



Bell of Batoche

A special guest at a local commemoration of the anniversary of the death of Louis Riel Nov. 16 was the Bell of Batoche, “Marie Antoinette.” Prince Albert Bishop Albert Th  venot blessed the bell in the traditional Catholic way while Shirley Isbister, president of the Central Urban M  tis Federation, performed a smudging ceremony.
— page 3

Housing plan

Catholic agencies that serve the poor have waited a long time for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s National Housing Day announcement. The strategy, announced Nov. 22, was applauded by those agencies.
— page 5

Iconography

An exhibition entitled “Iconography in Our Time: The Power of Visual Prayer” was launched at the Mus  e Ukrainia Museum in Saskatoon Nov. 19. “In a world of chaos and uncertainty,” said curator Anna Mycyk, “iconography is an expression of faith and a beacon of light.”
— page 6

Saving time

Instant communication is time-saving, and that’s important when time is valuable, says Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR. But the downside to this is that people feel more and more pressure to work harder and longer in the time that has supposedly been saved.
— page 7

Advent Sundays

This week’s issue features Liturgy and Life columns for both the Third and Fourth Sundays in the Advent season.
— page 11



Diplomatic dance

It is hard to be both a diplomat and a prophet, but Pope Francis pulls it off better than anyone else, writes Thomas Reese, SJ. Francis’ skills were put to the test during his recent trip to Myanmar.
— page 13

Myanmar youth pack church to meet pope

By Cindy Wooden

YANGON, Myanmar (CNS) — Before ending his visit to Myanmar, Pope Francis turned to the nation’s young Catholics, urging them to pursue lives of faith, hope and love.

Celebrating mass Nov. 30 in Yangon’s St. Mary’s Cathedral, the pope asked the youth to serve their tiny church and their struggling nation with prayer, solidarity and a defence of human rights.

The cathedral was packed full of teenagers and young adults, many of whom were wearing traditional outfits. Despite their numbers, the atmosphere was hushed except for the chirping of birds in the trees outside the open windows.

Thousands of young people also filled the gardens surrounding the cathedral, hoping for a close-up encounter with the pope.

In his homily, Pope Francis, whose 81st birthday was less than three weeks away, said he wanted to speak to the young as a grandfather.

The Bible, he told them, “asks us to think about our place in God’s plan” and to proclaim God’s love and mercy.

“As messengers of this good news, you are ready to bring a word of hope to the church, to your own country, and to the wider world,” he said. “You are ready to bring good news to your suffering brothers and sisters who need your prayers and your solidarity, but also your enthusiasm for human rights, for justice and for the growth of that love and peace which Jesus brings.”

Pope Francis’ grandfatherly advice to them was to find a place away from the noise and distractions of modern life where they could learn to listen to God in prayer. And he encouraged them to rely on the help of the saints, who were men and women who made mistakes but learned to trust in God’s mercy.

“You know that Jesus is full of mercy,” the pope told the young people. “So share with him all that you hold in your hearts: your fears and your worries, as well as your dreams and your hopes.”

“Cultivate your interior life, as you would tend a garden or a field,”



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

POPE CELEBRATES MASS WITH YOUTH — Pope Francis greets young people after celebrating mass with youth Nov. 30 at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Yangon, Myanmar.

the pope continued. “This takes time; it takes patience. But like a farmer who waits for the crops to grow, if you wait the Lord will make you bear much fruit, a fruit you can then share with others.”

Finally, Pope Francis told them, be young and be bold.

“Do not be afraid to make a ruckus, to ask questions that make people think,” he said. “And don’t worry if sometimes you feel that you are few and far between. The Gospel always grows from small beginnings. So make yourselves heard.”

Archbishop receives pallium from papal nuncio

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Holy Rosary Cathedral was filled with the faithful who had come to witness the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, invest Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen with the pallium Nov. 27. Bonazzi is the

representative of Pope Francis in Canada, and is a living reminder of the universality of the church.

The pallium is a liturgical vestment symbolizing the authority of Bolen as archbishop and metropolitan of Saskatchewan. “It is also a symbol of personal loyalty to the Pope and thereby a sign of unity between a local church and the universal church,” according to the investiture program. The pallium is woven from lamb’s wool and is often described as a symbol of the archbishop as the shepherd of his flock.

Bonazzi conducted the introductory rites to open the service and gave a brief explanation of what the pallium symbolizes. Bolen knelt on the stairs leading to the sanctuary, and Bonazzi, reciting a special prayer, descended the

steps and placed the pallium over Bolen’s shoulders.

Cree elder Robert Bellegarde performed a smudging ceremony following the investiture and presented the nuncio with a beaded

cross, which Bonazzi placed around his neck.

The liturgy of the Word involved people reading in several

— MINISTRY, page 7

Religious groups await Trinity Western decision

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Refusing to accredit Trinity Western University’s law school could adversely affect all religions and Christian institutions, interveners warned the Supreme Court of Canada Dec. 1.

“We are standing on an abyss of a revolutionary change on how religions have operated in Canada,” said Barry Bussey, representing the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. “This decision will become a template” on how governments license and register a range of institutions from nursing homes to soup kitchens. It could also have an impact on ability to obtain charitable status, he said.

If the law “drives out difference, we will no longer be a pluralistic society,” Bussey said.

On Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, the Supreme Court heard two simultaneous appeals involving decisions by the Law Society of British Columbia and the Law Society of Upper Canada not to accredit Trinity Western’s pro-

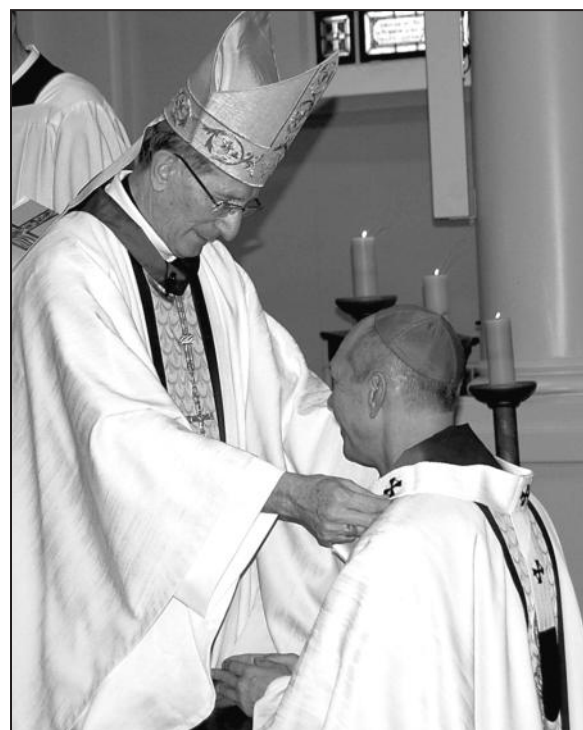
posed law school because the private evangelical university has a mandatory community covenant. This covenant requires students, staff and faculty to live by Christian moral standards, including refraining from sexual activity outside of traditional marriage. The law societies deemed this covenant discriminates against LGBTQ students.

Bussey admitted the law societies were “put in a difficult position” when approached by individuals who had been offended because in their view the covenant challenged their identity and dignity.

“Our rights and freedoms are not based on popularity,” he argued. State actors should not be “forcing minority views to conform to majority views.”

Never before in the history of Canada has the state so well “sought to impose its own definition of tolerance in the most intolerant way,” said Bussey. “If there was ever a time for this court to

— STATE, page 4



Frank Flegel

INVESTITURE — Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, invests Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen with the pallium Nov. 27 at Holy Rosary Cathedral. The pallium is a liturgical vestment symbolizing the authority of Bolen as archbishop and metropolitan of Saskatchewan, as well as a symbol of loyalty to the pope and a sign of unity between the local and the universal church.

Don't demonize illegal immigrants, archbishop says

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Miami Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski said laws need to be changed to fix the country's broken immigration system, but in the process, immigrants should not be demonized.

"Fixing illegal immigration does not require the demonization of the so-called 'illegals,'" said Wenski, addressing an audience at a Nov. 28 event in Miami sponsored by the Immigration Partnership and Coalition Fund.

"America has always been a land of promise and opportunity for those willing to work hard. We can provide for our national security and secure borders without making America, a nation of im-

migrants, less a land of promise or opportunity for immigrants."

His comments were posted on the Archdiocese of Miami's website.

Laws, he said, are "meant to benefit, not to enslave, mankind," and the laws in the country, regarding immigration, are too "antiquated" and "inadequate" to deal with the problem.

"Outdated laws, ill adapted to the increasing interdependence of our world and the globalization of labour, are bad laws," the archbishop said.

Proposed changes, or laws, should consider human dignity and the national interest, he said, otherwise, "bad laws will be replaced by worse ones."

He mentioned Rosa Parks, as

well as "patriots" who participated in the Boston Tea Party in 1773, as examples of those who opposed laws that didn't advance the common good. By refusing to sit in the back of the bus, Parks broke a law in 1955 requiring racial segregation on buses, and the Boston Tea Party participants protested taxation without representation.

Some laws, Wenski said, can even legally sanction an underclass and such was the case of the Jim Crow laws that segregated parts of the U.S.

"Our nation should not tolerate the emergence of a new underclass in our society composed of undocumented workers," he said.

And restrictive legislation focused solely on enforcement will

only make matters worse, he added, while saying that money spent on border enforcement for the last two decades hasn't stopped the problem, instead "illegal immigration increased because the labour market demanded willing and able workers."

Businesses that abuse and exploit immigrants rely on their labour, he said, "and, in doing so, help fuel the growth of the American economy."

The preferable route is that they benefit from a reliable and legal workforce, he said. Comprehensive immigration reform, he said, would legalize those already working in the U.S. without proper documentation, provide for industry's labour needs and allow border agents to chase after real criminals instead of chasing economic migrants.

But some are too intent in calling attention to immigrants by name-calling and demonizing them, including labelling them "lawbreakers, equating them with terrorists intent on hurting us."

"However, these people, including DACA kids, only ask for the opportunity to become



CNS/Bob Roller

Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski

legal — to come out of the shadows where they live in fear of a knock on their door in the dead of night or an immigration raid to their workplace," he said, referencing youth brought to the U.S. illegally and who benefited from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA.

Catholic, Orthodox dialogue to continue

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis, in a message to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, urged Catholics and Orthodox to continue the path of dialogue on key theological issues to achieve full communion between the two churches.

Theological discussions on primacy — the authority of the lead bishop — and synodality, or the deliberation of the College of Bishops in the West and the synod of bishops in the Eastern churches, can enable Orthodox and Catholics "to evaluate, even critically, some theological categories and practices which evolved during the second millennium," the pope said in a written message delivered Nov. 30 to the patriarch in Istanbul.

The pope's message was carried

to Patriarch Bartholomew by Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, who led a Vatican delegation to Istanbul for the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, the patriarchate's patron saint.

In his message, Pope Francis sent greetings to all those attending the liturgical celebration in Istanbul and asked for prayers while he continued his Nov. 27 - Dec. 2 visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh.

"When the deacon invites those gathered during the Divine Liturgy to pray 'for those who travel by land, sea and air,' I ask you, please, to pray for me, also," the pope said.

Like the apostles, who proclaimed the death and resurrection of Jesus "through their words and the sacrifice of their lives," the pope said Catholics

and Orthodox are called to make this proclamation "our own," which will enable both churches to "enter into communion with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit."

Recalling Patriarch Athenagoras' words during his first meeting with Blessed Paul VI in 1967, Pope Francis said Catholics and Orthodox must "join together what was divided, wherever this is possible, by deeds in which both churches are involved, giving added strength to matters of faith and canonical discipline which we have in common."

Pope Francis also praised Bartholomew's efforts in promoting the care of creation, the peaceful co-existence among peoples and the plight of Christians in the Middle East.



CNS/Dai kurokawa, EPA

POLICE CLASH IN KENYA — People flee from police after trying to force their way into the Nairobi stadium where Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta was sworn in for a second term Nov. 28. Two disputed polls left the nation deeply divided.

SNAP apologizes to St. Louis archdiocese, priests

ST. LOUIS (CNS) — The Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests issued an apology to the Archdiocese of St. Louis and two of its priests, Rev. Joseph Jiang and the late Msgr. Joseph D. Pins.

The Nov. 27 apology was issued as part of a settlement with SNAP in a defamation lawsuit filed by Jiang in 2015, according to the archdiocese.

The SNAP defendants never want to see anyone falsely accused of a crime. Admittedly, false reports of clergy sexual abuse do occur," said the apology, which was released by the archdiocese.

"The SNAP defendants have no personal knowledge as to the complaints against Father Joseph Jiang and acknowledge that all matters and claims against Father Jiang have either been dismissed or adjudicated in favour of Father Jiang," it said.

"SNAP acknowledges that false claims of clergy sexual abuse injure those clerics falsely accused and the Roman Catholic Church," the apology added.

Pins died of cancer June 17, 2015. Ordained in 1970, he had been rector of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis for 13 years at the time of his death.

The priest had been mentioned in a civil lawsuit that accused the archdiocese and St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of supposedly covering up for a priest accused in 2012, wrongly as it turned out, of molesting a teenage girl. The suit claimed the archbishop and Pins ignored requests to reassign the priest.

Jiang was associate pastor at the cathedral basilica when allegations arose that he had molested a 15-year-old girl who attended mass there with her family.

A judge dismissed the criminal case against Jiang in 2013 because prosecutors could not show the priest was ever alone with the girl at her home, where the alleged abuse supposedly took place. In 2014, Jiang was arrested and charged with molesting a young boy, but a year later, that charge also was dropped.

To clear his name, Jiang filed a defamation lawsuit in 2015 against the boy's parents and SNAP, "contending that the boy had been coached to falsely accuse an innocent man," according to court records. The lawsuit also accused SNAP of carrying out a "shameless smear campaign" that "destroyed the life of a promising young man and priest."

Tests date tomb of Christ to fourth century

By Rhina Guidos

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Scientists who helped restore a shrine above the site believed to be the place where Christ was buried say testing of samples has dated the tomb to at least the fourth century.

The new information published recently by National Geographic is consistent with historical accounts that say Constantine, the first Roman emperor to stop persecuting Christians and who became one, began protecting the tomb around the year 326.

In the fourth century, Constantine is said to have sent a team from Rome to the Holy Land in search of the site, and after the group believed they had located it, they tore down a pagan temple on top of it and protected the tomb.

Over the centuries, the structures above the tomb have been the victims of natural and human attacks. At some point, a marble

slab was placed on top of the tomb, perhaps to prevent eager pilgrims from taking home pieces of it.

In October 2016, when a team from the National Technical University of Athens was commissioned to restore the shrine around the tomb, which was in danger of collapsing, they also placed a moisture barrier to protect the tomb. It likely hadn't been opened in centuries, but the opportunity allowed the team to take samples.

"Mortar sampled from between the original limestone surface of the tomb and a marble slab that covers it has been dated to around AD 345," said National Geographic in a Nov. 28 news story. Until the results were revealed to National Geographic in late November by scientist and professor Antonia Moropoulou, who directed the restoration project, there was no scientific evidence to support that the tomb was older than 1,000 years, the story says.

