



Public health issue

Cordelia Anderson, an expert on sexual violence, told parliamentarians that violent online pornography is a public health issue that needs a multi-pronged approach. — page 4



Journey of reconciliation

An intrepid group of about 30 pilgrims — made up of First Nations, Jesuits and laity — will be replicating the 800-km journey taken by missionary St. Jean de Brebeuf in the 1640s from Midland, Ont., to Montreal as Canada celebrates its 150th birthday. — page 5

100th anniversary

The Friends of Sion are planning a reunion of all former students of Sion Academy to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Sion in Saskatoon. They are seeking help finding former students. — page 7

Message of hope

Canadian author David Adams Richards has drawn extensively on his often-



hardscrabble life experience in the rustic Miramichi region of New Brunswick

to produce a collection of prose that speaks of sacrifice, endurance and faith. — page 8

Single issue, manipulation, and money

“Given *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis’ insistence on integral human development that respects life with dignity for all God’s Creation, and the threats with which we are confronted, why do some powerful Catholics persist in reducing our rich tradition to a single issue?” asks Yvonne Zarowny. — page 14

CWL brings resolutions to Parliament Hill

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A four-woman delegation from the Catholic Women’s League (CWL) visited Parliament Hill Nov. 27 - 30, meeting with public officials on issues ranging from immigration to palliative care.

The CWL is promoting a resolution to urge the government to amend the Canada Health Act to “identify palliative care as an insured health service.”

Though the CWL is monitoring Conservative MP Marilyn Gladu’s private member’s Bill C-277 that asks for a national framework for palliative care, CWL legislation chair Nancy Simms says the Catholic women’s organization wants to see the Canada Health Act amended to include it.

“It’s great to have a framework, but if you don’t have finances it doesn’t go so well,” she said.

“Only 16 to 30 per cent of Canadians have access to quality palliative care,” said resolutions chair Joan Bona. “It’s quite alarming.”

CWL president Margaret Ann Jacobs, president-elect Anne-Marie Gorman, Simms and Bona met with Senator Betty Unger, a Catholic, who had planted the seed for the CWL resolution back in 2004, who told them, “If you want quality palliative care, you have to change the Canada Health

Act,” said Jacobs. They also met with Senator Jane Cordy, who mentioned the CWL in an October speech before the Senate, and called their resolution “a reasonable request by the CWL that would benefit all Canadians.”

The delegation met with Immigration Canada officials about 2016 Resolution #1 to urge the government to “amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act so that foreign workers may apply for permanent resident status regardless of occupational classification.”

They were told a report is coming in January from the House of Commons HUMA Committee (Human Resources, Skills, and Social Development) on the Temporary Foreign Workers program, said Bona.

The delegation met with officials from Health Canada concerning Resolution #2 regarding the updating of Canada’s Food Guide. “We’re asking for evidence-based research,” Bona said.

They were pleased to discover a new food guide is in the works that is “looking at the global aspect,” and addressing everything from nursing homes to restaurants, said Simms.

“The new guide is going to meet the needs of all sectors,” Gorman said. “We learned things that will be very informative for our members.”

Gorman said they are pleased with the response to the resolutions they brought forward. “We’ve had our finger on the pulse of what’s important to the culture,” she said.

The women met with other Health Canada officials concerning their Resolution #3 on “warning labels on food and drug products for all inactive substances and additives.”

For drugs they discovered many of these warnings are already in place, “but people are choosing not to access the information,” said Gorman.

It can be found in the drug monographs that come with the packaging. “We need to be better edu-

cated ourselves,” Gorman said.

— **EARLY**, page 4



CCN/D. Gyapong

CWL DELEGATION IN OTTAWA — A CWL delegation to Parliament Hill included resolutions chair Joan Bona, president-elect Anne-Marie Gorman, legislation chair Nancy Simms and president Margaret Ann Jacobs.

Somerville Keenan Memorial Lecturer at STM

By Kate O’Gorman

SASKATOON — Ethicist Margaret Somerville was welcomed as the 28th Michael Keenan Memorial Lecturer at St. Thomas More College Nov. 24,



Courtesy of STM

Margaret Somerville

offering a public lecture entitled, “The Song of Death, the Lyrics of Euthanasia versus The Song of Life, the Lyrics of Love and Hope.”

