be reasonably satisfied,” says Gerald Schmitz, but “Beyond special-effects spectacle, don’t expect deeper magic here.”

productions reviewed here. Next month comes *The Space Between Us*, about the first human born on Mars, and *Passengers*, involving a spaceship to another planet; not to mention another episode in the *Star Wars* saga.

First up, director and co-writer Scott Derrickson’s *Doctor Strange* <http://marvel.com/doctorstrange>), another adaptation from the Marvel Studios gallery of comic book superheroes, the box-office success of which spells future franchise sequels. An opening confrontation between beings with supernatural powers lets us know from the get-go that forces of light and darkness are in play. The scene shifts to a hospital where hotshot neurosurgeon Dr. Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) practises life-saving arts. He’s also an arrogant smart aleck who lands in intensive care after crashing his sports car. He makes a partial recovery helped by sometime lover and fellow physician Christine Palmer (Rachel McAdams) but cannot accept that his shattered hands won’t heal enough to permit a return to normalcy, much less performing delicate brain operations.

Mikkelsen) and his disciples who have allied themselves with the “dark dimension” and Dormammu, its lord of everlasting torment.

Revelations follow as battles ensue for the three “sanctums” of New York, London and Tokyo. Strange needs saving a second time while earth is in peril. But, armed with the “eye of agamotto” and “cloak of levitation,” the doctor cum goateed sorcerer’s apprentice in a red cape rises to the occasion. A mid-credits appearance by a character from the Avengers hints at what’s to come.

Fans of the sci-fi superhero genre will probably be reasonably satisfied. Minor controversy has arisen over the curious casting of Swinton as the Ancient One, given a female Celtic origin in contrast to the male Asian figure of the comic series. Not that it matters much. Beyond special-effects spectacle don’t expect deeper magic here.

For depth of meaning from another world to this one the movie to watch is *Arrival* (<http://www.arrivalmovie.com/>)

Be least in kingdom by living in faithful expectation



Rev. Bill Stang, OMI, started a shrub and flower garden in the backyard of the archdiocesan residence one year. The next spring he placed railway ties along the fence and filled the space behind them with topsoil. In the process, he noticed a plant sprouting up in the compost bin. Thinking it might be a zucchini plant, he lifted it out and planted it in the freshly laid topsoil. The growing conditions must have been ideal, because that plant grew to be at least 20 feet long and produced, not zucchini, but three huge pumpkins. That small seed, thrown into the compost, frozen all winter and rescued in the spring, was transformed into a magnificent pumpkin plant that produced beautiful fruit. This seems like such a minor everyday reality, but when we take time to ponder it, the word “awesome” comes to mind.

Father Bill’s pumpkin plant can be a symbol of this season of Advent. This Sunday is known in the church as *Gaudate* Sunday, or Sunday of Joy. We are reminded that Advent is meant to be a healing journey of joyful expectation, leading to a deeper experience of the kingdom of God. We are invited to be even the least in that kingdom, and greater than John the Baptist.

The first reading is a marvellous description of transformation, of new life blossoming in the desert, much like Father Bill’s pumpkin plant rescued from the compost heap. It speaks of healing and wholeness and newness, the stuff that Advent is made of.

In the Gospel we are told that Jesus is the Messiah,

Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-The Pas, is chaplain at the Star of the North Retreat House in St. Albert, Alta. He continues to live out his motto, Regnum Dei Intra Vos (the kingdom of God is among you), which is his overriding focus and passion.

the one who was to come. That was proven by his miracles. The greatness of John the Baptist is his closeness to Christ. All the Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled in Christ, for whom John prepared the way. Jesus points out that what his coming is all about is to inaugurate the kingdom of God among us, and that the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist.

There will always be some struggle and challenge as we seek to follow the advice of John and put our faith in Jesus. John the Baptist’s dilemma about the identity of Jesus is an indication of that touch of mystery that will be a daily companion for the disciples. The Jesus that John encountered clashed with his expectations and left him wondering — was this man really the Messiah, the one who was to come, or should they look for another? His reply to John confirms that Jesus is the fulfilment of prophecy, but that his kingdom is not of this world. The focus of the kingdom of Jesus is on personal transformation and communal empowerment, not politics and economics, as important as that is.

The kingdom of Jesus had truly come into this world as God’s tender love for the poor and the marginalized, in a totally non-violent fashion that would end up as a sacrificial victim on the cross. That cross would prove, however, to be the very source of resurrection and new life, the key to the kingdom.