What's harder to pin down sci-

entifically is evidence to prove that the person who was placed on the tomb's limestone rock shelf and buried there was Jesus of Nazareth. However, a documentary set to air Dec. 3 on National Geographic's cable channel shows interviews with scholars who say oral history strongly supports the possibility that the location of the shrine is the place where Jesus is believed to have been buried, a place where Christians believe he returned to life.

"Why would people remember for several generations that this is the spot?" asked National Geographic archaeologist-in-residence Fred Hiebert in a Nov. 9 interview with Catholic News Service.

In the absence of scientific data, you have to take into account people's traditions, village traditions, that pointed to the site, 300 or so years after the actual event of Christ's crucifixion, as the place where many believe he was buried, Hiebert said.

Reconciliation is a journey, says former AFN chief

By Andrew Ehrkamp
Grandin Media

EDMONTON (CCN) — After decades of turbulent history with the Catholic Church, indigenous peoples are now committed to healing the fractured relationship, says the former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

And a significant part of the reconciliation process will be a full, public apology from the pope — on Canadian soil — for the church’s role in operating residential schools for the Canadian government.

“I think a lot of people are anxious to experience that,” said Phil Fontaine, adding he is “confident” that under the leadership of Pope Francis it will happen.

“We’ve both had a big struggle in the last number of years trying to figure out how we’re going to move forward together, how to re-establish the traditional relationship between Catholic entities and indigenous groups in every part of the country.”

Fontaine was the guest speaker Nov. 30 at the Star of the North, an Oblate retreat centre in St. Albert.

A three-term national chief, Fontaine helped establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which detailed the history of residential schools and a path toward reconciliation through 94 recommendations covering child welfare, health, education and political changes. An apology from the pope on Canadian soil was one of those recommendations.

Over 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were placed in residential schools. Many were forbidden to speak their language or practise their own culture. An estimated 80,000 former students are living today, and the impact of the trauma and abuse they suffered continues to be felt.

“That just doesn’t disappear,” said Fontaine, who attended an

Oblate residential school on the Sagkeeng First Nation, 150 kilometres north of Winnipeg. “To think that, at this point and time in our history, that those will just vanish into thin air is very much wishful thinking.”

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission reports there were 139 government-run residential schools across Canada, most of which were administered by Catholic religious orders or other entities, starting in the mid-1800s. The last residential school closed in 1996.

Alberta had 25 residential schools, more than any other province. Two Catholic ones were located within the Archdiocese of Edmonton: Ermineskin at Hobbe-ma (now Maskwacis), operated by the Oblate fathers and Sisters of Assumption; and the Youville school in St. Albert, operated by the Grey Nuns.

Each diocese and religious community is autonomous and Canadian Catholic bishops, as well as leaders of men and women religious communities, have issued apologies.

Canadian bishops say they are focused on their ongoing response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but a future papal visit was not a major topic at their annual plenary Sept. 25 - 29.

Fontaine met privately with Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI in 2009, when he received a “wonderful and reaffirming” statement of regret for the church’s role in residential schools. He also suggested that acts of contrition might go both ways.

“We believe there is still is significant room in this process of reconciliation to have the church collaborate with our community to reaffirm this historic relationship,” said Fontaine.

“We’ve been pretty harsh too. We’ve been very angry. We’ve been bitter. We’ve come out swinging quite often. That doesn’t speak well about forgiveness.”



Grandin Media
Phil Fontaine

Fontaine stressed that First Nations want to return to a “very positive” relationship with the Catholic Church, which historically helped protect and advance indigenous rights.

“The Catholic Church was every bit a victim as we were,” Fontaine said. “The challenge is

how to build up communities, how to take whatever steps necessary to ensure that communities flourish.”

What those steps will look like, depends on the community.

In Winnipeg, Fontaine co-chairs a committee with Emeritus Archbishop James Weisgerber that is looking at creating garden of reconciliation, sweat lodge or teepee on land entrusted to First Nations.

In Calgary, it’s a commitment by the University of Calgary to increase the indigenous presence among students and faculty.

In the Archdiocese of Edmonton, the Office of Aboriginal Relations was established in November 2016.

“We need to show our amendments through action, and I think that’s how this office came about,” said co-ordinator Gary Gagnon. “As indigenous people, we needed a voice here in the Catholic archdiocese and not only here, but in other religious communities. We’ve always had dialogue with the church, but we never had a

voice at the table to strategize.”

For Gagnon, reconciliation between the church and indigenous people means healing together.

“I don’t believe we should ever forget what has happened, but we need to go forward. The wind goes forward. It never goes backward. We need to move ahead and forge good relationships.”

That will take time, and Fontaine cautions against expecting anything “dramatic.” The difference now is that the relationship with the church will be a collaborative effort.

“The transformation we’re looking for is not going to happen overnight,” Fontaine said. “It will be a long, difficult process because the fractured relationship came about through decades and decades.”

“I’ve seen not just apologies. I’ve seen forgiveness. I’ve seen people that have been really hurt reach out to the other side. Once you forgive, I think it’s possible to take the necessary steps toward reconciliation.”

Bell of Batoche repatriated by Métis

By Andréa Ledding

SASKATOON — Across the province, commemorations were held in honour of Louis Riel on the 132nd anniversary of his hanging November 16. The first event in Saskatoon took place at 10:30 a.m. at the statue of Gabriel Dumont on the riverbank in Friendship Park. Bagpipes accompanied the procession to the statue. St. Michael’s School children sang the Métis anthem.

“We are proud of our partnerships with the school systems,” said Shirley Isbister, president of CUMFI (Central Urban Metis Federation Inc.) who helped preside over the gathering before inviting everyone back to CUMFI headquarters in the inner city for a program and lunch. “We have worked since 2003 to cultivate those partnerships so that we could have Métis culture and history taught in our schools. St. Michael’s was the first school where we raised the Métis flag. I remember standing there thinking, ‘I wonder if Louis Riel ever thought this would happen.’”

Elders Nora Cummings and Norman Fleury led the gathering in prayer at the lunch.

“Lord our God, thou art the father of mercy and consolation,” Fleury read from Riel’s own prayer. “Grant that we may not be covered with confusion, ever defend us from this. Enlighten us in our darkness of doubt, encourage us in our trials, strengths, in our weakness and success.”

St. Michael’s students have a fiddle program, and participants accompanied their indoor version of the Métis anthem for those gathered for the lunch and program. Newly elected president of the Métis Nation — Saskatchewan, Glen McCallum, addressed the crowd.

“Our identity, culture and values are important to us,” he said. “The wording of that song covers most everything about the Métis

in regard to what we have gone through and what we need to do yet in regard to reconciliation with our federal government and the provincial government.”

Also present was a special guest: the Bell of Batoche, “Marie Antoinette,” and the Keeper of the Bell, Billyjo Delaronde.

“The Bishop of Prince Albert, Albert Thévenot, and Shirley Isbister, blessed this bell, one in the traditional Catholic way, and Shirley smudged and blessed the bell and welcomed it home,” said Delaronde.

He addressed the controversy surrounding the bell — the claims that it is not the true bell of Batoche — pointing out the Gatling gun marks on the exterior, along with other proofs.

Delaronde’s dream is for the bell to return to Batoche, from where it was taken by soldiers as a spoil of war in the spring of 1885, a few months before Riel was tried by a stipendiary magistrate and a hastily assembled six-person jury under pressure from the prime minister, John A. Macdonald, and the anti-French, anti-indigenous, anti-Catholic prejudices of the time.

Delaronde joked that, personally, he was not a repatriator, just a rebel who wanted to re-bell Batoche — a thief who stole back what had been stolen.

“I did it for the children and the elders,” he said.

Delaronde’s motivations are not unlike Riel’s when he sought justice for his people when they

found federal surveyors staking out Métis lands prior to the 1885 resistance at Batoche. Many injustices had been redressed at the founding of the province of



Andréa Ledding

KEEPER OF THE BELL — Commemorations were held across Saskatchewan Nov.16 on the anniversary of the hanging of Louis Riel. Following a program at the statue of Gabriel Dumont in Friendship Park, participants were invited to the headquarters of the Central Urban Metis Federation for a program and lunch. Among those present were the Bell of Batoche, “Marie Antoinette,” and the Keeper of the Bell, Billyjo Delaronde.

Bishops support fundraising for court case

By Derrick Kunz and
Kiply Yaworski

SASKATOON — The Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan recently circulated a letter of support for Catholic schools and their fundraising efforts to cover the legal costs of appealing the Theodore court case ruling.

“As your bishops, we encourage you to pray for Catholic education in our province, a privilege we presently have and now strive to protect,” states the letter circulated to parishes across the province.

“We would also invite you to prayerfully consider a financial donation to the ‘Schools You Can Believe In’ fundraising campaign. Your support will allow Catholic school divisions to continue to focus on quality Catholic education for all those who enter our schools.”

The campaign is necessary to cover the legal costs associated with appealing an April 2017 court decision which ruled that the gov-

ernment of Saskatchewan should no longer fund non-Catholics attending Catholic Schools, said the letter signed by the five Saskatchewan bishops: Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, Archbishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin-Le Pas, Bishop Mark Hagemoen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, and Bishop Albert Thévenot of Prince Albert.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools has joined the other seven Catholic school divisions in the province now seeking support to cover the legal costs of appealing the ruling.

The controversial court decision to fund only Catholic students attending Catholic schools stated that a Catholic baptismal certificate would be necessary for students to attend Catholic schools throughout the province. Catholic school boards across the province

University embroiled in freedom of speech issue

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Saint Paul University's abrupt cancellation of an outside group's pro-abortion film preceded by a Planned Parenthood panel has heated up debate on free speech in Ottawa.

On the hot seat is Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer, who last summer spoke of developing a policy of removing funding from universities that do not allow freedom of expression.

Some compare this cancellation to the controversy at Wilfred Laurier University involving a teaching assistant who was sanctioned for showing a video clip to her class that included Jordan Peterson, a University of Toronto professor who opposes the forced use of new gender pronouns.

Organizers of the annual Choice! Birth and Baby Film Festival had planned to show the

award-winning documentary *Vessel* Nov. 25. *Vessel* is about a woman who began providing abortions aboard ships anchored off the coast of countries where abortion is illegal. Days before, festival organizers received an email from the Catholic university telling them they should change the film or cancel the event. The festival had been held at Saint Paul University for six years previously, but none of the other films were controversial.

"We haven't heard from the Conservatives and Andrew Scheer on this issue," said Minister of Science Kirsty Duncan to journalists Nov. 27. "You can't pick and choose the issues, the free speech issues that you stand up for."

"Mr. Scheer encourages all universities and colleges to promote free speech and the exchange of ideas and thoughts in an academic setting," Jake Enwright, a spokesperson for the

Conservative leader, told CCN Nov. 28. "As he's said previously, he respects the right of university and college administrations to determine which outside organizations they allow on their campuses. That is a position he took back in the summer. It isn't new."

Phil Horgan, a constitutional lawyer and president of the Catholic Civil Rights League, said it is a bit "rich" for the Liberal party to be making free speech arguments when they don't allow members of their own caucus freedom of speech or conscience on abortion.

"As a Catholic institution of higher learning, Saint Paul's is under no obligation to advance agencies that would present matters contrary to its mission statement and faith-based understandings," Horgan said.

Horgan was particularly struck by the fact that Planned Parenthood was involved in presenting

a panel before the documentary screening on "safe access to medical abortion and taking abortions out of clinics and hospitals," according to the festival's Facebook page.

"The better question is why an organization antithetical to well-known teachings of the Catholic faith would pursue such engagements to advance arguments against such teachings at a Catholic institution," Horgan said. "Where is the convivial respect for difference from this group?"

Instead of academic inquiry, this was "engaging in provocation," he said.

However, Albertos Polizogopoulos, a constitutional lawyer who specializes in religious freedom cases, warned against a double standard.

"If we want to be consistent, it would have to include this scenario, unless you made an exception for faith-based organiza-



CCN/D. Gyapong

Phil Horgan

tions," he said. "I don't know whether it should be made."

— SECURITY, page 8

'State-supported discriminatory policies are not to be tolerated'

Continued from page 1

zealously protect religious minorities, I would suggest it is now."

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and other religious interveners were concerned about context in light of the legalization of same-sex marriage, said lawyer William Sammon. He noted the CCCB had intervened in the 2004 marriage reference, joining other religious interveners who "were concerned that those who held to the religious definition of marriage would be deemed bigots deserving of censure."

He pointed out that both the Supreme Court's marriage reference and the Civil Marriage Act legalizing same-sex marriage made it clear those who disagreed had a Charter right to maintain their views on traditional marriage. The law societies' decisions were a "clear contravention" of the Court's direction in the marriage reference, he said.

"Trinity Western has suffered a harm because the law societies have failed to accredit that university because of that covenant," Sammon said.

The message of the law societies' refusal to accredit Trinity Western's law school "is that religious beliefs and practices are not welcome in the public sphere," said Gwendoline Allison on behalf of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, the Catholic Civil Rights League and the Faith and Freedom Alliance. The groups she represented, "including the Archdiocese of Vancouver, will be directly and prejudicially affected."

The B.C. Court of Appeal noted the "severe detrimental impact" the B.C. law society's decision had on the students of Trinity Western, she said. Religion is "an aspect of identity; marginalization of religions is a denial of equal rights."

To find "authentic pluralism, we must find ways in which competing rights and values can be shared rather than the dominance of one group over another," Allison said.

"There is no need to hierar-

chize rights if peaceful coexistence is possible," argued Eugene Meehan on behalf of the National Coalition of Catholic School Trustees Association. "Not privileged one right over another protects all rights."

"LGBTQ peoples have suffered terrible violations of their civil rights," Meehan told the Court. But he asked whether in remedying that violation, "must the recognized rights of religious communities also suffer."

"The law societies have demanded that those undertaking the religious objective of creating a Christian university change their beliefs to be accredited," said Gerry Chipeur, acting on behalf of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Canada. "It is our position that no group should have to change beliefs as a condition of receiving a government benefit."

The United Church of Canada, however, opposed religious freedom for institutions. Lawyer Tim Gleason said freedom of religion and conscience is "a human right that can only be held by humans."

If you extend religious free-

dom to organizations, "you open up the problems this case presents to us, an organization shielding its coercive practices" under section 2a of the charter, Gleason said.

He argued the covenant was "compelled ideological conformity."

Lawyers for several LGBTQ organizations argued Trinity Western should not be allowed to discriminate on equality grounds. Angela Chaisson of Lesbians Gays Bisexuals and Trans People of the University of Toronto argued the community covenant caused a "direct harm" and created an "unequal playing field" for prospective LGBTQ law students. She warned of the ongoing "social exclusion" LGBTQ people face, and the "chilling effect" caused by "homophobia."

The Canadian Bar Association (CBA) argued the law societies' granting accreditation amounts to a "form of approval."

"State-supported discriminatory policies are not to be tolerated even if it arises from private actors which had the right to hold those views," argued Susan Ussel

for the CBA.

An impact on other areas of licensing — the abyss Bussey referred to — "are logical implications," she said, implications the CBA would favour. "Trinity Western has a right to its beliefs and covenant but has no right to state support."

In all, 27 interveners argued for or against the accreditation of the law school.

The previous day, lawyers representing Trinity Western University faced tough questions from several Supreme Court Justices.