As the Samuel Gale Professor of Law Emerita, Professor

Emerita in the Faculty of Medicine, Founding Director Emerita of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University in Montreal, Somerville has established herself as one of the most respected bioethicists in Canada. Given the new reality in Canada of an amended Criminal Code allowing for medically assisted death, Somerville was invited to share her reflections.

“I want to discuss the legalization of euthanasia as a prime example of what has happened and what is happening to our shared values,” she began. “I believe that the future world will review (the decision to sanction physician assisted death) with regret because it represents a seismic shift in our foundational values.”

Exploring how legalized euthanasia came to be, Somerville began by outlining progressive (liberal) vs. restrictive (conservative) value stances. “The people who sing the song of death call themselves progressives,” commented Somerville, while those against euthanasia typically hold values indicative of restrictives.

Quoting the research of social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, Somerville said that progressives generally favour individual auton-

omy to a greater extent than restrictives, and that restrictives favour the common good more than progressives.

“In relation to euthanasia, this translates into a conflict between

— **EUTHANASIA**, page 6

Syriac Catholic patriarch ‘horrified’ by ‘ghost towns’

By Doreen Abi Raad

BEIRUT (CNS) — The Syriac Catholic patriarch said he was horrified to see widespread devastation and what he called “ghost towns” during a recent visit to northern Iraq.

Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan wrote in an email to Catholic News Service that there was little left in some of the communities that he toured Nov. 27 - 29 and that “the emptiness of the streets except for military people . . . the devastation and burned-out houses and churches” was shocking.

About 100,000 Christians — among them more than 60,000 Syriac Catholics — were expelled from the Ninevah Plain by the Islamic State group in the summer of 2014 as the militants campaigned to expand their reach into Iraq.

Younan also called for understanding from the incoming ad-

ministration of President-elect Donald Trump about the plight and ordeal of all minorities, including Christians affected by violence in the region.

The patriarch told CNS about “walking through the Christian towns of Qaraqosh, Bartella and Karamles and witnessing the extent of devastation as if we had entered ghost towns!”

Graffiti and inscriptions “expressing hatred toward Christian symbols and doctrine were seen everywhere” on walls near streets, outside and inside houses and churches, he wrote.

“Aside from the looting, destruction of and damage to buildings, we discovered that the terrorists, out of hatred to the Christian faith, set fire to most of the buildings, including churches, schools, kindergartens and hospitals,” the

— **DESCENDANTS**, page 15

New Caritas report sets out ‘road map’ for justice

By Jonathan Luxmoore

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — Europe’s top Catholic charitable agency has published a “road map for social justice and equality,” urging all church members to defend the poor and marginalized. “The financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 proved a ‘stress test’ for European social models,” said the Brussels-based *Caritas Europa*. “Solidarity mechanisms have fallen under more pressure because of the austerity measures taken by governments,” it said.

“Even before the crisis, about 120 million people were living in or at risk of poverty in Europe — a clear indication that current social protection systems are not keeping their promise.” The 44-page report said *Caritas* groups had amassed data on poverty and exclusion to set out “building blocks” for a more-just Europe, which provided welfare for all. It added that inequalities could be reduced by improvements to labour markets and social protection systems, as well as by pro-family measures and the redefinition of “social rights

as human rights.” Among more than 60 policy recommendations for a *Caritas* social model, it called for universal and enforceable access to social services and benefit entitlements, monthly child allowances and affordable child care, as well as an adequate minimum wage, social housing and equal pay for men and women. “We are convinced of the necessity to provide for and empower those without the means to meet their basic needs, and to alter the structures in society that keep them excluded from the community,” the *Caritas* report said. “Consideration of poverty in Catholic social teaching begins from the foundation that each person is both sacred and social, created in God’s image, and destined to share in the goods of the earth as part of a community of justice and mercy.”

Caritas Europa is one of seven regions of the Vatican-based *Caritas Internationalis* and has member-charities in 46 European countries. In a foreword to the report, Jorge Nuno Mayer, *Caritas* secretary general, said *Caritas Europa* was “called to denounce unjust structures” and would “assist and empower” poor citizens to demand their rights “until states take up their full responsibility.” Alain Rodriguez, *Caritas* communications officer, said Nov. 30 that “the common good isn’t being used and distributed equally and fairly.”