Third Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-6, 10 Psalm 146 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11
December 11, 2016	

In the second reading we are reminded of the mysterious nature of this kingdom that will grow not in spectacular fashion, but by love shown as patience and perhaps even long suffering. We are never to lose hope, however, for that suffering will be vindicated and transformed. We cannot lose when it comes to following Jesus. All that seems negative and dark will be turned to the good for those who believe and who love Jesus.

We are to be like a farmer who, during drought, knows the power of rain. The people of Kenya, where the Oblates are presently serving, know what it means to wait patiently for the rainy season that will transform the parched land into verdant green growth. Ours must be humble faith and long-suffering patience, like that of the prophets, and like the people of Kenya.

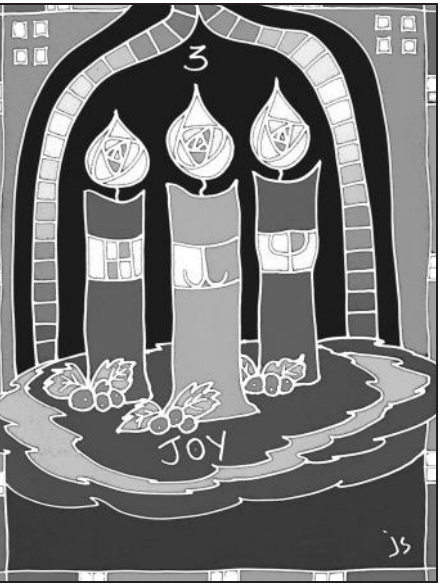
We need to be aware of our blindness, lameness, imprisonment and muteness as we journey with Jesus through the vicissitudes of our own lives. Faith in Jesus as Messiah does not mean a quick fix (“Many seek an easy, softer way,” as the Big Book of AA puts it), but an inner healing journey of joyful expectation. We must allow the Christ who has come, and the Christ who is present here and now, to transform us as we await the Christ who will come again.

Celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation during Advent is a great faith-filled way to deal with our darkness. Working the steps of the 12-step program for those in the program is another great way to journey through Advent toward a more meaningful celebration of Christmas, God among us.

Lionel is a man who has struggled with addictions and self-esteem for years. He has finally grown to where he can put his complete trust and confidence in the Messiah, has experienced forgiveness and healing through the 12-step program, and is now giving workshops on faith and self-esteem with his wife. His home life with his family has also been transformed as they pray together and share their lives together as a family in ways not possible before. He is truly experiencing the kingdom of God in his family and in his life with joyful gratitude.

The eucharist we now celebrate is a participation in the joyful expectation of Advent. The One who came, and who is to come again, comes to us now through Word and sacrament. Happy are we who are called to his supper.

So, let us strive to be the least in the kingdom by lives of faithful, joyful expectation, knowing we will be greater than even John the Baptist.



Stushie Art

Warrior ‘prophets’ who engage in bitter arguments do harm

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



A prophet makes a vow of love, not of alienation. Daniel Berrigan wrote those words and they need to be highlighted today when a lot of very sincere, committed, religious people self-define as cultural warriors, as prophets at war with secular culture.

This is the stance of many seminarians, clergy, bishops, and whole denominations of Christians today. It is a virtual mantra within the “religious right” and in many Roman Catholic seminaries. In this outlook, secular culture is seen as a negative force that’s threatening our faith, morals, religious liberties, and churches. Secular culture is viewed as, for the main part,

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being anti-Christian, anti-ecclesial, and anti-clerical and its political correctness is seen to protect everyone except Christians. More worrisome for these cultural warriors is what they see as the “slippery slope” wherein they see our culture as sliding ever further away from our Judaeo-Christian roots. In the face of this, they believe, the churches must be highly vigilant, defensive, and in a warrior stance.

It’s partly true that there are voices and movements within secular culture that do threaten some essentials within our faith and moral lives, as is seen in the issue of abortion, and there is the danger of the “slippery slope.” But the real picture is far more nuanced than the defensiveness merits. Secularity, for all its narcissism, false freedoms, and superficiality, also carries many key Christian values that challenge to us to live more deeply our own principles. Moreover, the issues on which they challenge us are not minor ones. Secular culture, in its best

expressions, is a powerful challenge to everyone in the world to be more sensitive and more moral in the face of economic inequality, human rights violations, war, racism, sexism, and the ravaging of Mother Nature for short-term gain. The voice of God is also inside secular culture.