Justice Richard Wagner, who could be next in line to replace Justice Beverley McLachlin when she retires this month, led off by saying "students who don't share the same sexual orientation" will either have to hide it, or act contrary to their deepest nature. He referred to "pain and suffering" on the part of these students and asked whether the covenant is not "an attack" on the "human dignity" of LGBTQ students.

Lawyers for Trinity Western argued the covenant is "part of the shared definition of a reli-

gious community," a "religious minority" and noted the charter protects the right to establish communities of faith.

The only charter rights being infringed are the religious freedom and freedom of association rights of the Evangelical Christian community at Trinity Western, argued Kevin Boonstra for Trinity Western.

Boonstra pointed out the Charter binds the law societies, but not Trinity Western, which is seeking accommodation for its religious character in the same way a Sikh receives religious accommodation for his kirpan in a weapons-free environment.

This is not the first time Trinity Western has been before the Supreme Court over its community covenant. In 2001 the Court decided in favour of the accreditation of its teachers' college over the objections of the B.C. teachers' college.

Justice Rosalie Abella pointed out that since the first Trinity Western decision, Canada has brought in a law recognizing same-sex marriage.

Abella read off some of the requirements of the covenant, such as refraining from getting drunk, swearing, using drugs or alcohol or drugs, and "sexual orientation" and concluded, "One of these things is not like the other."

Abella asked if Trinity Western has the right to ask people to refrain from the legal right of same-sex marriage.

Among the issues before the Court is whether law societies have the jurisdiction to determine the entrance requirements of a law school, or only to recognize the credentials of law school graduates when they present them.

Lawyers representing the law societies argued it was in the public interest to determine if there was equality of access to law school spaces.

Chief Justice McLachlin reserved decision on the case.

Bob Kuhn, president of Trinity Western, told CCN he thought the university had been granted a fair hearing.



CCN/D. Gyapong

AT THE SUPREME COURT — Trinity Western students at Ottawa's Laurentian Leadership Centre on the steps of the Supreme Court of Canada Dec. 1, with director of the centre Janet Epp Buckingham (third from left).

Catholic agencies applaud national housing plan

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Catholic agencies that serve the poor have waited a long time for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s National Housing Day announcement of a potential \$40 billion over 10 years to fund a national housing strategy.

“We were the only country in the Northern Hemisphere that had no housing strategy,” said Good Shepherd Ministries executive director Br. Richard MacPhee of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

“Catholic Charities’ member agencies know first-hand how important housing is for the people who turn to them,” said Catholic Charities social justice and advocacy program manager Jack Panozzo. “The best thing that can be said about the national housing strategy is that the federal government is once again committed to housing and recognizes housing as a basic human right.”

The strategy, announced Nov. 22, includes enshrining housing as a human right, a promise to cut chronic homelessness in half over the next 10 years, constructing 100,000 new units and committing \$4 billion for the Canada Housing Benefit to help renters. The strategy is dependent on sharing costs with provinces and municipalities.

“The fact that the government stepped up in the way that it has . . . is most significant,” said Covenant House executive direc-



Catholic Register/Meggie Hoegler

BASIC HUMAN RIGHT — The federal government’s housing strategy, released Nov. 22, will enshrine housing as a basic human right. Catholic agencies say it’s about time.

tor Bruce Rivers. “It’s something our organization and others have been looking for and asking for some time. This is a major step in the right direction and we’re happy.”

However, the strategy is probably not everything housing advocates were hoping for, said Wellesley Institute senior researcher and housing policy expert Greg Suttor.

“In some respects, the dollars are probably not sufficient to achieve the stated goals,” Suttor told *The Catholic Register*.

Some of the most significant new spending is pushed out beyond the 2019 federal election, particularly the Canada Housing Benefit which starts in 2020. But even once the cheques are in the mail, the rent subsidies for low-income families won’t solve the problem in expensive, big-city rental markets.

“If you provide a housing benefit of \$200 a month, which is what’s implied, you’re not going to take people out of core need,” said Suttor. “If you are a household that makes \$2,000 a

month and you’re paying \$1,000 in rent, theoretically you’re only paying \$800 in rent (once the subsidy kicks in). You’re still in core need. You’re still spending 40 per cent of your income on housing.”

For one of Canada’s leading researchers on housing and homelessness, the details can be debated later.

“Basically, I am delighted about the new housing strategy,” said Dr. Stephen Hwang, director of the Centre for Urban Health Solutions at Toronto’s St. Michael’s Hospital. “While some may criticize it as being too little or too slow, I think that it is of

great importance because it is a commitment to take steps in the right direction.”

For the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and their Fontbonne Ministries initiatives, it’s the possibility of creating more supportive housing to meet the needs of older, single women that is really exciting.

“As Christians, we have a responsibility to make sure that our society is one that cares for those who are most vulnerable. If we’re doing that, I think that trickles up throughout society,” said Fontbonne Ministries administrator Leanne Kloppenborg.

If there’s money on the table, Good Shepherd Ministries is ready to build, said MacPhee.

“If the church can come together and say, ‘We want to put our money and resources where we can turn around and make something different for people,’ I think that’s a call to action for our church. It’s a call to live the Gospel,” he said.

MacPhee hopes ordinary Catholics begin to see the homeless as people whose human rights have been denied and violated.

“People need to turn around and when they walk into their own door every night and they can turn that key — what does that place, a home, mean to them? What would it mean if they didn’t have that key? If they didn’t have that place to call home?” he said. “It is a right.”

MacPhee also subscribes to trickle-up economics.

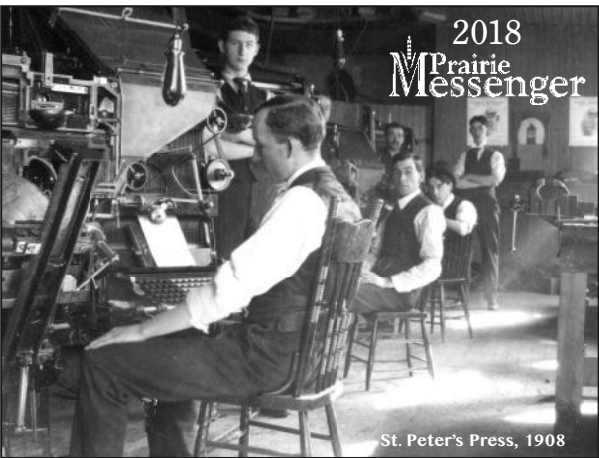
“If you deal with some of the vulnerable groups of people and build some new housing, it may in fact open up some housing opportunities for other people in the middle class,” he said.

Suttor predicts there will be opportunities for parishes, religious orders and church agencies to get involved in providing housing.

Housing strategy highlights

Key points in the national housing strategy:

- Planned legislation will enshrine housing as a human right. Though not quite at the level of the Charter of Rights, the new law will obligate governments to have and pursue strategies to eliminate homelessness and ensure safe and affordable housing.
- \$40 billion is budgeted over the next decade, including the \$11.2 billion already budgeted in the 2017 federal budget. Most of the new spending won’t kick in until 2020 and by one count the federal government share will only be \$16 billion with the rest coming from the provinces, municipalities and private sector.
- \$4 billion will go toward a Canada Housing Benefit. At the upper level this would amount to \$2,500 per year or \$208 per month for about 300,000 low-income renters across the country.
- A promise to cut chronic homelessness in half, remove 530,000 families from core housing need (as measured by affordability, adequacy and suitability) and construct up to 100,000 new affordable units.



The Prairie Messenger 2018 calendar features local photography accompanied by a meditation. The calendar measures 8 1/2 x 11" and includes the Sundays of the liturgical year, holy days, saints' days and the phases of the moon.

ORDER TODAY FOR A LOW PRICE OF \$15.95 plus S&H

Mail coupon to: **St. Peter's Press**
Box 190, Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0
Phone: (306) 682-1770 Fax: (306) 682-5285
email: press@stpeterspress.ca

Name _____
Address _____
Town/City _____ Prov. _____ P. Code _____
Phone # _____

Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery

☐ Cheque/Money Order enclosed ☐ VISA/MasterCard
VISA/MasterCard # _____ CVV # _____
Expiry Date _____ Name of cardholder _____

☐ Please send me _____ calendars @ \$15.95 for a total of \$ _____
Postage and Handling (Add \$4 for 1st calendar and .50¢ for each additional) \$ _____
6% PST (Sask. residents only, on calendars only) \$ _____
5% GST (on calendar and postage) \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Obituary
MILLER, Sister Rita
(Anna Mary)

entered Eternal Life on Nov. 27, 2017, at Villa Angela in Chatham, Ont. She was born in Viscount, Sask., in 1923, the daughter of the late Elizabeth (Novecosky) and Andrew Miller. In 1942 Sister Rita entered the Ursuline Sisters in Vibank. In 1953, the Ursulines of Vibank amalgamated with the Ursulines of Chatham. During her religious life she served as a teacher in Vibank, Regina, Grayson and Balgonie. She also was Local Leader in Regina and sacristan in both Regina and Chatham. She is survived by many nieces and nephews whom she loved dearly. She is predeceased by her parents and siblings Magdalena, Peter, Benedict, Joseph, Anthony, John, Leo, Elizabeth German, Bernard, Edward, Martin, Albert, Sr. Elizabeth Anne Miller, OSU, and Bridget Wolfe. Relatives and friends were invited to join the Ursuline Community at a prayer service held on Nov. 30 in the Kiva at Villa Angela in Chatham. The Mass of Resurrection was celebrated on Dec. 1 in the Kiva at Villa Angela, Chatham. Interment is in St. Anthony's Cemetery. Donations in memory of Sister Rita may be made to "Chatham Ursuline Charities", 20 Merici Way, Chatham, Ont., or to the charity of your choice. Arrangements entrusted to Hinnegan-Peskeski Funeral Home Ltd., (519-352-5120). Condolences may be left at www.peskeski.com

Reconciliation sought at Riel commemoration

By Andréa Ledding

SASKATOON — The Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Francophone Federation held a joint event on Nov. 16 at Station 20 West, commemorating the death of Louis Riel, celebrating Métis culture and heritage, and working on reconciliation between the two communities.

Elder Norman Fleury recounted the story of Josette Tourond, a contemporary of Riel and an example of the matriarchal system. “This is who we are,” said Fleury. “Our mothers and grandmothers were the powers in our communities.”

Madame Tourond was widowed at an early age, with many children. Even so, the family ranched peacefully at Batoche until 1885. She lost three sons that year, and most of the rest in a tragic seven-year period that followed. All but one sick son and another who died at the age of three had been married with children. Tourond outlived them all, dying at the age of 97 in 1928.

“This is a survivor we’re talking about,” said Fleury. “Most of us are survivors.”

This is true of all indigenous peoples, he stated, whether it be the effects of war, genocide, the Sixties



Andréa Ledding

EXCHANGE OF SASHES — At a reconciliation event held Nov. 16 commemorating the anniversary of the hanging of Louis Riel, the Francophone Federation of Saskatoon gave Métis performers their official sash, while the Gabriel Dumont Institute presented the Francophone Federation with a commemorative Métis sash.

Scoop, or the inter-generational effects of the residential schools.

The area of Tourond’s farm was known as Fish Creek, or Tourond’s Coulee. The Battle of Fish Creek on April 24, 1885, was a decisive victory for the Métis under Gabriel Dumont, but the farm was looted during the fighting. Incensed, Tourond crossed enemy lines to demand the return of her wagon and horses, which she needed for her elderly mother

and infirm son. Awed by the actions of this fearless 52-year-old widow, the government troops gave them back.

Tourond was one of the first people Riel visited when he arrived in Batoche. He came to offer condolences to the widow on the loss of her husband and to seek support and encouragement for his own cause.

“We don’t have to pray for strong leaders like Josette Tourond,” Fleury said. “She’ll pray for us. We’re the ones that need prayers. So we ask in the spirit of Josette that something good happens this evening amongst us. We’re trying to repair those differences and those hurts.”

After the more solemn half of the evening, there was a break for

food, followed by entertainment that included guitar music, jigging, fiddling, and dancing.

Before performing, Scott Duffee, who is related to Riel on his mother’s side, spoke about Riel’s gentle kindness, passed on through family stories. “What he brought was a spirit of inclusiveness and interconnectedness,” Duffee said. “He wanted us to live together and respect our distinct cultures, and relate to each other in a good way as fellow human beings.”

Duffee contrasted Riel’s spirit of inclusivity and compassion with the aggression and intolerance of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and his supporters in Protestant Ontario. “He shall hang,” Macdonald declared of Riel, “though every dog in Quebec bark in his favour.”

The evening included messages of reconciliation and peace, acknowledging the commonalities between the two communities, and ending with an exchange of sashes. The Francophone Federation gave all the Métis performers their official sash, while Karon Shmon of GDI presented the Francophone Federation with a commemorative Métis sash.

Catholic schools have a mandate to be open to all

Continued from page 3

have asserted that this narrow and restrictive definition does not reflect the inclusive and ecumenical nature of Catholic education, nor does it consider the diversity of the family in modern society.

The ruling has been appealed by both the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association (SCSBA) and the Government of Saskatchewan. On Nov. 8 the provincial government introduced legislation invoking the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to give a temporary, five-year reprieve from the ruling. However, a permanent reversal through the appeals process is needed.

“We feel strongly that education funding should stay where it belongs, in our classrooms, but at the same time, we need to pursue an appeal of the court decision to ensure Catholic education is an option for all parents who want it,” said SCSBA president Vicky Bonnell in a media release. “So, we are reaching out to our supporters for their help.”

Under the theme “Schools You Can Believe In,” the fundraising campaign, with a goal of \$300,000, will cover the cost of appealing the decision up to the Supreme Court of Canada, should that become necessary. All Catholic school divisions in Saskatchewan are participating and are looking to parents and guardians, families, parishioners, provincial Catholic organizations, clergy and friends of Catholic education for donations.

Diane Boyko, Board of Education chair for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, said, “We have much to gain through a successful

appeal. Support will help ensure Catholic education is available to all who choose it, no matter the reason, for future generations.”

Boyko noted that, as Saskatchewan’s largest Catholic School division, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools’ share of the provincial initiative would be about \$140,000 — roughly \$7 per student.

“Our role as Catholic educators goes far beyond helping parents and guardians equip their children as leaders of tomorrow,” she stressed. “We have the responsibility to walk with students along their faith journey, and help them realize their inherent dignity as children of God and know the hope to which he calls them.”

In their letter, the bishops noted that “Catholic schools in Saskatchewan are founded on a common faith in Jesus Christ as understood within the Catholic tradition. Religious instruction, religious practice, value formation and faith development are integral to every area of the curriculum in a Catholic school. These faith communities provide a learning environment in which each student’s unique, God-given gifts and talents are fostered.”

Catholic schools have a mandate to share the Gospel and be open to all those seeking Catholic education, the bishops wrote. “The Catholic Church and Catholic schools have a social mandate rooted in Gospel values to be open to all, especially the most vulnerable in our society. Catholic schools have a two-pronged obligation to remain grounded in the tradition and teachings of the Catholic Church, and to be receptive to families who choose Catholic education for their children.”

Iconographers launch exhibition

By Kate O’Gorman

SASKATOON — An exhibition entitled “Iconography in Our Time: The Power of Visual Prayer” was launched with a reception at the Musée Ukraina Museum (MUM) in Saskatoon Nov. 19.