“While things are going well

for some, too many others are ignored and left behind,” Rodriguez said. He told Catholic News Service that all European Union members could implement many of the report recommendations, using “existing tools” for ensuring social justice. In its 2015 Crisis Monitoring Report, *Caritas* said poverty and exclusion affected up to a third of the population in Bulgaria,

Greece, Hungary, Latvia and Romania, but also 16.1 per cent of Germans and 14.4 per cent of Austrians. It said half of all EU states had “serious gaps” in their social welfare systems. It added that social unrest was increasing faster in Europe than elsewhere in the world, fuelling racism, xenophobia and hatred, and said social cohesion was fading as trust in political institutions “increasingly weakened.”



CNS/Yannis Kolesidis, EPA

SOUP KITCHEN IN GREECE — A homeless man eats his meal in 2015 at a soup kitchen run by the Archdiocese of Athens in Greece. Europe’s top Catholic charitable agency has published a “road map for social justice and equality,” urging all church members to defend the poor and marginalized.

‘Mercy’ outlives its special year of focus

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Year of Mercy and its series of papal reflections may be over, but compassion and acts of mercy must continue and become a part

of everyone’s daily lives, Pope Francis said. “Let us commit ourselves to praying for each other so that the corporal and spiritual works of mercy increasingly become our way of life,” he said Nov. 30 during his general audience in the Vatican’s Paul VI hall. Because the day also marked the feast of St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter and founder of the church in Constantinople, Pope Francis gave special greetings to his “dear brother,” Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople.

Pope Francis, the bishop of Rome and successor of Peter, said he was sending “a big embrace” to the patriarch and “this cousin church.” The Vatican released a letter from the pope to the patriarch, which praised the way Catholics and Orthodox have begun “to recognize one another as brothers and sisters and to value each other’s gifts, and together have proclaimed the Gospel, served humanity and the cause of peace, promoted the dignity of the human being and the inestimable value of the family, and cared for those most in need, as well as creation, our common home.”

In his main audience talk, the pope ended his yearlong series of talks on mercy with a reflection on the corporal work of burying the dead and the spiritual works of praying for the living and dead. Catholics particularly remember the faithful departed during

the month of November, he said. Praying for those who have died “is a sign of recognition for the witness they have left us and the good they have done. It is a giving thanks to the Lord for having given them to us and for their love and friendship.” By entrusting their souls to God’s mercy, “we pray with Christian hope that they are with him in heaven,” he said.

While for many burying the dead is an expected, straightforward ritual, there are some parts of the world where this may not be a given, such as places experiencing “the scourge of war, with bombings day and night that sow fear and innocent victims,” he said. “Even today, there are those who risk their life to bury poor victims of war,” he added, thanking those particularly in Syria and the Middle East for their courage in recovering the dead and going to rescue the injured.

Praying for the living, he said, can be done in many ways, such as: blessing one’s children every morning and evening; visiting and praying for the sick; praying silently, “sometimes in tears,” for help during difficult times; even thanking God for the blessings bestowed upon one’s family, friends and co-workers. The important thing, he said, is to always have one’s heart open to the Holy Spirit, “who knows our deepest desires and hopes,” and can “purify and bring them to fulfillment.”



CNS/Catholic Herald

PEARL HARBOR CATHOLIC HERALD — This is the front page editorial of *The Catholic Herald*, the publication of the Diocese of Honolulu, published Dec. 11, 1941, four days after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Dec. 7 marks the 75th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

British cardinal: media foster ‘climate of fear’ vs. migrants

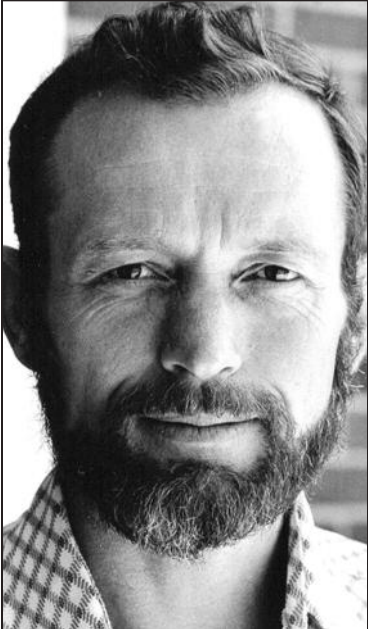
LONDON (CNS) — Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster said some British media were stirring up xenophobic sentiments against migrants and refugees.