Christian prophecy must account for that. Secular culture is not the anti-Christ. It ultimately comes out of Judaeo-Christian roots and has inextricably embedded within its core many central values of Judaeo-Christianity. We need then to be careful, as cultural warriors, to not blindly be fighting truth, justice, the poor, equality, and the integrity of creation. Too often, in a black-and-white approach, we end up having God fighting God.

A prophet has to be characterized first of all by love, by empathy for the very persons he or she is challenging. Moreover, as Gustavo Gutierrez teaches, our words of challenge must come more out of our gratitude than out of our anger, no matter how justified the anger. Being angry, being in someone else’s face, shredding those who don’t agree with us with hate-filled rhetoric, and winning bitter arguments, admittedly might be politically effective sometimes. But all of these are counter-productive long-term because they harden hearts rather than soften

them. True conversion can never come about by coercion, physical or intellectual. Hearts only change when they’re touched by love.

All of us know this from experience. We can only truly accept a strong challenge to clean up something in our lives if we first know that this challenge is coming to us because someone loves us, and loves us enough to care for us in this deep way. This alone can soften our hearts. Every other kind of challenge only works to harden hearts. So before we can effectively speak a prophetic challenge to our culture we must first let the people we are trying to win over know that we love them, and love them enough to care about them in this deep way. Too often this is not the case. Our culture doesn’t sense or believe that we love it, which, I believe, more than any other factor renders so much of our prophetic challenge useless and even counterproductive today.

Our prophecy must mirror that of Jesus. As he approached the city of Jerusalem shortly before his death, knowing its inhabitants, in all good conscience, were going to kill him, he wept over it. But his tears were not for himself, that he was right and they were wrong and that his death would make that clear. His tears were for them, for the very ones who opposed him, who would kill him and then fall flat on their faces.

There was no glee that they would fall, only empathy, sadness, love, for them, not for himself.

Rev. Larry Rosebaugh OMI, one of my Oblate confreres who spent his priesthood fighting for peace and justice and was shot to death in Guatemala, shares in his autobiography how on the night before his first arrest for civil disobedience he spent the entire night in prayer and in the morning as he walked out to do the non-violent act that would lead to his arrest, was told by Daniel Berrigan: “If you can’t do this without getting angry at the people who oppose you, don’t do it! This has to be an act of love.”

Prophecy has to be an act of love; otherwise it’s merely alienation.

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Refugees’ access to health care vital for integration



Dr. Doug Gruner says that a welcoming approach toward refugees is a key to their successful integration into Canadian life, and access to health care is vital to the process.

Gruner practises at the Bruyère Family Medicine Centre in Ottawa. He spoke recently to a class at the Ottawa School of Theology and Spirituality (OSTS). “Once we make a decision to accept refugees,” he said, “it is our responsibility to provide them with health care.”

Honeymoon phase is over

Referring to the Syrian refugees who arrived earlier this year Gruner added, “We are past the honeymoon phase that occurs when refugees first arrive. We are now seeing a lot of physical and mental health issues.”

A lack of familiarity with Canadian society, cultural and language differences, and the trauma that many refugees have experienced can make it incredibly difficult for them to use the health care system, he said.

For example, many Syrian refugees are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). “As a result,” Gruner told the OSTS class, “these people may have difficulty sleeping, getting motivated and trusting others.”

Quoting Dr. Morton Beiser, a psy-

Gruending is an Ottawa-based writer and a former member of Parliament. His blog can be found at <http://www.dennisgruending.ca>

chiatrist with St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto and a professor at Ryerson University, Gruner said that refugees often deal with these difficulties by retreating into silence, and health care providers have too often colluded by participating in the silence.

Doctors for Refugee Care

Gruner belongs to a group called Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care which opposed the Harper government when it chose to make drastic cuts to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) in 2012. That program had provided for refugee health services since 1957. MPs and cabinet ministers, including Jason Kenney, then immigration minister, claimed that refugees were getting “gold-plated” health benefits which were not available to most Canadians.

Gruner and other health professionals fought back. “These were our patients and we had to stand up for them,” he said. Refugees, he added, were getting exactly the same services available to anyone on social assistance.” This included visits to the doctor, access to basic medications and supplemental benefits like vision and dental care, but for emergency treatments only. “It was simply not true to describe those services as out of the ordinary or excessive,” Gruner said.

In July 2014 the Federal Court of Canada ruled that the changes to the IFHP violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Early in

2016 the new Liberal government restored the benefits.