“Today, we celebrate iconography,” said curator and instructor Anna Mycyk. “In a world of chaos and uncertainty, it is an expression of faith and a beacon of light. Icons invite contemplation, and are inseparable from prayer. Their purpose is to engage the viewer.”

The icons in the exhibition were written by local iconographers over the past several years.

“We have rules and guidelines in iconography, one of which is to share the joy and love of writing icons with others,” continued Mycyk. “Museums are fascinating settings for preserving and sharing culture, ideas, heritage, and art, and we are pleased to show this exhibition at the MUM.”

Of the icons on display, Mysyk said they are both “deeply personal and universally accessible.”

Together, she and her collaborator, Giselle Bauche, offer classes, workshops, and retreats in iconography.

“These offerings have garnered enthusiasm throughout Saskatoon over the past 15 years,” said Bauche. “It has grown beyond our expectations.”

While rooted in the Eastern Catholic tradition, the practice of icon-writing transcends denominational lines.

Cathryn Wood, program coordinator for the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism and an exhibition participant, remarked that “Lutherans and Anglicans, Catholics and Baptists” attend the classes offered by Bauche and Mysyk: “We come together from different denominations to find a commonality in

icon writing.”

“We have become an ecumenical community,” said Bauche. “It’s been an honour and a gift to us, and we are grateful.”

Wood began writing icons after being invited by her father, Rev. Larry Mitchell, a semi-retired minister in the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon.

“I loved it right away,” Mitchell said of his first experience of icon-

writing. “There’s something about looking at that icon and the face looking back at you that hits you inside. You get connected.”

“Anna and Giselle start each class with Taizé prayer,” continued Wood, “and so the whole experience becomes very meaningful.”

Of attending iconography classes together as father and daughter, Wood said, “We’ve always been close, and this has given us another opportunity to connect.”

Longtime iconography student and exhibition participant Rev. Paul Matheson, a Baptist minister, says he was drawn to the ancient practice after being exposed to icons on a trip to the Holy Land many years ago.

“The process of writing the icon itself is a prayerful, meditative experience that uses a different part of the brain than I use in my everyday working life. For me, it’s a time to come apart from all the activity of being a pastor in

professional ministry and nurture my soul.”

Kate Hodgson, exhibition participant and a graduate of Saskatoon’s Lay Formation program, described the launch as a family reunion: “Being part of the community has been wonderful. It’s a great mix of people from different traditions and that has enriched our prayer and our sharing.”



Kate O’Gorman

ICONOGRAPHY EXHIBITION — Rev. Paul Matheson stands next to his icon at the launch of an iconography exhibit Nov. 19 at the Musée Ukraina Museum in Saskatoon.

Originally a student of fine art, Hodgson found iconography to be a way of exploring her love of art as prayer.

“It was wonderful to put away the egocentric aspects of the visual arts and move into something more spiritual,” she said. Icon writing “is like meditation. It’s soothing and relaxing. It takes you to another space, and at the end you have a beautiful icon to take home.”

Mycyk and Bauche extended their appreciation to all the iconographers involved. “Iconography is an expression of God, love, and prayer,” they affirmed. “For this we are grateful.”

‘Uncomfortable pew’ a hazard of ecumenism

By Kate O’Gorman

SASKATOON — The Prairie Centre for Ecumenism offered a public event at St. Matthew’s Anglican Church in Saskatoon Nov. 14 entitled, “The Uncomfortable Pew: Ecumenical Sensitivity at Weddings and Funerals.”

The event drew clergy and laypeople from a variety of Christian traditions and offered a friendly and hospitable environment to reflect on various experiences of ecumenical etiquette and sensitivity.

The centre’s executive director, Darren Dahl, invited participants to remember a time when services such as weddings, funerals, baptisms and confirmations deliberately excluded family and friends who belonged to another Christian denomination.

“Just a generation ago, it was common that one didn’t participate in the services of other denominations,” said Dahl. “It simply wasn’t an option.”

Participants shared stories and

lamented memories that highlighted this history of division. But despite the painful past, Dahl emphasized, we no longer think the same way about other churches. This new attitude is owing to our ecumenical conversations, particularly at the local and regional levels.



Darren Dahl

“We give thanks that, for the most part, we aren’t there anymore,” said Dahl. “It’s common practice now, especially when it comes to services such as funerals and weddings, that we find ourselves invited into our neighbours’ churches.”

Because Christians are no longer separated in the same way, however, we face a new set of challenges when we find ourselves in churches that are unfamiliar to us.

“Part of the ecumenical journey is accepting the fact that we remain diverse, even in our attempts to be united,” Dahl said. “Being a good friend in a church that is not our own requires us to

recognize that there is an etiquette to adhere to, especially in practices such as the eucharist. There are expectations about what it means to be a good guest and what it means to be a good host, and when those expectations conflict with the theological and liturgical boundaries that still exist between us, things can get awkward.

“The challenge we face now is how to live together, celebrating our accomplishments while recognizing the boundaries that still exist and the etiquette required to navigate our ecumenical life together,” he said.

“Unfortunately, many of these practical modes of etiquette are discovered by trial and error, cre-

ating the experience of the ‘uncomfortable pew.’”

Dahl asked, “What could we do to make guests from other traditions feel welcome at services such as weddings and funerals, while also helping them navigate modes of appropriate practice and etiquette?”

Participants at the event were invited to share their own experiences of navigating ecumenical etiquette. This was followed by a robust conversation about how to be a good ecumenical host.

The Prairie Centre is planning further events in 2018 to help foster practical ecumenical conversations. For more information, visit www.pcecumenism.ca

New co-ordinator named for lay Aboriginal stream

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Deepening a relationship with God through the Aboriginal Lay Formation program changed Marlene Hansen’s life. As the new co-ordinator of the program, that transformation is something she shares with and encourages in others.



Kiply Yaworski
Marlene Hansen

“The more you get to know God, the more you get to know about love,” says Hansen, a parishioner at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Buffalo Narrows, Sask.

Encouraged by a colleague, Hansen first experienced the Aboriginal Lay Formation program as a participant in 2012 - 2014. She also took the spiritual direction program offered at Queen’s House of Retreat and Renewal in Saskatoon.

“I wouldn’t say life is easy, but the more I got to know God the easier it became to deal with, knowing God and having God in my life to lean on, through the difficult times.”

Hansen, who works in the area of mental health and addictions for the Keewatin Yatthe Regional Health Authority in northwestern

Saskatchewan, is presently leading nine participants in the Aboriginal Lay Formation program, held one weekend at month at Queen’s House.

Jointly offered by the dioceses of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Keewatin-Le Pas, Aboriginal Lay Formation is held in conjunction with a Ukrainian Catholic eparchial stream and a Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon stream of Lay Formation. Participants in each stream are together for some sessions and apart for others. All three streams offer an opportunity to deepen one’s faith and relationship with God through prayer, learning, and Christian community.

Taking Aboriginal Lay Formation was the best thing she could have done, asserts Hansen.

“It was really about finding out about my relationship with God, how does God work in my life, was God in my life, where is God? Because I always thought God was ‘out there,’ I didn’t know God was in here,” she says, pointing to her heart.

“It’s just easier to live now, and it makes life more beautiful,” Hansen adds, noting that Lay Formation has brought healing, and helped her to see God at work even during difficulties and in darkness.

The spiritual enrichment Lay Formation offered has also permitted her to reach out to others, to confidently share faith, to assist in her parish, and now to accompany the nine participants in this year’s program. The content of the program, the prayer, the learning, and the connections built among traditions have a powerful effect on people’s lives, says Hansen. “They are able to take it back to their communities.”

Lay Formation is about trusting God and being open to listening to God, she says. “If we open our hearts to it, our lives will make a difference in helping others. And I believe that is why we are here.”

Technology can be deceiving: Bayda

By Paul Paproski, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — People are fascinated by technology and find the newest gadgets very alluring, Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, said Nov. 24 to some 35 people attending a noon luncheon sponsored by St. Peter’s College Campus Ministry. It is assumed that technology will increase the standard of living and bring more leisure and recreation, said the bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon. Computers and mobile phones have revolutionized communication and the marketplace, but “what is all this technology turning us into?” he asked in his presentation, entitled “The Idolatry of Technology.”

“Personal access to information is unlimited and it is putting tremendous pressure on you,” he said. It is expected that an email should be answered just after it’s been sent, and the people on the receiving end feel pressure to send an immediate reply. Instant communication is time-saving, and that’s important when time is considered valuable. The downside to this is the pressure to be more efficient and accomplish more by filling in saved time with more and more work.

“The problem is, we have been blind-sided by this would-be ally called technology. It promises to be a friend, an aid, an assistant, to help us. It can be a friend, but at the same time it can take over if we are not vigilant.”

Good questions to ask when opening a computer or an iPhone are, “What is your motive? Are you looking for quality, speed, affordability? Do these things bring more leisure? What is the goal, to have more leisure? What is your reason for living? Who is your God?”

“How many times have you returned from a vacation and needed to recuperate? After travel and technology, you need time to catch a breath,” Bayda remarked.

The story of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) who were tempted by the serpent speaks to the lure of technology. The serpent told Eve that if she ate of the forbidden fruit she would become like a god, having knowledge of good and evil.

There is a strong attraction to the many promises of new technology. Innovation has opened

people to many new things and changed the way people see things and interact with each other. You should ask yourself, “How is technology changing you? What are you becoming? Are you becoming more Christian, more like Christ? Jesus told his followers to love and forgive. He did not tell them their lives are about efficiency and productivity.

“Think about it critically. Why do I use the technology that I use? How do I use it to serve Christ, my neighbour, as opposed to being like a dog on a leash and being dragged along?” he asked.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5) give insight into how Christians should live. They speak of the blessedness in being meek and merciful, hungering and thirsting for righteousness and peace, being a peacemaker, having a clean heart. Technology can be used to be of service to others.

“When it is blowing and snowing and raining and storming, you come into the house feeling calm. Our minds and hearts do that when

we step away from technology. Ask yourself, ‘Who is in the driver’s seat? And what expectations have I placed on myself?’”



Paul Paproski
Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR

Fasting from technology will bring the realization of how independent we are, Bayda added.

Ministry flows from Christ

Continued from page 1

languages representing the diversity of people in the archdiocese. This was followed by mass, with Bolen as presider and homilist.

Bolen began his homily by holding up an icon of Christ the Good Shepherd, a gift from Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon. He reflected on the Gospel readings of the day, and the day previous, in which Christ described himself as a shepherd who will look after his sheep: “All Christian ministry flows from this, including ministry symbolized by the pallium,” said Bolen. “But it’s not about the ministry of the metropolitan in isolation: we include everyone — bishops, clergy, members of religious communities and everyone sharing in the ministry. Each of us in a distinct way is called upon to share Christ’s ministry. We are all in this together.”

Bolen reflected on Jesus’ ministry as described in Luke and Matthew, in which Christ told his disciples to preach the Gospel and heal the sick and the wounded. He quoted Pope Francis, who said that the church needs to heal wounds

and warm the hearts of the faithful, and should be like a field hospital after battle. The wounds have first to be healed, then we can talk about everything else.

The pallium is woven of wool from two lambs representing Christ the Lamb of God and Christ the Good Shepherd. The pope chooses the animals from a flock raised at the Convent of St. Agnes in Rome, then they are sent to the Benedictine Sisters of St. Cecilia in Trastevere, a district of Rome, where they are cared for and eventually shorn.

Once completed, the pallia are placed on the tomb of St. Peter on the evening of June 29, the feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul. The following day they are placed on the high altar of St. Peter’s Basilica, where the pope blesses them and places one on his own shoulders. They are then placed in a silver urn, enclosed in a cabinet, and placed under the altar on the tomb of St. Peter until they are taken out for particular investitures.

After Bolen’s investiture, the congregation was invited to a reception in the gymnasium of Holy Rosary School behind the cathedral.

Difference between life and death a slim margin

Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



One Sunday morning in my mid-teens, I woke up to news of a terrible car crash involving some Mennonite kids from a neighbouring village. The driver's parents had gone away for the weekend, and on Saturday night he'd taken their car and rounded up a few friends and driven to a dance

Ratzlaff is a former minister, counsellor, and university lecturer. He has authored three books of literary non-fiction published by Thistledown Press. He has been short-listed for three Saskatchewan Books Awards, won two Saskatchewan Writers Guild literary non-fiction awards, and served on local, provincial, and national writing organization boards.

in our town's community hall. Later they were speeding recklessly down the gravel road to the highway, too late saw the stop sign and tried to swerve into a farmer's lane but instead rolled the car several times. Everyone was thrown clear, and though some of them were hurt they were all alive, thank God, with another chance to mend their rebellious ways.

That Sunday morning on the way to our country church we stopped to view the wreck. There it sat, half-upright and badly mangled, in the farmer's ditch. While rolling over it had sheared off several fenceposts, one of which pierced the driver's window and the steering wheel and in a perfect hit had punched out the

round speedometer in the dash. The post was stuck there like a thick arrow in a bullseye, or a piston in a cylinder.

My parents shook their heads and clucked at the kids' foolhardiness. We all stared at the demolished car, poked our heads through its broken windows and saw how awful this thing was. If the driver had been in his seat, the post would have taken off his head and mashed it to a pulp against the dashboard. I was so shaken myself that on the rest of the drive to church, and during the entire service, I was pondering my own sins, haunted by the exact fit of fencepost to speedometer.

One frigid winter morning after this accident, I left the house to do my chores before school, boots squeaking on the snow as I trudged glumly toward the barn. From a distance I saw a cat peeping through a jagged hole in the door, where a splinter of wood had broken off and my father hadn't yet had time to repair it. The hole tapered to a V at the bottom, and I saw only the creature's head looking out, waiting,

as I imagined, for its share of milk from a bowl we kept in a corner of the barn. To me, cats were a daily nuisance as I milked the cow like a poor Jack before a magic beanstalk grew, how impatiently they jumped at me where I squatted on my wooden stool doing the work I loathed. Now in the cold morning air I felt annoyed at this animal, wanting just to get the job over with, and change clothes and head for school where at least the work came easily to me.

The cat stared out as I lifted the latch and opened the door. For an instant it stood on its hind legs looking straight ahead, then slowly toppled forward and thumped on the ground, and lay still. During the night — I suddenly

understood — it had leaped up to look outside, the gap in the door just wide enough for the head to get through, and had strangled itself there with its back paws nearly touching the floor. The body was frozen stiff where it hung impaled, and if the gap in the door had been a fraction of an inch narrower, this could not have happened.

Later when I left for school, I carried with me the uncanny image of a dead animal standing on two legs, and the long, slow fall forward with its eyes wide open.

And after all these years, it's become even clearer how narrowly we evade death at every instant, how small the cleft that finally deals it.

Security of the student population comes first

Continued from page 4

Polizogopoulos stressed the Charter does not apply to Saint Paul University or Wilfrid Laurier University. "They didn't violate the Charter and are not bound by the Charter," he said. "The religious freedom argument could potentially be made in the same way churches and religious halls have been asked to host weddings that go against that religious groups' beliefs," he said. "That's been unsuccessful in cases where the organization rents their spaces to outsiders."

Legally, however, Saint Paul University hasn't broken any laws, or discriminated against any enumerated group, he said.