The cardinal suggested that some media were guilty of fostering a climate of fear of refugees ahead of the June 23 referendum that resulted in a surprise vote for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. He told a Nov. 18 press conference attitudes toward migrants had since hardened, making it harder for humane solutions to be found to the refugee crisis in the Middle East and the crisis of mass migration from Africa. Speaking at a London press conference after an annual November meeting of the bishops of England and Wales in Leeds, Nichols said: “We were concerned about the levels of intolerance, of attitudes hardening, of attitudes of exclusion.

“It is the fostering of a climate of fear that actually makes finding

solutions more difficult,” said Nichols, the president of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

“I believe that the constant repetition of the dangers of the risks of refugees and the constant putting into the public sphere of fear actually masks a deeper level of compassion that exists within many people in this country,” he said. The cardinal said the bishops collectively “expressed our regret of the emergence of harder attitudes toward people who have migrated to be in this country and our regret at the way those views are given such ample expression, particularly in parts of the media.” Nichols added that inevitable economic consequences of Brexit — such as rising inflation, possible restrictions on trade with the European Union and the devaluation of British currency — would be felt “most keenly at the bottom of the economic ladders.”



CNS/Charlene Scott

FIRST U.S. MARTYR — Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of Rev. Stanley Rother of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, making him the first martyr born in the United States. Rother, born March 27, 1935, was brutally murdered July 28, 1981, in a Guatemalan village where he ministered to the poor. Many priests and religious in Guatemala became targets during the country’s 1960 - 1996 civil war.

Panel points to increased use of renewable energy

By Glen Argan
Special to the
Prairie Messenger

EDMONTON — Greenhouse gas emissions in Canada will begin to decline by 2020 due to the increasing use of renewable energy, says a leading Quebec environmentalist.

Actions already taken by the Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia governments will ensure the national total of emissions starts falling within four years, says Steven Guilbeault, senior director and co-founder of Equiterre, a consulting, education and research organization.

As well, the coal industry is being rapidly pushed out of existence in both China and the United States, he said.

Guilbeault told a Nov. 30 panel session on Faith and Climate Action that the United States is investing more in solar and wind power than in gas and that since 2013, more has been invested every year in renewable energy than in fossil fuels.



Ryan Mason

The value of American coal companies has declined from \$63 billion in 2011 to less than \$200 million today, he added.

“You know what? Donald Trump is not going to change a



Steven Guilbeault

single thing about that.”

China, meanwhile, has rapidly become the world’s dominant renewable energy producer, now producing 70 per cent of the world’s solar energy. China, he said, has also closed 1,000 coal mines in recent years.

Guilbeault was the featured speaker at the event at Newman Theological College, which was sponsored by Development and Peace, Equiterre and the Canadian Religious Conference. About 45 people attended.

In Canada, he continued, the Blue-Green Alliance — an alliance of blue collar workers and environmentalists — has calculated that for \$1 million of investment, two jobs could be created in the petroleum industry compared with 15 in the clean energy sector.

Ontario’s Green Energy Act has led to solar energy systems being installed in 40,000 homes with people having the ability to sell surplus electricity back into the grid. “People are becoming their own energy producers in many places.”

Germany has banned gasoline-powered vehicles as of 2030, Guilbeault said. As well, China expects to have one million electric vehicles on the road by 2020.

Nevertheless, 70 per cent of

current global energy use comes from coal, oil and natural gas, he said. “If we want to solve climate change, we have to reduce the amount of fossil fuel we consume.”

About 40 per cent of the Arctic ice cap — the “planetary cooling system” — has melted away over the last 40 years.

California, the producer of half of Canada’s winter produce, has been suffering from systemic drought for three years, boosting food prices here, he said.

Equiterre opposes pipeline building to ship Alberta oil to foreign markets, including Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline, approved the day before Guilbeault’s talk in Edmonton.