Canada needs newcomers

Gruner was asked in the OSTS class whether Canadian health care and service providing institutions can cope with immigration and refugee acceptance numbers at their current levels. He replied that there was a challenge when thousands of Syrian refugees arrived early in 2016. It was overwhelming, especially for providing education and housing services, he said, but that has smoothed out.

Traditionally, he said, that Canada accepts about 250,000 immigrants and 25,000 refugees each year. “Most end up in urban centres where there is more of an opportunity to access health care,” Gruner said. “One of the biggest challenges is interpretation services. In the case of the Syrians we need interpreters who can speak Arabic.”

Private sponsorships work

In the longer term, Gruner said, the more important question is whether Canada can afford not to accept immigrants and refugees. “We are not replacing ourselves as a population so refugees and other immigrants, many of them young people, will have a lot to offer in the future.”

It’s difficult to breathe with only one lung

By Brett Fawcett

There are two intriguing facts about Pope Francis which go generally unreported in the media coverage of him.

One is the fact that, as a result of a bout of deadly pneumonia in his youth, he has only one lung.

The other is that, while serving as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he also served as the ordinary for



Dennis Gruending

WELCOMING APPROACH — Dr. Doug Gruner says that a welcoming approach toward refugees is a key to their successful integration into Canadian life, and access to health care is vital to the process, writes Dennis Gruending.

Of the approximately 30,000 Syrian refugees accepted into Canada within the past year, Gruner said, about 1,600 have arrived in Ottawa. About 1,200 of them have been sponsored by the government and another 400 are privately sponsored, many of them by faith communities. Gruner said those who are privately sponsored receive more support than is available to refugees who are government sponsored. This includes the welcome

upon arrival, social and friendship support and also practical assistance in finding housing and jobs.

“There is an embarrassment of riches available to privately sponsored refugees compared to those sponsored by the government,” he said. “In the future our system needs to evolve to better co-ordinate our welcoming efforts to include the generous support of private sponsors when we welcome all refugees, including government assisted refugees.”

all Eastern Catholics in Argentina without a prelate for their rite. This may not sound like the snappiest title, but it is deeply important because of how it reveals the Holy Father’s experience with and understanding of the Eastern tradition of Christianity, and with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation looming on the horizon, we are all called to prayerfully reflect on the unity to which Christ calls his church.

St. John Paul II, in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, famously said that the church needs to “breathe with both her lungs.” This does not just mean the East and West need to reform a juridical reunion (the recent Pan-Orthodox Council does not inspire one with confidence that any such union between the Orthodox themselves is imminent, let alone between them and Rome), but also that their theology, their worship, and their respective experiences must inform each other. This is where Francis’ experience with Eastern Catholics becomes important.

Obviously his ecology owes a great (and acknowledged) debt to Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople (see *Laudato Si’* 7-9), but his recent gestures with regard to holy matrimony also become much more understandable when looked at through a Byzantine lens. The East and West have slightly different conceptions of marriage; while in the West the sacrament is given by the spouses to each other by means of lifelong, binding vows, in the East it is a

sacrament dispensed by a priest, like most other sacraments; vows are not even a part of their wedding ritual. In accordance with this, the East allows — after a properly penitential liturgy — for the possibility of a second marriage after a divorce.

Why is this important?

In the midst of all the discussion of the possibility of communion for the divorced and remarried, many missed the fact that Francis also changed canon law such that now a priest must officiate at any wedding involving an Orthodox or Eastern Catholic spouse. This seemingly minor gesture is actually a strong acknowledgment of the Eastern theology of marriage, and, with that door opened, is it not possible that his gestures toward communing the divorced and remarried are a peek into the doorway?

If so, it removes an impediment to unity, which is important for a lot of reasons. One of these is geopolitical: any peaceful world order must include Russia, and whatever you think of Russia, you cannot understand it (or Putin’s cultural initiatives) without understanding how deeply rooted her existence is in her religion. There will be no national unity between East and West without a prior ecclesial unity. But another is evangelistic: the postmodern mind is often more receptive to the Eastern way of explaining controversial doctrines like the atonement or hell than the familiar Latin formulations. And Francis is, if nothing else, an evangelistic pope.

Besides, he knows better than anyone how hard it is to breathe with only one lung.


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Fawcett is a master’s student at Newmal Theological College in Edmonton.

For American family, Canada a destination of hope

By Alan Smith
Catholic Register Special

MINNEAPOLIS, MN — To our soon-to-be-compatriots: thank you for making Canada a destination of hope.