Saint Paul University, however, is not engaging religious freedom arguments.

"This is a business matter between Saint Paul and an external non-academic entity," said Fidèle Lavigne, a spokesperson for the university. "We decided not to have the film here because it was a security issue."

Lavigne said the university had hosted an event several years ago that brought protesters. "They caused damage. The fire alarm

went off. Police had to come on campus."

"The security of our student population comes first," she said. "These were external events not organized by anyone on campus."

Wendy Jolliffe, an organizer of the film festival, told Global News she got the impression the university was forced to cancel the venue. "From what I understood it was completely out of their hands," she said. "It's way up in the Catholic Church. Exactly what level it was, you'd have to check with them but I get the impression it was very high. It was not something they could control at the university."

But Lavigne disagreed. "It's not a matter of the archdiocese of Rome," she said. "If people want them to comment, they should contact them directly."

The archdiocese is not commenting officially. However, a spokesperson did tell CCN the archdiocese had received several complaints after the festival published a Facebook page promoting the event. The archdiocese simply passed the complaints on to the university, he said, noting the decision to cancel was the university's.



COCO — *Coco*, the new film from Disney's Pixar Animation Studios and the first Pixar film to feature a Latino protagonist, is the story of Miguel Rivera, a 12-year-old boy living in the fictional town of Santa Cecilia, Mexico. On the three-day Mexican holiday known as *Día de Los Muertos*, or the Day of the Dead — a holiday with roots in Catholic ritual and belief — we watch as Miguel, an aspiring musician played by Anthony Gonzalez, struggles to balance his love of music and his family's desire for him to go into the shoe-making industry, writes Olga Segura of *America* magazine. After stealing a guitar that belonged to his favourite musician, the young boy is transported to the Land of the Dead where he meets some of his dead relatives. Against the backdrops of beautiful colours, musical numbers and poignant dialogue, Miguel goes on a journey to discover the truth about his own heritage and history.

Disney/Pixar

www.prairiemessenger.ca

PRAIRIE MESSENGER PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

KAPOOR, SELNES, & KLIMM Barristers & Solicitors W. Selnes, B.A., LL.B.; G. Klimm, B.A., LL.B.; Phone (306) 752-5777, P.O. Box 2200 Melfort, Saskatchewan S0E 1A0 Phone (306) 873-4535, P.O. Box 760 Tisdale, Saskatchewan S0E 1T0	MCKERCHER LLP BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS SASKATOON: (306) 653-2000 L.J.(Dick) Batten, QC Michel G. Thibault David M.A. Stack, QC Curtis J. Onishenko Galen R. Richardson REGINA: 306.565.6500 David E. Thera, QC <i>Committed to serving the legal needs of Religious Organizations for the past 90 years.</i> MCKERCHER LLP mckercher.ca	RAYNER AGENCIES LTD. www.rayneragencies.ca Est. 1948 General Insurance Broker Motor Licences & Notary Public 1000 Central Avenue, Saskatoon Phone: 306-373-0663 Shawn Wasylenko Norbert Wasylenko	MAURICE SOULODRE Architect Ltd. Maurice Soulodre , B.A., B.Ed., M.Arch., SAA, MRAIC 1815C Lorne Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7H 1Y5 Tel: (306) 955-0333 Fax: (306) 955-0549 E-mail: soularch@sasktel.net	 MOURNING GLORY FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES John Schachtel 1201 - 8th St. East Saskatoon, Sask. (306) 978-5200
WEBER & GASPER Barristers & Solicitors Russel Weber (B.A., LL.B.) Tabbatha M. Gasper (B.A., LL.B.) 517 Main Street, Humboldt, Sask. Phone: 306-682-5038 Fax: 306-682-5538 E-mail: weber.gasper@sasktel.net		VOLUNTEER INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE requires Teachers, Administrators, Medical Professionals and Trades People, aged 21 - 65. If you are interested in serving overseas for two years, we may have an assignment for you! Please call 780-485-5505, Email: vics1@volunteerinternational.ca or visit our Website at www.volunteerinternational.ca	 Satisfaction Hearing Systems Ltd. Hearing Aid Sales, Service & Repair Ph: 306.979.4543 #16-1945 McKercher Dr. Cell: 306.881.8602 Saskatoon, SK S7J 4M4	Schuler-Lefebvre Funeral Chapel <i>"Dedicated to those we serve"</i> Ph: 306-682-4114 Humboldt, Sask.
		 St. Peter's Press Commercial Printers Since 1954 Fine Quality Printing Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0 Ph: 306-682-1770 Fax: 306-682-5285 press@stpeterspress.ca Place your professional ad here Call 306-682-1772	 Emerald Tree ACCOUNTING SERVICES Bookkeeping, Charity Returns, GST Filing, FRAME Reports Specializing in parishes and parishes with schools. Mira Salter ~ mira@emeraldtree.ca	 MALINOSKI & DANYLUIK FUNERAL HOME HWY 5 EAST HUMBOLDT <i>Humboldt's only 100% locally owned and operated.</i> PH : 306-682-1622

More of the year’s best films that deserve to be seen

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



It’s the advent of awards season with more of the year’s quality movies from the festival circuit showing up in theatres to reach a wider audience. That season extends into January when the Oscar nominations are announced, and when several high-profile titles, notably Steven Spielberg’s *The Post* and Paul Thomas Anderson’s *Phantom Thread*, will get more than a limited release. Below I look at a documentary and a drama that rank with the best. Since many people have Netflix I also briefly note a raft of new films available on that streaming service.

I have not seen a better documentary than *Faces Places* (<http://cohenmedia.net/films/faces-places>), a unique collaboration between one of France’s greatest filmmakers, Belgian-born Agnès Varda, still spry and alert at 88, and “JR” (no relation to the infamous Ewing of TV’s *Dallas*!), a 33-year-old photographer with imagination to burn.

Agnès sports a two-tone rust-red to white mop of hair while JR is never without his dark hat and glasses. The pair embarks on a journey to the countryside and coasts in JR’s photo-booth truck that is capable of producing large-format black-and-white prints that can be pasted on to vertical surfaces. They are looking to record ordinary people from all walks of life.

These portraits become giant murals on the walls of dwellings, other buildings, and more unusual

occasion turns to deeper musings, as when they visit the tiny cemetery with the grave of the master photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Varda recognizes that her eyesight is fading. The vigorous JR reminds her of her famous filmmaking contemporary Jean-Luc Godard, with whom she hung out during the heyday of the French New Wave, but has not seen in years. Varda is emotional when an attempted visit to see the elderly icon fails to get them in the door. Still, although the journey closes on a subdued elegiac note, Varda and JR are immensely engaging guides whose encounters among people in places with no claim to fame have left behind a life-affirming and soul-stirring legacy.

Swedish director Ruben Östlund’s *The Square* (<http://www.squarethefilm.com/>), controversial choice to receive the Cannes festival’s prestigious *Palme d’or*, is hands down the year’s most provocatively brilliant film. In Stockholm Christian Nielsen (Claes Bang) is the stylish high-flying chief curator of the X-Royal museum of modern and contemporary art, flush with a major new donation.

He is about to open a new exhibit called simply “The Square,” an illuminated space with the benign message that it “is a sanctuary of trust and caring. Within its boundaries, all have equal rights and responsibilities.” Christian gives a desultory interview to American journalist Anne (Elisabeth Moss, having a banner year in the TV series *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Top of the Lake: China Girl*), who quotes back his own meaningless artspeak. Then Christian gets mugged by reality, robbed of his phone and wallet in an artful street setup. His efforts to retrieve them set off a train of ill-fated consequences with the rougher half of society.

Events start spinning out of control. After a raucous party Christian has a one-night stand with Anne that ends in an excruciating faceoff — who is using whom? His distraction allows a promotional video pitched by a couple of hipster marketers to go viral. It features a little blonde girl holding a kitten being blown up in the square, sparking outrage.

Östlund’s savage satirical shots at the art scene — an exhibit of piles of gravel; a ponderous conversation with an artist disrupted by the loud profanities of a man with Tourette’s syndrome — culminate in a posh gala banquet in which a performance artist, Oleg (Terry Notary), playing a gorilla, goes totally ape. (Not to mention that a pet ape lives in Anne’s apartment.)

Östlund also skewers politically correct pretensions of social-democratic egalitarianism, racial inclusion, and free speech. Beggars keep popping up. An aggrieved minority



Netflix/Steve Dietl

MUDBOUND — Mudbound chronicles two families — one black, one white — on a dusty plantation in Second World War-era Mississippi.

boy demands an apology from Christian while he is trying to manage a pair of squabbling young daughters. He has to bite the bullet over the offensive video. Troubles rain down even when he tries to do the right thing. By the end, our *schadenfreude* over all these self-inflicted woes relents at least a little.

Faces, Places

(Visages Villages/France)

The Square

(Sweden/Germany/France/Denmark)

Excellent performances and striking set pieces make this bonfire of vanities and absurdities compulsively watchable.

Available on Netflix:

I have already praised the Sundance selection *Mudbound*, which was added in mid-November. Here are a dozen more, four dramas and eight documentaries, that merit attention.

Megan Leavey (U.S.)

Gabriela Cowperthwaite directs this true story of an aimless young woman, the titular Megan Leavey, who shapes up after joining the Marines and forms an unusual bond with a war dog named Rex, trained to sniff out hidden explosives and other dangers. Leavey becomes his handler and both are deployed to Iraq where they endure attacks. Suffering PTSD, she is done with the war, but Rex is not. The rest of the story is about her inspirational struggle to be reunited with Rex. Although the heroic veteran narrative omits any critique of the war, and Kate Mara seems rather wispy to portray a Marine, the scenes of the human-canine relationship are effective.

The Meyerowitz Stories (New and Selected) (U.S.)

A dog named “Einstein” won the “palm dog” at the Cannes film festival where writer-director Noah Baumbach’s latest dramedy was one of the first Netflix productions to premiere in competition. Set in New York it follows the fumbings and foibles of the

Jewish-American Meyerowitz clan. Adam Sandler is excellent as the hapless divorced son Danny, the focus of the first story, as is half-brother Ben Stiller as the estranged successful L.A.-based architect son Matthew who reluctantly returns when four-times married dad, egocentric artist Harold (Dustin Hoffman), is hospitalized. Emma Thompson plays Harold’s alcoholic current wife Maureen. Also in this cocktail of family dysfunction is a depressed sister, Jean (Elizabeth Marvel). Danny’s promising daughter Eliza (Grace Van Patten) provides at least one note on the brighter side.

The Dinner (U.S.)

Although not as good as the Sundance selection *Beatriz at Dinner*, director Owen Moverman’s adaptation of the Herman Koch novel (<https://the.dinner.film/>) also takes aim at the conceits of a privileged upper class. Two couples meet over a fancy dinner at an ultra-posh bistro to discuss how to deal with the consequences of an appalling crime their wayward teenage sons have committed against a homeless woman. Paul Lohman (Steve Coogan) is a former teacher and grating misanthrope married to obliging wife Claire (Laura Linney). Brother Stan Lohman (Richard Gere), whose mixed-up son Michael (Charlie Plummer) was the instigator, is an ambitious congressman who wants to run for governor with attractive wife Katelyn (Rebecca Hall) at his side. Whether it’s better to cover up or come clean is the question.

Band Aid (U.S.)

Writer-director Zoe Lister-Jones directs this quirky story of an underemployed married couple, Anna (Lister-Jones) and Ben (Adam Pally), who start a makeshift garage band as a way to resolve their growing frictions. Taking up old guitars they compose songs based on their fights, adding as a drummer weird next-door neighbour, Dave (Fred Armisen) who claims to be a sex addict. Although a rather slight affair, and despite some casual profanity, it does have its moments.

Joan Didion: The Center Will Not Hold (U.S.)

Actor Griffin Dunne, a nephew of acclaimed 82-year-old American woman of letters and chronicler of contemporary culture Joan Didion, directs this absorbing appreciation of her life and career (<https://www.didion-doc.com/>) that features intimate conversations in her California home. It covers her rise to fame, marriage to Irish-Catholic writer John Gregory Dunne, and also the tragedies that befell with his sudden death in December 2003 (the aftermath of which was the subject of *The Year of Magical Thinking*), followed by the 2005 death of their adopted daughter Quintana Roo. The title, from the W.B. Yeats poem, comes from her 1968 essay collection *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*.

One of Us (U.S.)

Co-directors Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady (*Jesus Camp*) penetrate the secretive closed world of New York’s strict Hasidic Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community to tell the stories of the hopes and struggles of three ostracized individuals who have left. Fleeing an abusive arranged marriage, Etty finds support with a survivors group, “Footsteps,” while seeking custody of her children. Luzer has abandoned a wife and two children, moving to Los Angeles where he lives out of a trailer and finds work as an actor playing Hasidic roles. The youngest, Ari, is emerging from the shadow of a sheltered existence to find his path in the secular world.

The Kingdom of Us (U.K.)

Director Lucy Cohen won the Grierson award at the London film festival for this remarkable documentary about the family of a deeply troubled soul, Paul Shanks, who died from suicide in 2007, leaving behind wife, Vikie, and seven young children, six girls and a boy. The growing family living outside Coventry enjoyed many seemingly happy times, obsessively recorded on video by Paul even as he was descending



Magnolia Pictures

Elisabeth Moss in *The Square*.

backgrounds — abandoned houses, an enormous wartime German bunker fallen on a Normandy beach, water towers, the sides of rail cars. One of the most striking compositions involves the wives of three Le Havre dockworkers on the front of a huge assemblage of shipping containers.

Along the way Varda and JR share a serendipitous conversational rapport that is sometimes easygoing and teasing, but on

Playing loose with the truth an unforgivable sin

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



It can be quite disheartening to watch the news these days. Our world is full of hatred, bigotry, racism, and over-stimulated greed and ego. The gap between the rich and poor is widening and random, senseless violence is an everyday occurrence. One lives with hope, but without much optimism.

Among all of this, perhaps the most distressing thing of all is the erosion of our capacity to recognize and acknowledge the truth. From the highest government offices, to the major media outlets, to our local newspapers, to the thousands of bloggers, down to our dinner tables, we are becoming irresponsible, manipulative, and outright dishonest with the truth, denying it where it's inconvenient, bending it to suit our own purposes, or labelling it as "fake news," "an alternative fact," "misinformation," "a truth that's no longer operative," or as "political correctness" with no truth value.

Studies from major scientific

Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website: www.ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser

institutes are dismissed as just another opinion with the result that we are creating an entire society within which it's becoming more and more difficult for any of us to trust what's a fact and what isn't. That's dangerous territory, not just politically but especially spiritually.

Scripture tells us that Satan is the Prince of Lies and Jesus makes it clear that, among all sins, failure to acknowledge the truth is far and away the most dangerous. We see this motif particularly in the text that warns us that we can commit a sin that's unforgivable because it's a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

What's this sin? Why is it unforgivable? And what has it got to do with telling lies?

The unforgivable sin is precisely the sin of lying, which can become unforgivable because of what lying can do to us. Here's how the biblical text unfolds: Jesus has just cast out a demon. Part of the Jewish faith at that time was the belief that only someone who came from God had power to cast out a demon. Jesus had done that, but the scribes and Pharisees who have just witnessed this found it to be an inconvenient truth since they denied Jesus' goodness. So in the face of truth they had to either acknowledge something they did

not want to, or they had to manipulate the truth to give it a different meaning. They chose the latter and, clearly aware that they were manipulating the truth, accused Jesus of performing the miracle through the power of Satan. They knew better, knew they were lying, but the actual truth was too difficult to accept.