“Putting more eggs in the oil basket makes Alberta even more dependent on what happens in the oil market,” he said, noting 50,000 petroleum industry jobs have been lost in the last two years.

Guilbeault did pay tribute to the Alberta government for launching “some really amazing things,” including the rapid phase-out of coal-fired energy and the development of renewable energy.

“Alberta is going to develop faster than anywhere in Canada,” he said.

Two of the other four panelists spoke of practical steps they are taking to move toward a more environmentally clean society.

Sister Jeannette Filthaut, a member of the Kingston, Ont.-based Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, showed a brief video of the order’s efforts to save heirloom seeds from garden vegetables.

Several years ago the order began organic gardening on its more than 30-acre garden and restored its root cellar to its original purpose, Filthaut said. It has also collected more than 80 varieties of heirloom tomato seeds.

Ryan Mason is the co-founder of Reclaim Urban Farm, which uses vacant and under-utilized land totalling less than an acre at 16 locations along Edmonton’s busy Whyte Avenue to grow leafy vegetable greens.

Over the last three years, Mason and his partner have grown tens of thousands of kilograms of vegetables on their micro-farm. Mason would transport up to 68 kilograms of his

harvest on his bicycle the first two years, but has cut back on the cycling as the farm expands.

Raised on a farm, he travelled widely to gain experience with small-scale, entrepreneurial farming in countries around the world.

A member of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, he says, “I strongly believe all of us should be taking part in the stewardship of creation.”



Sister Jeannette Filthaut

Catechism a ministry of presence

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — Advent is a time to “reduce spiritual clutter, clear our hearts and make room for the Lord.”

With those words the director of catechetics for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Judith Vasquez, welcomed 200 catechists to a retreat at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Winnipeg Nov. 30.

The retreat was led by Archbishop Richard Gagnon, who reassured his audience, “The catechesis of the church doesn’t fall on your shoulders. You do not have control over the souls in that classroom. Catechism starts with parents and the catechist is to supplement.”

Gagnon quoted Deuteronomy 4:9: “Do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you

live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”

He said in the Jewish faith the passage is called the Shema. “The Torah teaches the people to learn, to know and to pass on to children.” But, he added, catechism is not just passing a story along: “The Bible is full of stories but it is the living Word of God.”

The archbishop emphasized the importance of discipleship in a catechist and explained that discipleship means, “You copy. Copy who? Jesus. For some people the only Bible they will ever need is you.”

The archbishop spoke of walking the pilgrimage of El Camino de Santiago in Spain, likening it to the experience of a catechist: “We walked for three weeks, but it was for more than just reaching the goal. It was the journey; that’s where you listen, you are learning

by encountering people through relationships, so the present is as important as the goal. The classroom is a special moment of presence. In sharing your faith you also teach yourself. There is a desire in our hearts to share our journey of faith with others.”

Pope Francis, Gagnon said, speaks of the church as a field hospital in a war. “It is ill-equipped; people do what they can to help the wounded. We are the church and we are called to help each other search for salvation. In the classroom you are a healing presence.”

The church’s *General Directory for Catechesis* says the church is sent to be the keeper of the faith, in communion with Jesus Christ. “Everyone here has a communion with Jesus Christ

— GENEROSITY, page 7

Band-Aid solutions fail in curbing poverty

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — If the economy leaves 1.3 million Canadian children living in poverty, then “the system has failed,” Senator Art Eggleton told religious leaders gathered at Queen’s Park Nov. 24.

“The band-aid approach, the incremental approaches that have been tried over the years — as good as the intentions have been — still haven’t been enough to really move the (poverty) numbers in a big way,” he said.

Politically, it apparently carries little weight that 60 per cent of Aboriginal children on reserves live in poverty, or that more than 150,000 Ontario families live below the Statistics Canada “Low Income Measure,” which draws the poverty line at

\$35,648 for a family of four.

“Poverty is a tough sell come election time,” Eggleton said.

Canada’s poverty numbers and the reality behind them are “shameful,” he said.

The senator and former Toronto mayor came to the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition meeting to urge ISARC to keep bothering the politicians. In 1989, when Parliament passed a unanimous motion calling for an end to child poverty by the year 2000, Canada’s child poverty rate was 15.8 per cent. Today it stands at 18.5 per cent.