My wife, our youngest daughter and I are leaving our beloved home in Minnesota and moving to Canada. The decision came swiftly as a result of Donald Trump's victory in the American presidential election, but it was not easy since it entails significant loss of friends, and financial risk.

Nor was it unexpected: my wife and I have been talking about Canada ever since we married. Now, it is becoming a reality. We plan to settle in London, Ont., in the spring, or at the very latest the end of the school year, and have begun all the paperwork to make it happen.

Some background: I am a Canadian citizen born in New Brunswick who has lived my entire adult life in the United States. My wife, a native New Yorker and former ballet dancer, transferred during her school days from Columbia University to the University of Toronto.

She cherished her experiences there, including learning to play hockey (they made her the goalie because she can't skate). We have devoted ourselves to our three American-born daughters (two of whom are away at university), had successful careers, and thrived in

Smith is the founder of Concerto Designs (<http://www.concerto-designs.com>), which provides web-site services for small and medium-sized companies, including The Catholic Register.



LEAVING TRUMP'S AMERICA — In the wake of Donald Trump's election as president, Alan Smith and his family, who currently live in Minnesota, plan to move to Canada because they see it as a "destination of hope."

Minnesota, a state where people are always polite, winters are extreme, hockey is a cult religion and government does a decent job. Sound familiar?

Despite the benefits of this ersatz-Canada, we are aware of subtle but important cultural differences. Long before Trump's takeover of the American popular imagination and (more pertinently) government, we have felt an underlying attraction from north of the border.

This attraction is nourished by personal encounters, visits to relatives, vacations in Quebec and

Nova Scotia, and fascination with Canadian news.

The latter has served as a soothing antidote — Rob Ford notwithstanding — to the shrill, mind-numbing and often tragic nature of American news. No need to rehash American stereotypes about Canadians, which paint a positive if somewhat bland picture. We know that Canada also has substantial issues of social justice, economic disparity and spiritual stagnation.

These challenges pale in comparison with the looming crises in the United States. We have wit-

nessed a steady deterioration of public discourse and of the social fabric over the past 16 years. Political discourse in America has become so partisan and toxic that it is virtually impossible to talk rationally about differences of opinion. Institutions like higher education and the media that establish authoritative social and historical facts are discredited and replaced by Internet conspiracy theories, rumours, personal attacks and outright fabrication. The epidemic of gun violence has

raised parents' anxieties across the country.

Comparisons with Canada paint quite a different picture: not utopian, but clearly different.

Trump's victory brings an even more disturbing element: a rhetoric of cruelty and violence. The list of individuals and groups who suffered his vicious insults and derision include women, Mexicans, Muslims, people with disabilities, African-Americans, victims of his financial dealings, climate scientists and journalists. His followers and members of his transition team seem eager to put in place policies that further disenfranchise the most vulnerable by removing safeguards.

We are experiencing the effect of this rhetoric right here in Minnesota.

We hear it in the stories of Latino schoolchildren convinced that someone will come soon to take them and their families away.

We see it in the xenophobic, racist and anti-Semitic graffiti proliferating at schools and colleges since the election.

We feel it in the presence of our Muslim friends and neighbours terrified by the prospect of a national registry for Muslims. They came to America looking for tolerance, peaceful co-existence and opportunity. They made huge sacrifices because they hoped for a place where their children and grandchildren could flourish, where civil liberties are protected, the weakest are cared for and communities build across racial, ethnic, gender and political lines.

That has now become our hope as well. That is why we are moving to Canada.

"Christmas is joy, religious joy, an inner joy of light and peace."
Pope Francis

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Great War celebrations disregard long-term suffering

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



Remembrance Day — every Nov. 11, how many of us pause and wonder how to best “celebrate” this event that marks the 1918 end of hostilities in the First World War? In most Canadian towns you can’t even buy a coffee at Tim’s without facing the “Great War.” What message do we foster among the next generation as we admire the sacrifice and sympathize with the suffering of those who went to war?

If you worship in an older church building, such as I do, there may be lists of fallen soldiers from two World Wars commemorated on the walls of your parish building — often found directly under some of the stations of the cross.

Yet, Pope Paul VI’s 1965 speech at the UN cried out: “No more war. War never again!” This same invocation was echoed by John Paul II in 2002: “Never again war. Never again hatred and intolerance.”

As a high school student, I had no idea why our teacher Ted

Schmidt had us read and discuss *All Quiet on the Western Front*. I had no idea that Erich Maria Remarque’s 1929 anti-war classic had been a bestseller of 40 million copies, but had also once been excluded from Ontario’s curriculum. Nor did I realize the book was banned in Poland (as pro-German) but also burned by the Nazis as defeatist (and anti-German.)