Jesus initially tries to argue with them, pointing out that there's no logic in suggesting that Satan is casting out demons. They persist, and it's then Jesus utters his warning: "In truth I tell you, all human sins will be forgiven, and all the blasphemies ever uttered, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (Mk 3:28-29 parallel text in Mt 12:31-32). What exactly is this warning?

Jesus is saying this: Be careful about what you are doing just now, putting a false spin on something because it is too awkward to accept as true. The danger is that if you continue doing this you may eventually come to believe your own lie. That will be unforgivable, given that you will no longer want to be forgiven because you will see truth as a lie and a lie as the truth. The sin cannot be forgiven, not



CNS/Jim Lo Scalzo via Reuters

FALSE SPIN — Jesus warns about putting a false spin on something because it is too awkward to accept as true, writes Ron Rolheiser, OMI. "The danger is that if you continue doing this you may eventually come to believe your own lie. That will be unforgivable, given that you will no longer want to be forgiven because you will see truth as a lie and a lie as the truth. The sin cannot be forgiven, not because God doesn't want to forgive it, but because we no longer want to be forgiven."

because God doesn't want to forgive it, but because we no longer want to be forgiven.

Dictionaries tell us that blasphemy is the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God. We don't blaspheme when we use foul language when we're frustrated; nor do we blaspheme when we shake our fists at God in anger or turn away from God in bitterness. God can handle that. The one thing God cannot handle is lying, where we lie to the point of believing our own lies (the real danger in lying) because that eventually warps our consciences so that we can no longer tell truth from falsehood or falsehood from truth.

Theology teaches us that God is *One*, this means that God's

inner integrity assures that all of reality also has an inner integrity, an intelligibility, meaning that something cannot be and not be at the same time; meaning that two plus two cannot equal anything but four; meaning that a tree is always a tree no matter what you say it is; and meaning that black can never be white. God's Oneness allows us to both trust reality and trust our normal perception of it.

That's what's under attack today, most everywhere. It's the ultimate moral danger: God is One and so two plus two can never be five — and if it is, then we are no longer in touch with God or with reality, are warped in conscience, and are blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

More films worthy of attention can be found on Netflix

Continued from page 9

into darkness. Excerpts recall that period as a roving candid camera shows the struggles of family members to come to terms with his death in the years since, especially in light of the shocking revelation that he had originally planned a murder-suicide.

Let it Fall: Los Angeles 1982 - 1992 (U.S.)

This year has seen a number of films looking back at America's troubled history of inner-city racial violence. Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit* dramatized an infamous fatal incident from that city's hot summer of July 1967, also the subject of Brian Kaufman's searing documentary *12th and Clairmont*. Justin Chons' *Gook* about two Korean brothers defending their store during the infamous 1992 L.A. riots, won an audience award at Sundance. Twenty-five years after those events several documentaries re-examine the fraught circumstances that ignited the spark after four white police officers were acquitted of assault for the vicious video-recorded beating of a black man, Rodney King.

The directors of *LA 92*, Daniel Lindsay and T.J. Martin, use archival footage to assemble a searing

account of the worst outbreak of civil violence in U.S. history that left 58 dead and damages over a billion dollars. What makes John Ridley's *Let it Fall* (<https://www.letitfallmovie.com/>) compelling are revealing interviews with many key subjects (even if the four accused police officers refused to participate). From L.A. in the decade leading up to the riots he probes all sides of what happened during those awful days of looting, arson and murder — the stories of police failings from the top down, yet also heroic interventions; of perpetrators, their victims and rescuers; of a traumatized Korean community fighting back. It's worth reflecting on in the wake of police killings of young black men, the "Black Lives Matter" movement, and the Trumpian resurgence of white racism.

Strong Island (U.S./Denmark)

Awarded a special jury prize at Sundance, African-American filmmaker Yance Ford directs this moving personal exploration of the disputed circumstances of the 1992 murder of an only brother, William Ford Jr. As a result of a flawed all-white grand jury process the white teenage perpetrator was allowed a specious grounds of self-defence and never charged. The grief and the injustice had a profound impact.

The parents had come to Long Island from the Jim Crow South to build a new life, sending their three children to good Catholic schools. Mother Barbara was a school principal and had taught prisoners. William, an upstanding young man, wanted to become a corrections officer. Another layer is that to him Yance was a youngest sister, concealing a transgender identity. The story is told through old photographs and direct-to-camera commentary, sometimes in intense close-up. When black lives seem to matter less, these old wounds still feel fresh.

Out of Thin Air (U.K./Iceland)

Director Dylan Howitt recounts the fascinating story of the most sensational criminal case in normally tranquil Iceland's history (read his statement at: <https://www.outofthinairfilm.com/>). In the mid-1970s, two young men disappeared and were believed to have been murdered, though no bodies were ever found. An intense police investigation focused on six suspects who had known them, extracting confessions under duress from some, including Erla Bolladottir, interviewed in the film. Although innocent she was convicted and served prison time. Other lives were destroyed. Ques-

tions about police tactics, false memories and false confessions continue to swirl around this notorious case that remains unsolved.

Cuba and the Cameraman (U.S.)

This labour of love for Cuba and Cubans by American journalist Jon Alpert documents his five decades of visits to the island "trying to tell the story of Cuba." As a social activist videographer in New York City he had welcomed the revolution's social reforms, receiving rare access to a cigar-smoking Fidel Castro, who demonstrated a disarming, even charming side. Although one might accuse Alpert of taking a rose-coloured view of autocratic communist rule, he acknowledges the anti-Castro protests, large numbers of exiles and voices of dissent. With the ongoing U.S. blockade, then the Soviet collapse, he shows the many hardships suffered by the population, notably on familiar faces such as three elderly farmer brothers with whom he formed a special bond. They have passed on by the time of a 2016 visit, though things seem to be looking up and he's able to say a final goodbye to a frail Fidel at age 90. However uncertain the post-Castro future, what can certainly be shared is his affection for the Cuban people and hope for better days.

It's Not Yet Dark (Ireland)

Director Frankie Fenton's award-winning film (<https://www.itsnotyetdark.com/>) is about Simon Fitzmaurice, a budding filmmaker with a passion for cinema who a decade ago started showing symptoms that led to a devastating diagnosis of motor neuron disease, a progressively degenerative condition that is ultimately terminal. Appropriately this poignant documentary premiered at Sundance since the first signs appeared during the 2008 festival at which Fitzmaurice presented an admired short film, *The Sound of People*. Simon's wife, Ruth, was a crucial support as his body failed. When paralysis set in he became unable to breathe on his own, or to speak. (The first-person narration is voiced by Colin Farrell.) That did not stop this remarkable couple from having a second child, another boy, three years after the initial diagnosis. Defying doctors' prognoses, Simon was fiercely determined to go on. He raged against the dying of the light. Astonishingly, using eye-blink computer technology, he wrote and directed the 2015 feature film *My Name is Emily*. Simon Fitzmaurice died on Oct. 26, but his story endures as a source of illumination.

Be grateful, and bring light to the darkness



Liturgy and Life

Sylvain Lavoie, OMI

In November 2014, the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation national committee of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate organized and held a conference in Ottawa around the theme of ethical mining.

A highlight of this event was the presence of Gustavo Gutiérrez, who is considered one of the fathers of liberation theology. He was the keynote speaker and received an honorary doctorate from Saint Paul University.

Third Sunday of Advent December 17 2017	Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11 Luke 1 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28
---	---

This event ties in with the Third Sunday of Advent and its theme of rejoicing in the Lord, or *Gaudete* Sunday. That theme of exultation, rejoicing and happiness flows especially from the first and second readings for today.

It is one of the teachings of Gutiérrez that links this Sunday with the event in Ottawa. When he spoke at Newman Theological College years ago as part of the Bishop Anthony Jordan series of lectures, he gave North Americans some advice about possible motives for going to

Lavoie, 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.

Latin America. If we were coming because we were angry at the injustices they were facing there, then don't come, he stated, because they had enough angry people already.

If we wanted to come out of guilt at having so much when they have so little, then don't come, he repeated, as they had enough guilty people already. However, if we wanted to come because we were grateful for all the blessings that God has given us, then come — they could always use more grateful people.

In a practical way, Gutiérrez was underlining the theme of this Sunday — that a genuine life of faith in Jesus, concern for justice, and caring for especially the poor, will be characterized by joy.

Be happy, pray always, and be grateful because of the Lord, St. Paul is able to say in the second reading. Be open to the Spirit, and be holy, he adds, for God has called us to that.

Isaiah in the first reading is very much like Simeon in the gospel who, after he held the baby Jesus in his arms in the temple, rejoiced because he had seen the salvation of God. For his part, Isaiah exults and rejoices for the gift of salvation and integrity. He goes on to say that God will make integrity and praise spring up in the sight of all the nations, a suggestion that justice and joy go hand in hand.

Isaiah then goes on to speak prophetic words that Jesus would claim as his own in the synagogue at Capernaum: "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me to proclaim Good News to the poor; to bind up broken hearts; to proclaim liberty to captives; to free prisoners; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord."

It is interesting that the category of prisoners or captives is mentioned twice. Perhaps that is an allusion to the two kinds of bondage or captivity people at any stage of history or in any society experience for which they need release: unjust political imprisonment, and personal bondage to painful dark emotions such as anger and bitterness; negative attitudes such as false pride and stubbornness, or addictions, either to chemical addiction such as alcoholism, or process addictions such as gambling, pornography, power and control.

In the gospel we see the presence of especially the negative attitudes of false pride and stubborn self-righteousness in the person of the priests and Levites, and in the

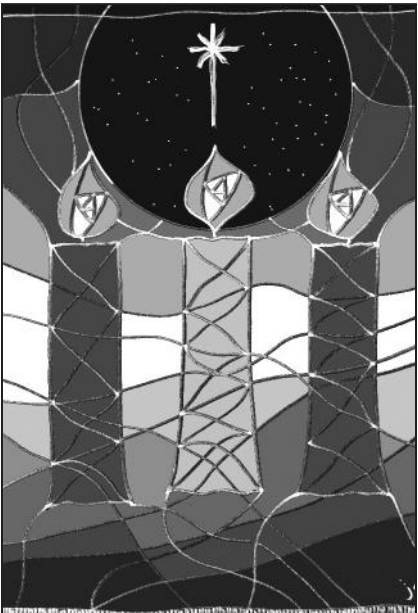
Pharisees who sent them, as soon as someone like John the Baptist appears, who might even hint at being a threat to the religious establishment.

Not only did they personify those negative attitudes with their refusal to believe in John or Jesus, whose way he was preparing; they also were addicted to power and control, and that was what they were so intent on preserving at all costs. That enslavement to suspicion, false pride, stubborn self-righteousness, and addiction to power and control, was precisely what Jesus came to free them from, had they only been more humble, able to repent and let John be who John said he was. Because they were not, they excluded themselves from any possibility of that joy and exultation Jesus came to give so freely to anyone who believed and followed him.

To those who genuinely believe in Jesus, who sincerely try to obey his commandments to love God, love others as he has loved us and as we love ourselves, and even love and forgive our enemies, there will always be the possibility of joy.

Recently a U.S. network did a 13-minute special on the Copts in Egypt. As a minority they have always faced some persecution for their faith, but recent years have been the worst. After their pope stood with the military

— EUCHARIST, page 13



Stushie Art

Navigating our own space between the familiar and the unknown



Liturgy and Life

Gertrude Rompré

This year we move directly from our celebrations of the Fourth Sunday of Advent to Christmas Eve, without even pausing to catch our breath! For a brief moment in this liturgical year, we stand on the threshold of the Christmas season, on the edge of Advent, peering expectantly through the door of our upcoming celebrations of Christ's birth. As such, the liturgy asks us to reflect on the other threshold or liminal spaces we encounter in our lives. The readings, in particular, invite us to ponder three such spaces: the spaces between doubt and faith, promise and fulfilment, and, longing and encounter. But, first, what do we mean by "liminal space"?

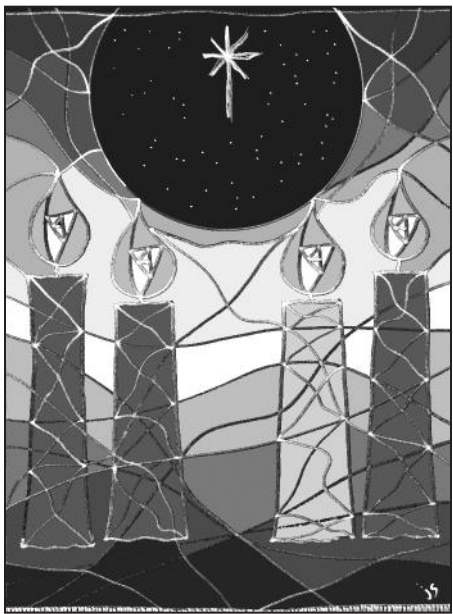
The root of the word *liminal* comes from the Latin word *limen*, which means threshold. In our spiritual lives, liminal spaces are important because it is here that transformation can occur. The Franciscan spiritual writer Richard Rohr describes liminal space as a place "where we are betwixt and between the familiar and the completely unknown. There alone is our old world left behind, while we are not yet sure of the new existence." He goes on to say that a liminal space is "a good place where genuine newness can begin . . . the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart, and a bigger world is revealed. . . . The threshold is God's waiting room" (*Everything belongs: The gift of contemplative prayer*, pp. 155-156). Our liturgical celebration of the Fourth Sunday of Advent spilling into our observance of Christmas Eve invites us to contemplate the call to enter into other profound liminal spaces in our lives. Where in our lives are we being asked to leave behind the old and embrace the new?

The Gospel story of the Annunciation allows us to

Rompré is the director of Mission and Ministry at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

glimpse how Mary dealt with her own "betwixt and between" space between the familiar and the unknown. After all, Gabriel's message must have been completely perplexing! One minute she was an ordinary young woman betrothed to Joseph and looking forward to their ordinary lives together, lives that likely would never make it into the history books. The next minute she was contemplating the possibility of being pregnant out of wedlock, rejected by Joseph, and becoming the mother of one who would change the world! It's no wonder she responded to the possibility of this radical shift with a question: "How can this be since I'm a virgin?"

In order to embrace the new life that was being born within her, Mary had to pass through a sort of liminal space between doubt and faith. In the story of the Annunciation



Stushie Art

we see her move from a place of doubt at her virginal capacity to bear a child, to faith in God's ever creative and surprising word. Liminal spaces demand a choice, a choice to either cling to the old or embrace the new, a choice between doubt and faith. Mary chose to embrace the new in faith and the world has never since been the same.