Supported by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario and Catholic Charities of Toronto, among others, ISARC brings together the religious leaders who run food banks, shelters and other

— PEOPLE, page 5



James Buchok

CATECHISTS RETREAT — Catechists of the Archdioceses of Winnipeg and St. Boniface with Judith Vasquez (standing), director of Catechetics and Faith Development for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

Stopping violent porn a public health issue: expert

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — An American expert on sexual violence told parliamentarians Nov. 29 violent online pornography is a public health issue that needs a multi-pronged approach.

"We are watching; the world is watching what is happening here," Cordelia Anderson, a consultant based in Minneapolis, concerning Conservative MP Arnold Viersen's Motion 47 that would instruct the House of Commons Health Committee to "examine the public health effects of the ease of access and viewing of online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women and men" and report to the House of Commons by July 2017. The Liberal government has

signalled it will support the motion.

Anderson said the examination should include the latest studies on the effects of pornography done over the last 10 years in many different countries.

At a presentation sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and Defend Dignity, a Canadian organization against sexual exploitation, Anderson said the content of pornography has changed to emphasize pain and the degradation of women. A 2010 study analyzing 50 of the top-grossing porn films of 2007 showed 3,376 different acts of verbal and physical abuse; 11.5 acts of aggression per scene in 88 per cent of them, she said. Aggression was rewarded 68 per cent of the time; with a neutral response 32 per cent

of the time; and discouraged 0 per cent. Only about 10 per cent was sex shown in a positive manner.

"The porn industry is the main 'sex' educator of young people," she warned.

"Many children and teens learn more about 'sex,' gender and relationships from mainstream, hyper-sexualized media and today's porn than from parents and other caring adults in their lives," she said.

The porn industry earns an estimated \$57 billion worldwide, more than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple and Netflix, she said. One company, MindGeek (formerly Manwin) owns nine out of 16 lucrative "free" porn sites that serve to get children hooked.

Anderson cited a number of

studies from around the world that showed the harmful effects on porn users, depending on their age of first exposure, and the frequency and amount of time spent viewing porn. Because of the brain's plasticity, these young people "are predisposed to sexuality coercive and abusive behaviours," she said.

"We live in a sexually pornified and toxified environment," she said. "Children have gone from Dr. Seuss to porn."

Studies have shown the average age of first exposure to porn is 11, she said. Porn not only affects those who view it, but other children who are exposed to verbal abuse and degrading sexual expectations. One study she cited revealed many young teenage girls expect to have painful anal sex and think they are not supposed to complain about it.

Boys and girls are exposed to images that define for them that "inflicting pain on another person is sex," she said. "It's been normalized." One boy asked if he had to strangle his girlfriend if they had sex.

"We can't arrest, prosecute, incarcerate, legislate, treat or educate our way out of this," she said. "It will take all of that and more and the more is broad-based social and environmental change."

Anderson said putting the onus on society to educate parents to protect children is similar to warning people about a toxic water supply but doing nothing to clean up the water.

Pornography needs to be defined as a social issue so the responsibility "moves from individuals to holding external social causes or influences accountable," she said.

Some great public health

achievements have been in the area of immunizations; motor vehicle safety such as seatbelts; fluoride in drinking water; and the treatment of tobacco as a health hazard, she said.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Cordelia Anderson

Anderson said she was not advocating going back to an era where sex was treated with shame. "We need a revolution with heart, not a revolution of shame," she said. "It has to be about human connection. What our kids aren't learning about are human relationships and caring."

Though she said she is full of hope change is possible, she warned there would be a backlash against any major social change, the same way the tobacco industry pushed back proof smoking causes cancer and other diseases. Already, some hotels have bowed to public pressure to remove porn channels, she said. No longer can child pornography be paid for with a credit card, she said.

New director named for COLF

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) board has appointed Michel MacDonald as the agency's new director.

MacDonald will replace Michele Boulva, who is retiring after 12 years as COLF's director. His term begins Dec. 12, 2016. Boulva leaves COLF at the end of December.

"I'm excited to be on-board and to continue the good work that COLF has done under Michele Boulva and (assistant director) Peter Murphy," MacDonald said.

"They've had a love for the church's teachings on marriage and family in their presentations," he said.