But it did influence my thinking forever on “The Great War.” What was its purpose, its confusing and less than noble cause, the global tensions unleashed between historic empires and, most graphically, how was the war understood by those suffering through it, and after it?

These conundrums came to mind again as I turned the pages of a new book: *The Vimy Trap: or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War*.

In April 2017, Canada will mark the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. Authors Ian McKay (McMaster University historian) and Jamie Swift (director of the Social Justice Office of the Sisters of Providence in Kingston) warn us to be wary of “Vimyism”: a network of ideas and symbols that mythologize what the battle, and the war, truly mean.

At Vimy in April 1917, the four divisions of Canadian troops fought together for the first time in a cohesive action. They barged and stormed this high spot of land in France, advancing 4,500 yards to take and hold the ridge from fierce German fighters. Enemy casualties were not reported, but some 4,000 prisoners were taken.

Yet, the German command did not see Vimy as a defeat, since no full-scale breakthrough occurred following the attack. Throughout the rest of the war, they did not attempt to retake the ridge. Some Canadian politicians and writers,



THE DARK SIDE OF WAR — This First World War archival photo sees Canadian soldiers going over the top of a trench during the battle of Vimy Ridge. In April 2017, Canada will mark the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. Joe Gunn urges people to think about what the battle, and that war, truly mean.

however, especially in recent times, have attempted to laud and sanctify Vimy Ridge as “the birth of the nation.” McKay and Swift decry this narrative as overwrought “martial romanticism” rather than a warning against “the unprecedented possibilities of mass death under conditions of industrial modernity.” In just four days of brutal action, 3,598 Canadian soldiers died, and over 7,000 more were wounded.

The authors warn that, as preparations for Vimy centennial commemorations approach in the coming months, Canadians might not be equally exposed to the darker side of the experiences of Canadians who lived that era. Obviously, the toll of human suffering in the war was atrocious: of the 420,000 soldiers who served overseas, over half were killed or wounded. Many who valiantly signed up to defend “Canada, western civilization and Christianity” (and, notably at the time, “the British Empire”) against an atrocity-perpetuating foe, returned doubting some of those justifications.

Thousands of returned soldiers were forced to engage in the “second battle” for economic survival. Postwar pensions reflected societal divisions: if privates received an annual maximum of \$480, officers might receive twice as much. Aboriginal veterans received nothing. Conscription divided Canadians, especially in Quebec. While women laboured for pennies in

munitions factories on the home front, profiteering and corruption by owners and senior politicians were widely reported. And the country’s debt load jumped from about \$220 million in 1914 to roughly \$3 billion in 1920.

Today, religious communities would do well to recall the words of leaders who travelled to France in 1936 to inaugurate the impressive Vimy Memorial. Rev. (Lt.-Col.) Fallis said, “The only hope lies in making the world hate war — as I hate it — as every man who went through the awful ordeal hates it.” Auxiliary bishop A.E. Deschamps of Montreal called on all to “hate and curse war, this universal evil.”

Lest we forget.

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

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Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. — Romans 12:13

Recently Pope Francis canonized arguably the world’s best-known contemporary religious figure, Mother Teresa, the “Saint of the Gutters.” Born in Macedonia in 1910, Agnes Bojaxhiu would come to symbolize hope for the masses, making Kolkata and the Missionaries of Charity synonymous with selfless love. Catering to the poor and forgotten, the sick and the dying, she embraced AIDS sufferers, prostitutes and orphans equally, reminding us what constitutes true charity.

When she died on Sept. 5, 1997, she left a hole in the world that will never be filled. Ironically, for all of the love and compassion

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

we associate with Mother Teresa, those who knew her rarely describe her as a warm and fuzzy person. Everyone fortunate enough to have met her describe a passionate but ferocious individual, one who had little time for bureaucracy, niceties or diplomacy. She could dress down a bureaucrat, business tycoon, or a U.S. president without hesitation. A friend once told of a meeting where the world’s top CEOs pulled out their checkbooks after one of her presentations. “I don’t want your money,” she purportedly informed them, “I want you to go back to your community and make a difference.” And so they did.