This week we also encounter King David and the Prophet Nathan. They are encountering their own sort of liminal space, the space between promise and fulfilment. David is worried that he has settled into his sumptuous royal accommodations while the Ark of the Covenant remains housed in a tent. He intends to build a temple, but

God asks him to live in a liminal space a little longer, trusting that future generations will be able to create a suitable "home" for the Lord. David is asked to stake his life and legacy on a promise, trusting in God's capacity to fulfil that promise even though David himself will not live to see it. Indeed, we hear this particular Scripture

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 24, 2017	2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a-16 Psalm 89 Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38
---	--

passage today because we believe that Jesus' birth through Mary is the ultimate fulfilment of God's promise to David, a promise where God assured David that "his throne will be established forever." As followers of Christ, we too live in the liminal space between promise and fulfilment. We are promised the fulfilment of God's plan for humanity — what Scripture refers to as God's kingdom — and we wait to see the fulfilment of that promise fully revealed.

Finally, this threshold between Advent and Christmas invites us to stand in the liminal space between longing and encounter. All through the Advent season we have been ritually preparing, waiting, longing for the birth of Christ. We have been pondering in our hearts the mystery of a God who is willing to become one of us, to enter fully into our limited, embodied human experience. As humans, we long to be in communion with the divine, but that longing is often inchoate, misdirected, unnamed. Advent invites us to ponder that our human longings are ultimately an invitation to enter ever more fully into an encounter with the divine. Christmas promises us that the full encounter between the human and divine is possible in Jesus. As humans we live in the partiality of our limited existence. In Jesus we are offered a pathway into ever deeper communion with our God.

Liminal spaces are necessary moments in our spiritual lives. These threshold experiences invite us to leave behind our old lives and embrace the new. May our celebrations of Christ's birth encourage us in our journeys. May we, like our ancestors before us, faithfully navigate the thresholds between doubt and faith, promise and fulfilment, and, longing and encounter. May we, too, find the courage to open the doors of our hearts to the abundance of God's love offered us in the in-between spaces of our lives.

Blind faith: artist inspires hope with her work

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

In Sister Helen Kluge’s pottery studio, “there are no mistakes, only new creations.” Kluge has cast those words in clay, fired them, glazed them in a rainbow of bright colours and mounted them above her shelves full of books, tools, paints and glazes as a constant reminder to students while they work.

For the most part, student potters assume these words apply to making things out of clay. In the case of blind sculptor and potter Anne-Marie Landry, the new creation is her own life lived more fully, enjoyed more deeply and loved as it should be.

She is making a manger, which she also calls a church, and filling it with the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, an angel, a cross and all kinds of animals — including a big-eared polar bear with her cubs. In late October she had two Christmas mangers on the go, hoping to place at least one in her parish church, St. Stanislaus in downtown Toronto.

It never occurred to Landry that a blind person couldn’t be a potter. “I had a good feeling about it,” she said. “Because it was tactile.”

Her hands are her guides in the world, the way sighted people rely on their eyes.

Landry had glaucoma at the age of two and has been almost completely blind since she was seven. Only the colour red persisted into her teenaged years. At 41, she remembers red, but not much else.

For nearly 20 years, she was trapped in an abusive relationship with her brother, who cashed the disability cheques that came to her and their blind mother. As Landry’s mother succumbed to her own dementia and blindness, the young woman was virtually a prisoner in the family apartment, dependent on a brother who was violent and unpredictable. Years of isolation and untreated depression combined with developmental delays and blindness to plunk Landry down in the “dual diagnosis” category whenever she visits doctors or social workers.

When the city found out what

was going on in Landry’s home, case managers, with some help from police (outstanding warrants and a gun in the home), managed to get the brother away from her. Landry was at last able to care for her mother by placing her in a long-term care home. From there, Landry found refuge in St. Felix House, a transitional home for women in the former convent of the Felician-Franciscan Sisters. Across the parking lot from the gracious old convent, Landry found a welcoming parish in the historically Polish St. Stan’s. After a two-year transition, she now has a home in Vita Community Living, a circle of friends at St. Stanislaus, regular activity with the Sisters of St. Joseph arts program at The Mustard Seed and weekly afternoons in The Studio on the Hill with Kluge, who is also a St. Joseph Sister.

“Dual diagnosis” doesn’t begin to capture the unique complexity of Landry’s life. Whatever her misfortunes, however, Landry never looks back in anger or self-pity.

“I have faith. I always had faith.”

Come Christmas day, Landry will be at a cottage with her godparents, Davina Jalea and Ravi Anandappa, and their family. She will enjoy a glass of wine. Food prepared by chef and restaurateur Anandappa will be a particular delight. And she will be sure to dance — she loves Abba.

It’s a perfect Toronto Catholic Christmas, with Landry embedded in a family that joins her Filipina godmother with her Sri Lankan godfather and Jalea’s nieces and nephews enjoying the Italian cuisine that is Anandappa’s specialty at Antonia’s Bistro (named after St. Anthony of Padua) in Campbellford, Ont. — all thanks to a connection made in the RCIA program of a Polish church.

“Our friendship grew to having her as part of our family,” explained Jalea. “Anne-Marie is an extremely bright woman. She has a lot to offer. She’s very inspiring.”

A former nurse, Jalea has found it easy to see past Landry’s disability and her struggle with depression to find somebody with a capacity for joy and fierce determination.



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

EXPRESSION OF FAITH — Anne-Marie Landry with some of her Nativity creations.

Dropping Landry off one rainy afternoon at the end of a shopping trip, Jalea was worried about Landry and the walk back to her apartment. She asked Landry if she would be all right.

“You can’t be blind and be a wimp,” Landry told her.

Several pieces of Landry’s pottery are on display in the decor of Antonia’s Bistro. Anandappa also displays work by a professional potter in his restaurant. When patrons learn that some of the pottery was made by a blind, disabled woman they give Anandappa a doubtful stare.

“Even me, with eyesight, I don’t think I could do as well,” said Anandappa.

Jalea is very fond of a cup Landry made for her, which is on display in the restaurant.

“I showed them (restaurant customers) that cup and said, ‘By the way, she’s blind. Like, totally blind.’ They were blown away.”

The relationship is no exercise

in dutiful Christian pity.

“I’m not there to look after her. I may offer some help to her, but she is more of a help to people — more than they realize,” Jalea said. “Like her commitment and her faith. She just has an incredible faith.”

Over the last decade of extricating Landry from her isolation, Family Services of Toronto social worker Ornella Cavasin has come to see how faith was not incidental to her client’s life.

“We forget that importance,” said Cavasin. “That’s a part of people’s basic needs.”

Cavasin encouraged the opportunities which emerged for Landry to explore and grow in her faith. She was often led by Landry, who was actively looking for a church, looking for community and seeking ways to express herself.

“Sister Helen was just so open,” Cavasin said.

The idea of a blind potter was never ridiculous for Kluge. Landry is just the kind of student Kluge has built her pottery ministry around, knowing that making things from clay isn’t just a technical challenge or an interesting art discipline.

“It’s healing,” said Kluge. “It became a language for me. It becomes something that opens up possibilities.”

From the street, the Studio on the Hill looks like a business — another storefront jammed between a couple of restaurants. Kluge’s secret is that her storefront is actually a ministry open to anyone willing to discover themselves in a creative process. She runs prayer and play workshops for young people. Her students include teachers and professionals, widows, single mothers on welfare, children from refugee families.

“It’s a place where people just want to be,” she said.

Which makes it the perfect place for Landry’s Advent dream of a manger and church that gathers all God’s creation from polar bears to donkeys.

As she glazes her manger red, she explains that red is the right colour because it’s the blood of Christ.

There could be no better metaphor for faith than shaping what you can’t see from raw material extracted from the earth. Her faith is what it’s all about for Landry.

“It’s my faith. I believe. It’s important because it’s always been there.”



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

NEW CREATIONS — Anne-Marie Landry has used Sister Helen Kluge’s pottery class, left, to discover her passion to create.

All I want for Christmas... is to share LOVE and bring HOPE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Buy a gift for a loved one and bring love and hope to a family in need.

Chalice Gift Catalogue

1-800-776-6855 chalice.ca

pml217



Pope Francis both prophet and diplomat in Myanmar

By Thomas Reese, SJ
©2017 Religion News Service

It is hard to be both a diplomat and a prophet, but Pope Francis pulls it off better than anyone else.

Prior to visiting Myanmar, the pope was urged by human rights activists to condemn the murder, rape and ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims by the Myanmar military. Hundreds of villages in Rakhine state were burned by the military, and over half a million Rohingya fled as refugees to Bangladesh.

But Myanmar’s cardinal, Archbishop Charles Bo, asked the pope not to use the word “Rohingya” because he feared the small Catholic minority would be attacked by the Buddhist majority who see the Rohingya as illegal aliens who are a threat to their nation. The military denies any persecution is taking place, even though the evidence collected by journalists and human rights organizations is overwhelming.

Thus, Pope Francis was faced with a terrible dilemma: be prophetic and put at risk Christians in Myanmar, or be silent and compromise his moral authority.

Pope Francis chose neither.

Reese, a Jesuit priest, is a senior analyst at RNS. Previously he was a columnist at the National Catholic Reporter (2015 - 17) and an associate editor (1978 - 85) and editor-in-chief (1998 - 2005) at America magazine.

Instead he carefully threaded the needle by being both prophetic and diplomatic. He told Myanmar’s leaders that the country’s people have suffered “from civil conflict and hostilities that have lasted for too long” and called for “peace based on respect for the dignity and rights of each member of society, respect for each ethnic group and its identity,” without using the word Rohingya.

No one misunderstood his message. Although the media noted his not using the word Rohingya, they also knew and reported that in his speech he was referring to the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities in Myanmar, especially the Rohingya Muslims.

Rohingya activists and human rights activists were not satisfied. They wanted him to specifically and publicly criticize the military and the government for its treatment of the Rohingya. I certainly understand and sympathize with their view.

On the other hand, it is one thing to be prophetic and personally suffer the consequences; it is another thing to put others at risk by your statements.

I have no doubt that Pope Francis would have been willing to put his own life at risk, but to put other lives at risk would be reckless, especially when it is unlikely that his words would have had any effect on the military, which continues to deny that any discrimination or ethnic cleansing is going on.

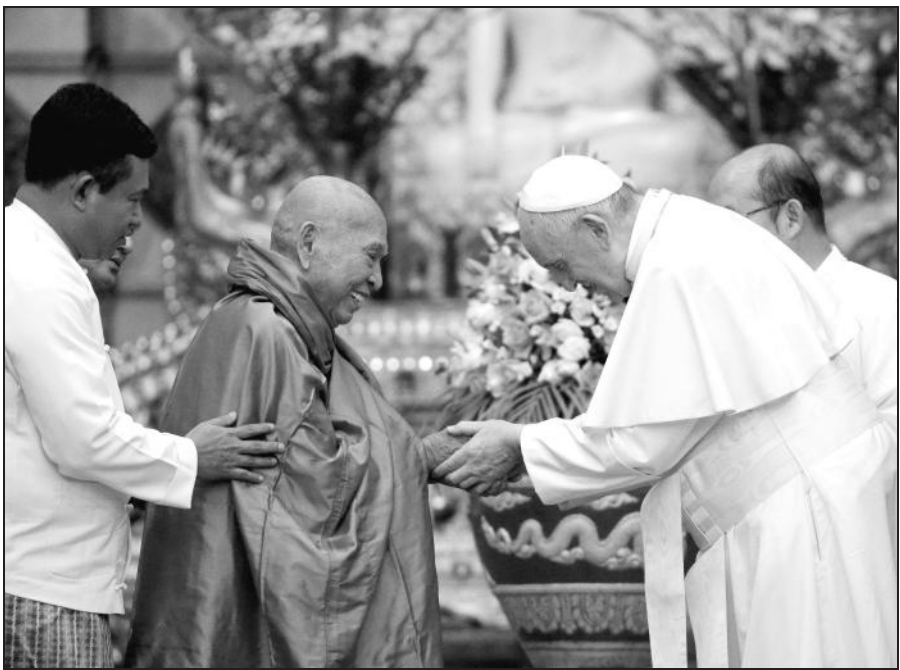
Were the pope and the Myanmar cardinal being overly cautious

about the possibility of a blowback? Not at all. Christians are already being persecuted in Myanmar — as has been clearly documented by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in its report “Hidden Plight: Christian Minorities in Burma.”

(Although I am a USCIRF commissioner, the views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the commission.)

Radical Buddhist monks are working arm in arm with the military in demonizing religious and ethnic minorities. Religious services have been disrupted, churches have been burned, ministers have been killed, and discrimination is rampant. Even getting a government ID is very difficult for non-Buddhists. In the minds of the military and most of the Buddhist population, you cannot be a Myanmar citizen unless you are a Buddhist, even though Catholics have lived there for over 500 years.

Some experts fear that the anti-Muslim violence in Rakhine state, which led to the refugee crisis, will spread to other parts of Myanmar.



CNS/Max Rossi, Reuters

DIPLOMAT AND PROPHET — Pope Francis greets Bhaddanta Kumarabhivasma, chair of the supreme council of Buddhist monks, during a Nov. 29 meeting with monks of the council at the Kaba Aye Pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar. “It is hard to be both a diplomat and a prophet, but Pope Francis pulls it off better than anyone else, writes Thomas Reese, SJ.

Granted the terrible situation in Myanmar, has the pope’s visit had any effect?

It clearly has not made matters worse, which goes for progress in Myanmar. The trip certainly gave encouragement to the Catholics of Myanmar who rejoiced in the pope’s visit. He also gave encouragement to those who are working for inter-religious reconciliation and dialogue.

Most importantly, he also brought the attention of the media to the tragic conditions of religious minorities in Myanmar, especially the Rohingya. His trip to Bangladesh continued to keep the focus on the horrendous plight of Rohingya refugees. He thanked the Bangladesh people and government for welcoming refugees from Rakhine state and called on the international community to do more to help them.

So, I would judge the visit to be a net positive, but no miraculous accomplishments. But then, we should not expect miracles from the pope. He can’t walk on water.

Union/communion grows stronger through differentiation



Rev. Marie-Louise Ternier

Having attended several weddings this past summer, I have to get something off my chest, and that is the ritual of the “unity candle.” Yes, it is a lovely ritual, but it smacks of incorrect theology when the couple end the ritual by

blowing out their individual candles. Every time I see that I have to suppress the urge to rush to the front and relight those candles.

Why? Because marriage does not mean we cease to be our own person; rather, the opposite.

Eucharist an exultation

Continued from page 11

during the uprising in Egypt, Muslim extremists went berserk and ransacked, burnt and destroyed dozens of Coptic churches, and there was no one to help them.

Media personnel later attended a large gathering of Copt faithful at one of the churches that was not damaged. They found no trace of retaliation, of a desire for revenge. Instead, one of the priests they interviewed calmly said that forgiveness was the core of Christianity, and that was what they have always lived, even to the point of martyrdom. And that, he pointed out, was the life of faith that they were living presently.

The Copts were just the oppo-

site of the priests, Levites and Pharisees that John faced in the gospels, and with whom Jesus struggled so much, right up to his martyrdom on the cross. They were perhaps not exulting, but certainly, like Jesus on the cross, they were at peace, a peace only God can give.

The eucharist we celebrate now is itself an exultation, a moment of joyful celebration. May our celebration today strengthen our faith and empower us to be like Isaiah and the Thessalonians, able to exult, rejoice, be grateful and spread the Good News that Jesus has overcome death, darkness and evil in all its forms, and that we share in that final victory already through faith and love, despite any darkness around us.

Married love is intended to create a oneness in the two-ness, yes, but never at the expense of each individual’s flourishing as a human being.