He said he shares COLF's vision of helping families "live out the beauty and truth of the church's vision for marriage and family so they can really experience what Pope Francis calls the Joy of Love (*Amoris Laetitia*)."

"We want families to be witnesses to God's love and to that joy," he said. "Families through living their mission and vocation can be real witnesses of God's love for the world — they live out the new evangelization," he said.

The father of seven children, MacDonald holds a licentiate from the John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C., on the theology of marriage and family. He is completing his doctorate in moral theology at Saint Paul University. He defends his thesis on Dec. 9.

He had earned bachelor's degrees in theology and philosophy at Dominican University College. He has taught at both Saint Paul University and Dominican University College and worked with St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto in developing an online course on human sexuality and marriage. He has also taught in the field of Christian ethics.

MacDonald served as a mem-

ber of COLF's board from June 2011 to June 2016. He has also worked as youth ministry co-ordinator and music director at St. Maurice Parish in Ottawa.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus who co-founded COLF and jointly fund the organization were consulted in the appointment.

MacDonald and his family live in Ottawa.

"The board thanks Ms. Boulva for the many years of dedicated service she has rendered to COLF, and wishes her joy and happiness in her new challenges," said a COLF news release announcing MacDonald's appointment.

Boulva has said she will remain active in life and family issues upon leaving COLF. She plans to live in Montreal.

Early intervention needed

Continued from page 1

They also brought up their 2015 Resolution #1 with Public Health Canada on increasing early intervention and access for children and youth to mental health services.

Because the resolution deals with early intervention and access, and access is more of a provincial issue, they are going to discuss this in federal/provincial meetings next year, Simms said.

The officials told them they have a mental health kit coming that will be announced soon and that they have a good rapport with the provinces and territories in finding ways to address this matter, said Jacobs. The federal government is also coming out with a federal framework on suicide prevention.

The delegation also met with the Opposition Indigenous Affairs critic Conservative MP Cathy McLeod, who set up an e-petition at Simms' request to have home care recognized as an insured health care service.

This was Jacobs third time

making a trip to Ottawa as part of a delegation, her second time meeting with representatives of the Liberal government, and her first as CWL president. The twice-a-year visits give the women a chance to explain to government officials what the CWL is and how, as Canada's largest women's organization, it is possible to disseminate messages to members.

"I think we were favourably received," Jacobs said.

The CWL delegation also met with the incoming director of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) Michel MacDonald and assistant director Peter Murphy; with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops general secretary Msgr. Frank Leo; and with the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi while in Ottawa.

"I was very impressed with how much trust the CCCB puts in COLF," said Gorman.

"COLF is what we rely on for correct information with regard to Catholic teaching if we need to look," said Jacobs.

Prêtre Rédemptoriste, Pr. Joseph Manh C.S.s.R.
Ordonné, 24 avril, 2016, Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Québec



Je crois...

"...en notre mission d'évangélisateurs: annoncer la Bonne Nouvelle, surtout aux plus abandonnés d'aujourd'hui."

Pr. Joseph Manh, C.S.s.R.

Viens et vois chez les Rédemptoristes.
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PLUG IN TO CHRIST

Canoe pilgrimage is a journey of reconciliation

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The journey toward Truth and Reconciliation takes many forms, but few will be as physically demanding as a history-matching canoe trip planned for next summer.

An intrepid group of about 30 pilgrims — made of First Nations, Jesuits and laity — will be replicating the 800-km journey taken by missionary St. Jean de Brebeuf in the 1640s from Midland, Ont., to Montreal. To mark Canada’s 100th birthday in 1967, a group of Jesuits followed the same trade route to Expo in Montreal.

Fifty years later, as Canada celebrates its 150th anniversary, the route will be the same, but the motivation is much deeper.

“It is serving as a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by, on a fundamental level, bringing together two cultures — First Nations and non-First Nations,” said Erik

Sorensen, project manager of the 2017 Canadian Canoe Pilgrimage. “It is reconciliation on a very practical and individual level . . . by letting them encounter each other and develop friendships and relationships. That is very practical reconciliation.”

The group is expected to begin paddling July 21 from Midland along the shores of Georgian Bay. The route will see them head north to take the French River to Lake Nipissing, then following the Mattawa River to the Ottawa River to the St. Lawrence. They hope to arrive in Montreal Aug. 15.