Our own professor of religious studies and theology, and CWL chair for Catholic studies, Dr. Michael Duggan, was fortunate to meet Mother Teresa and, on one occasion, have an extended conversation with her. While doing his doctorate studies at the

Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., he taught classes to Mother Teresa’s sisters at Gift of Peace, their home for the friends of Jesus who were elderly and homeless. It is no doubt one of the reasons Dr. Duggan remains so passionate about social justice issues here at St. Mary’s University in Calgary.

In his wonderful new book, *The Idea of Canada: Letters to a Nation*, Governor General David Johnston praises the passion and influence of Mother Teresa, especially her ability to encourage charity. Certainly her gift for generating financial support for her missions is legendary; but so too is her message of hope and love for the unwanted and forgotten. It is here that we see the true focus of her passion and commitment. As Johnston puts it, she reminds us that every effort we make, no matter how small, “can reshape someone’s life, if not the world.”

Mother Teresa insisted that we should find joy in giving. And she reminded us that even the least among us — indeed *especially* the most unfortunate — “is Jesus in disguise.” Perhaps my favourite quote from our new saint is this one: “I’m a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world.” No postscript needed!

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A depressing picture

Ireland used to be a hotbed for vocations. However, the situation has changed greatly. Vocations have fallen off, seminaries have been closed, clergy abuse has turned people away from the church and secularism has become the new “religion.”

The sad result was reported in a recent Catholic News Service story.

The average age of Irish priests is now nearly 70; significant numbers are in their 80s; some in their 90s are still working.

These aging priests are increasingly falling victim to depression and mental health problems, leaders of the Association of Catholic Priests report.

Rev. Brendan Hoban, an association founder, said the problem has been fuelled by the increasing pressure priests face to continue working beyond the normal retirement age of 75. “Not so long ago,” he said, “priests would normally have expected to retire at 75, but that’s no longer the case. Because of the vocations crisis, most priests are being encouraged to continue working. So in effect, retirement is no longer an option. It’s almost as if it’s been abolished.”

With fewer priests, their workload has increased as well, he noted.

It’s not uncommon for pastors to celebrate four or five masses on a weekend, he said. This isn’t a problem for someone younger, but it is challenging for someone older. “Also 20 years ago, it was easy to get someone to fill in if the priest wanted to take a holiday. That’s now a lot more difficult and there would be some priests who don’t take a day off at all.”

Also in the past, most parish rectories had live-in housekeepers who cooked and kept a rectory clean. Today, most don’t and priests must tend to such duties themselves.

Another factor facing Irish priests include a changed public perception.

“These men lived through a time when there were plenty of vocations and their churches were full at mass, so there’s a loss of esteem,” Hoban said.

“These priests are what I describe as the lost tribe,” Hoban said. They’ve no longer any quality of life and they need our attention, because many are in a desperate situation. We’ve noticed there’s a high level of depression amongst the clergy and there are some who must be wondering if they’ll just be left to die alone in their homes.”

Ireland isn’t the only country facing this chal-

lenge, and the Catholic Church isn’t the only denomination facing a clergy shortage in the western world. However, as the Second Vatican Council reminded us, the church is not just the clergy; it includes all the People of God. And there are encouraging signs of new life among the baptized. — PWN

Strong words

Cardinal Charles Bo had strong words about the economy in Myanmar recently.

Bo told a Myanmar’s Resource Wealth conference that none of the wealth generated from natural resources such as gold and other extractive minerals has benefited the poor. He hit on the country’s thriving jade industry, which supplies more than two-thirds of the world’s jade, saying it has been overrun by “looters” and is the source of conflict.

Myanmar’s illicit jade trade reportedly generates \$31 billion, nearly half the country’s gross domestic product. But it lines the pockets of former junta officials and other “elites.”

Myanmar is designated the “least-developed country” by the World Bank.

It’s a situation that cries out for strong words. — PWN

Three reasons Canadians can’t agree on climate change, fossil fuels

By Barry Wilson,
Salmon Arm, B.C.

What should we do about fossil fuels and climate change?
It’s difficult for society to

agree on a course of action for a variety of reasons, including these three:

Delayed gratification

All of us make choices daily

about whether to act for immediate benefit or invest in future benefits. It’s a struggle that crosses many basic lines, including food, exercise, finance and relationships. Behaviour psychologists show

us that when we make decisions to invest in the future and delay gratification, we’re more successful. But for many, perhaps most, the pain of discipline is too high when the opportunity of gratification is at hand.

When we think about this struggle in terms of climate change, we can boil it down to whether we’re willing to accept short-term pain for long-term gain — or, more modestly, long-term sustain.