After 38 years of married life with Jim, I dare to say that we have learned a few things about this, often the hard way. Marriage has invited us to grow in both oneness and two-ness.

In the big scheme of things, ours is a relatively healthy marriage. But Jim and I are complete opposites in just about every imaginable way: in background and family history, in character and relational styles, in interests and professional occupations, not to speak of the fact that we grew up on different continents, with a different mother tongue and in different cultural contexts.

Jim’s spiritual/emotional roots go down deep in the beloved prairie soil of his family farm. I grew up living above the store of my parents with asphalt in both front and back.

I worked off the farm, and needed an active social life. My call to ministry grew steadily over many years of Catholic and ecumenical engagement, until I

moved into the Anglican tradition, while Jim has remained Roman Catholic.

We agreed on the big stuff; it was the little stuff that created regular havoc. Yet each time relational disaster loomed, we dug deep into our marital vows to find our unity. Thus an intricate web has woven itself of honouring the other in his/her uniqueness as fully as we possibly could, and concretely supporting that uniqueness even at personal cost, while claiming the union in married love.

The Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin calls this relational movement an evolutionary dance present in all living things. He discovered a fascinating paradox, i.e. that union/communion grows deeper and stronger in and through differentiation: “The more closely an entity or group is united, the more differentiated its parts become” (Together in Christ, page 28).

As couples work through the challenges and tensions in their common life, they grow an increasing emotional, spiritual, intellectual capacity for compassion and joy, forgiveness and generosity. When a couple is most fully in love, de Chardin claimed, the partners become most fully themselves. Looking to our 38 years of marriage, I can now see this as true.

What if we applied de Chardin’s “evolutionary dance” analogy to the diverse Christian traditions? As this Reformation 500 commemoration year draws to a close, we can at

least say that we have come a long way since the hostile exchanges in the 16th century.

What began as reasons for parting company have, over time, developed as unique strengths in each tradition, making us realize that we truly need one another to embody the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Can we see our baptismal vows on par with marriage vows, bonding us to one another in the Body of Christ? Can we learn to dig deep into these vows so our differences can be held in unity by an ever-deeper abiding love and regard for one another, mirroring the communion of the Trinity itself?

Fyodor Dostoevsky said poignantly: love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams. While we love Jesus and want to be his disciples, all of us fail miserably, and often, at growing this ever deeper love.

It seems easier to turn our backs on one another and to see differentiation as insurmountable division. It seems easier to part company, to limit eucharistic hospitality, and to feed mutual distrust.

While historic barriers between churches are slowly dissolving, healing even, new ones are emerging. There is no shortage of conflict and dispute in most marriages, as in our diverse church family. Yet each painful crisis continues to come with the same choice: grow deeper in love or part ways. Which will it be today?

Ternier, an Anglican priest, serves the Anglican and Lutheran parishes in Watrous, Sask. This column is co-published with the Saskatchewan Anglican. She blogs at <http://graceatsixty.wordpress.com>

God today is called ‘Rohingya’

Pope Francis has completed his trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh, whose citizens are mainly Buddhist and Muslim. The pope didn’t go to convert them, but to give witness to a Christian proclamation of unity and peace.

The pope encountered a diplomatic dilemma in Myanmar. He was urged by human rights activists to condemn the murder, rape and ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims by the Myanmar military.

The Buddhist majority in Myanmar see the Rohingya as illegal aliens who are a threat to their nation. The military denies any persecution is taking place; however, hundreds of villages in Rakhine state have been burned by the military and over half a million Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh as refugees.

Rev. Thomas Reese, SJ, questioned the wisdom of the pope visiting Myanmar before the visit, but

he lauded him afterward, writing: “It is hard to be both a diplomat and a prophet, but Pope Francis pulls it off better than anyone else.”

While the pope did not mention the Rohingya by name in Myanmar, he did so in Bangladesh. There he met 16 Rohingya refugees — 12 men and four women — and insisted on meeting each one individually. Then he addressed the group spontaneously. His remarks deserve a full hearing:

“Dear brothers and sisters, we are all close to you. There’s not much that we can do because your tragedy is so great. But we make space for you in our hearts. In the name of all, of those who’ve persecuted you, of those who’ve done this evil, above all for the indifference of the world, I ask forgiveness. Forgiveness. Many of you have spoken of the great heart of Bangladesh which has welcomed you. Now I appeal to your great hearts, that you might be able to give us the forgiveness we seek.

“Dear brothers and sisters, the Judaeo-Christian account of creation says that the Lord who is God created man in his own image and likeness. All of us are this image, even these brothers and sisters. They, too, are the image of the living God. A tradition of your religions says that God, in the beginning, took a little bit of salt and tossed it into water, that was the soul of all people; and each of us carries within ourselves a little of this divine salt. These brothers and sisters carry within them the salt of God.

“Dear brothers and sisters, we only have to look at the world to see its selfishness with the image of God. Let us continue to do good by you, to help you; let us continue to act so that they may recognize your rights. Let us not close our hearts, not look somewhere else. The presence of God today is also called ‘Rohingya.’ May each of us give our own response.” — PWN

Keeping Christ in Christmas struggles with spending spree mania

Soul Mending

Yvonne A. Zarowny



“Whatever you do to the least of these, you do unto me.”
— Matthew 25:40

“God’s LOVE is the Heart of Christmas.”
— Christmas card in a 2017 holiday card display

By the time you read this, the season of manic advertising and spending will be over.

Christmas Day may be past with its often stress-filled socializing and family squabbles.

I commend the Knights of Columbus for starting and persist-

ing with their campaign to get rid of those horrible Christmas cards. I did not see a single one this year.

I did see a number of great Christmas cards . . . including the one quoted above.

In the week leading up to the

insanity that is “Black Friday,” I saw in my Credit Union a big sign: “Maybe Christmas doesn’t come from a store; Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit MORE.” *The Grinch*.

I was delighted. Could there actually be hope for us?

I suggested to our parish K of C and CWL that they buy such a sign (\$39.95) for our parish as my social/structural justice budget is currently depleted.

In an attempt to “Keep Christ in Christmas” after the Sandinista democratic socialist government of Nicaragua gained momentary power in that tiny impoverished country (1980s), one of its cardinal “sins” was to ban the 24-hour advertising. The leaders felt it turned the celebration of the birthing anew of the Divine into our world in the form of Jesus the Nazarene into a soul-less spending spree per-

petuating our culture of death.

For such moves this original Sandinista government, which was peppered with priests including a number of Jesuits, were vilified.

They were . . . and even their memory . . . is a “threat of a Good Example.” “Capitalism” does not like the survival of practical alternative modes of development that offer functioning alternatives to the existing order.

Did you know that our industrial form of *capitalism* cannot survive without our manic consumption and materialism?

In 1955 American economist and marketing consultant Victor Lebow observed in an article: “Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life. That we convert buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our *spiritual satisfaction*, our *ego satisfaction*, in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, replaced, and discarded at an

ever-accelerating rate.”

The two best ways to do this? War . . . and DIY home renovations! Lebow did not advocate this.

He was merely observing what needed to be done given our industrial capacity for over-production of everything — including food — *if we* wanted to avoid another “Great Depression” after the Second World War, as happened after the First World War.

We could have structured our societies to have authentically sustainable modes of development, enabling all God’s children to have life with dignity, according to our beautiful Catholic social teachings . . . but they got “disappeared.” Where is the profit maximization in that?

I suspect most people, if they had been given the freedom to make conscious informed choices, would have chosen that.

As I hope to explore in my next column, we were not given that choice.

Instead, those with the wealth to buy the power to influence the decision-makers — bit by bit — restructured our global societies to suit them.

— PEOPLE DENIED, page 15

Catholic Advent ad on bus rejected

By Richard Szczepanowski

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Washington filed suit in federal court Nov. 28 over the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s advertising guidelines after the transit system rejected an Advent and Christmas advertisement.

The archdiocese seeks injunctive relief after WMATA, as the agency is known, refused to allow an ad promoting the archdiocese’s annual “Find the Perfect Gift” initiative for the Advent and Christmas seasons. The suit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The archdiocese contends WMATA’s policy that “prohibits all non-commercial advertising, including any speech that purportedly promotes a religion, religious practice or belief,” is a violation of the free speech and free exercise of religion clauses of the First Amendment and a violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment.

The WMATA’s prohibition, the archdiocese contends, “violates the free speech rights of the archdiocese because the prohibition creates an unreasonable and disproportionate burden on the exercise of the archdiocese’s speech without any legitimate justification.”

“We believe rejection of this ad to be a clear violation of fun-

damental free speech and a limitation on the exercise of our faith,” said Kim Fiorentino, archdiocesan chancellor and general counsel. “We look forward to presenting our case to affirm the right of all to express such viewpoints in the public square.”

The archdiocese has in previous years advertised on WMATA’s public buses. Up until 2015, the archdiocese purchased WMATA space for ads that, according to the lawsuit, “were explicitly religious in character.”

“These advertisements included a campaign highlighting the importance of the sacrament of reconciliation during the liturgical season of Lent. This campaign, ‘The Light Is on for You,’ was remarkably successful for the archdiocese — and lucrative for WMATA — with advertisements on the backs of 85 buses throughout the metropolitan area.”

The advertisements rejected by WMATA highlight the archdiocese’s annual “Find the Perfect Gift” campaign, which refers viewers to the FindThePerfectGift.org website that includes mass schedules, reflections on the meaning of Advent and Christmas, religious holiday traditions and opportunities for charitable service. The image is a silhouette of shepherds and sheep standing on a hill.

“The rejected ad conveys a

simple message of hope, and an invitation to participate in the Christmas season. Yet citing its guidelines, WMATA’s legal counsel said the ad ‘depicts a

— CHURCH ADS, page 15

A critical educator, writer and engaged citizen living in Qualicum Beach, B.C., Zarowny is also on the leadership team for her parish’s Justice and Life Ministry.



CNS/Abir Abdullah, EPA

ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH — A Rohingya family sits outside their tent Nov. 20 at a refugee camp in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. The plight of the ethnic Muslim minority in Myanmar’s Rakhine state was front and centre in speeches by Pope Francis and Aung San Suu Kyi, but neither publicly used the word Rohingya.

Papal trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh successful

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As on every papal trip, Pope Francis’ visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh included a mix of meetings with government officials and events focused firmly on the nations’ Catholic communities.

The political implications of his Nov. 27 - 30 stay in Myanmar and his Nov. 30 - Dec. 2 stop in Bangladesh grabbed the headlines mainly because of the situation of the Rohingya people, a Muslim minority being pushed from Myanmar’s Rakhine state and seeking refuge in Bangladesh.

But the political and pastoral sides of his trip were interwoven, including his attention to the Rohingya and his defence of their rights.

Meeting Rohingya refugees at the end of an inter-religious gathering in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Dec. 1, Pope Francis said each human



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE MEETS ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH — Pope Francis prays with religious leaders and Rohingya refugees from Myanmar during an interreligious and ecumenical meeting for peace in the garden of the archbishop’s residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Dec. 1.

Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu leaders. “Let’s not close our hearts. Let’s not look away.”

The Catholic communities in both Myanmar and Bangladesh are very small; Catholics make up

asked about how a Catholic should balance a commitment to inter-religious dialogue and a commitment to evangelization with the hope of welcoming converts into the church.

The key, the pope said, always is witness. It is not a Christian’s job to try to persuade someone to become Christian. That is the Holy Spirit’s job, he said, but individuals must prepare the way by offering a living witness of what it means to be Christian.

The main ingredients of witness, he said, are living according to “the Beatitudes, giving testimony to Matthew 25 (feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting the sick), the Good Samaritan and forgiving 70 times seven.”

The pope met privately with a varied group of religious leaders in Myanmar before holding a formal meeting with leaders of the nation’s Buddhist community Nov. 29.

Quoting Buddha and a prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, the pope insisted that in a land where the powerfully bonded pairing of religion and ethnicity have been used to prolong conflict, it was time for religious leaders to reclaim the greatest

values and virtues of their faith traditions.

Pope Francis also held separate meetings in both countries with the nation’s bishops. In Myanmar, he told the bishops that the idea that differences are a threat to peaceful coexistence is an example of an “ideological colonization” sweeping the world and trying to make everyone the same.

“The unity we share and celebrate is born of diversity,” he said. Unity in the church and in a nation “values people’s differences as a source of mutual enrichment and growth. It invites people to come together in a culture of encounter and solidarity.”

As Myanmar continues its transition to democratic rule and tries to deal with the challenges of development and full equality for all its ethnic groups, Pope Francis told the bishops to ensure that their voices are heard, “particularly by insisting on respect for the dignity and rights of all, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.”

Before leaving the country, he celebrated mass Nov. 30 with thousands of young people from throughout Myanmar. He told them to be messengers of the Good News of God’s love and mercy.

“As messengers of this good news, you are ready to bring a word of hope to the church, to your own country, and to the wider world,” he said. “You are ready to bring good news to your suffering brothers and sisters who need your prayers and your solidarity, but also your enthusiasm

for human rights, for justice and for the growth of that love and peace which Jesus brings.”

Witness was also the theme he highlighted at a large mass in a park in Yangon, Myanmar’s capital.

“I know that many in Myanmar bear the wounds of violence, wounds both visible and invisible,” the pope said in his homily. The temptation is to think that “healing can come from anger and revenge. Yet the way of revenge is not the way of Jesus.”

Pope Francis prayed that Catholics in Myanmar would “be faithful witnesses of the reconciliation and peace that God wants to reign in every human heart and in every community.”

In Bangladesh, his only public mass was celebrated Dec. 1 and included the ordination of 16 priests, who came from different



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE VISITS ELDERLY PRIESTS — Pope Francis laughs as he meets with Bangladesh’s bishops at a residence for elderly priests in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Dec. 1.

being is created in God’s image and likeness. “Today, the presence of God is also called ‘Rohingya,’ ” he said after listening to each of the 16 refugees briefly tell their stories.

“They, too, are images of the living God,” Pope Francis told

because of the contributions of Catholic schools, hospitals and other activities.

In Myanmar, the majority of people are Buddhist and in Bangladesh the majority are Muslim. On the return flight to Rome Dec. 2, Pope Francis was



CNS/L’Osservatore Romano

MYANMAR INTERRELIGIOUS MEETING — Pope Francis and Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon, Myanmar, seated at pope’s right, listen as Bishop John Hsane Hgyi of Patheingyi, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Myanmar, speaks during a small informal meeting with a variety of religious leaders Nov. 28 at the archbishop’s residence in Yangon.



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE GREETS AUNG SAN SUU KYI — Pope Francis greets Aung San Suu Kyi, state counsellor and foreign minister of Myanmar, at the presidential palace in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, Nov. 28.

dioceses and religious orders. He read the prescribed homily from the rite of ordination, but then spoke off the cuff to thank the thousands of people who had travelled far for the mass. He also encouraged them to pray for their priests.

The next day, before leaving Bangladesh, he met with priests, religious and seminarians at Holy Rosary Church in Dhaka. He told them the harmony, mutual respect and peace that should reign in relations between members of different religions must first be found between members of the Catholic Church.

I do not at all understand the mystery of grace — only that it meets us where we are but doesn’t leave us where it found us.

— Anne Lamott