As an example, the debate about oil transport — through pipelines, on trains and trucks, or in ships — is highly charged. Those who support these developments see oil and gas exploration as an important economic development that can mitigate the pain of unemployment, decrease personal and national debt, and bring about greater security through energy sovereignty.

Those who oppose such development generally cite the risks to water and to future generations.

of other countries.

But more importantly, we will be acting decisively to improve the health of Albertans, Canadians and other people around the world from the ravages of uncontrolled climate change.

The governments of Alberta and Canada are to be congratulated for their decisions to phase out coal-fired power, and to reap the important health benefits for all Canadians.

Now the hard work begins: designing plans to ensure this transition happens quickly, in partnership and collaboration with communities most impacted. We look forward to working with all levels of governments throughout this process.

Because it’s not enough to have a good week — we need to work together to ensure a good future.

Wilson is a systems ecologist and cumulative effects expert. www.troymedia.com

They liken it to a disease that we shouldn’t treat with short-term painkillers. These folks would rather bite the bullet today and cure the cause so that the pain will be less in the future.

History shows that more often than not we value commodity production and consumption in the present far more than the potential future benefits of conservation, which feel like a missed opportunity today. Consider the massive deforestation in the Amazon basin to produce beef, despite the knowledge that this unsustainable practice carries a huge environmental cost. But conservation isn’t likely to put meals on the table and so the trade-off continues.

We do the same with money. Many of us don’t save because we value our current self more than our future self. Economists came up with a way of accounting for this — it’s called the discount rate. Essentially, it means that money in hand today is more valuable than money in the future. Even having a commitment device like “doing it for future generations” isn’t always enough of a reward for us today.

— SELF-INTEREST, page 15

Phase out of coal has health benefits

By Kim Perrotta, Toronto

It was a good week for people and the planet.

First, the federal government announced it will take steps to phase out pollution from coal-fired power plants across the country by 2030. Then the government of Alberta announced it has signed an agreement with three major power generators to ensure a phase-out of coal plants in Alberta by 2030.

There will be time to examine and critique the details surrounding these two announcements, but for now we want to acknowledge what they can mean for human health in Alberta, across Canada and around the world.

A new report endorsed by 15 health and environmental organizations — including the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), the Asthma Society of Canada and the Lung Association — estimates that a Canada-wide phase-out of coal power by 2030 would prevent more than 1,000 premature deaths, 900 hospital admissions or emergency room visits, and nearly \$5 billion in health care costs by improving local air quality.

In fact, most of these national health benefits will be realized in the Prairies — about \$3 billion in Alberta and up to \$1.3 billion in Saskatchewan.

While the lion’s share of the benefits will happen here, there will still be important benefits realized in the Atlantic provinces and in central Canada, making a Canada-wide coal phase-out truly of national interest.

Perrotta is the executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE). www.troymedia.com

The 2030 phase-out will also significantly reduce mercury emissions. Mercury is the reason that pregnant women are warned not to eat certain types of fish during pregnancy. The persistent substance accumulates in the aquatic food chain and can harm the brains of children exposed during pregnancy. Reducing this pollution will mean that these harmful effects can be minimized — then we can reclaim fish as a healthy protein source for all.

In addition, the 2030 phase-out will help Canada’s fight against climate change. The renowned medical journal The Lancet estimates that climate change is responsible for approximately 150,000 deaths worldwide each year. People die from malnutrition, malaria, infectious disease and extreme heat; conditions made worse by a climate characterized by more frequent and more intense storms, heat waves and droughts.

People in countries that already struggle to feed their populations will experience many of these health impacts, but Canada will not be immune. Over the last 10 years, Canada has experienced an increase in droughts, wildfires, extreme rain and ice storms, floods and extreme heat. We have seen the spread of insect- and mite-borne diseases such as West Nile virus and Lyme disease. And we have seen permafrost and ice roads melting in the far north. Canadians are already being affected by climate change, in economic and health terms.

By accelerating the closure of coal-fired plants across the country, we will cut Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions by about eight per cent. This will help Canada meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change and put us in a stronger position to ask the same



CNS/Luke Michael Davies

THOMAS MORE HAIR SHIRT — Benedictine Abbot David Charlesworth of England’s Buckfast Abbey looks at the encased hair shirt worn by St. Thomas More. More, a former lord chancellor of England, wore the shirt while he was incarcerated in the Bell Tower of the Tower of London while awaiting execution for opposing the Protestant reforms of King Henry VIII. The shirt, not shown in public before, is now on permanent display at the abbey.



Photo by Patricia Bourque

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