After about eight hours a day in a canoe, the group will spend the majority of nights camping in the wilderness, joining together in prayer each evening and making a number of stops in municipalities to refresh.

“It will be physically demanding,” Sorensen said. “These large, six- or eight-person canoes are challenging to paddle and even more challenging to portage. To pick them up and carry them a

couple kilometres across dry land requires a fair bit of physical excursion.”

Details about the trip can be found at www.canoe-pilgrimage.com. It’s expected to cost about \$100,000 and those selected will have to fundraise their share. Any additional funds collected will be used to produce learning material and resources, said Sorensen, who professed his first vows with the Jesuits in 2014.

For him, the extended exposure to First Nations people during the trip is what can spark true reconciliation.

“That prolonged encounter is what this trip is all about,” said Sorensen, a 26-year-old from Red Deer, Alta. “With this prolonged experience it steers the group into the opportunity for the people participating to really encounter each other in more than a superficial way — more than an afternoon meeting would. It is in that encountering that relationships will be formed and there will be the opportunity for mutual healing.”

Andrew Starblanket, a First Nations who intends to make the pilgrimage next summer as part of the core group, agrees that much healing is possible by bringing people together in this way.

“It is more than just a canoe trip,” he said. “This trip will bring nations together to help support not only the First Nations but all people. (It) will bring together many different creative minds from many different nations so we can heal what was so devastating to many.”

Starblanket, who lives on a



Photo courtesy of Erik Sorensen

CANOE PILGRIMAGE — Andrew Starblanket, left, Krista Bowman and Erik Sorensen will be part of a First Nations, Jesuit and laity group retracing the historic canoe route of St. Jean de Brebeuf from Midland, Ont., to Montreal.

reserve in Saskatchewan with fellow Cree, said the wounds of the past manifest themselves today in the “hard time” he has with saying “I love you to my family.”

He blames the residential schools and the impact they had on his mother.

“It was like imprinted on her and it affected her parenting,” he said. “I have yet to find out why.”

But it isn’t only the First Nations who need reconciliation, added Starblanket.

“It’s hard to tell a story that is history and that is bad, especially

for certain churches and religious that had a negative influence on many,” he said. “(So) the church needs healing too, and this is a good way for them to heal and for all of us to heal.”

Sorensen said there will be a number of public events along the route, and he is encouraging ways for those who want to join the pilgrimage.

“We’re also inviting people to come and paddle with us for two or three days at a time if they want to come and experience the pilgrimage aspect of it,” he said.



Queen’s House was established in 1958 as a ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI Lacombe Canada) to serve our community. We invite applications for a half-time

Development Officer

To commence February 1, 2017

The development officer will work collaboratively with the director, administrative team, staff and Board to successfully implement the mission and ministry of Queen’s House which includes being a welcome presence to the many faces of our community.

Responsibilities: (include but are not limited to)

- Strengthen donor, volunteer and stakeholder commitments in the service of our Queen’s House community.
- Planning and executing events for Queen’s House that include events such as our Spring Fling Lottery, Oblate Scramble Golf Tournament, Bike-A-Thon and Gala Dinner, special donor events, campaign launches, celebrations and recognition events, planned giving and grant writing.
- Work collaboratively to secure sponsorships, encourage and promote volunteer participation, promote, enhance and extend donor relationships and encourage the culture of philanthropy within and beyond our community.

Preferences:

- Undergraduate degree or post-secondary education and equivalent experience.
- Previous experience in event planning and management in a non-profit fundraising environment is an asset.
- Demonstrated skills in planning and organization.
- Demonstrated ability in all forms of communication, knowledge and use of technology, social media and information gathering and sharing.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a diverse team.
- Dedication, commitment and respect for faith and spiritual interests and endeavors.

Terms of Employment:

- 20 hours per week with flexibility to work occasional evenings and weekends as scheduling and event needs require.
- Salary commensurate with OMI guidelines.
- Start date preference is February 1, 2017, or as agreed.

Submit resumé, cover letter and references by **December 30, 2016**, to:

Queen’s House Retreat & Renewal Centre
Attention: Mr. Brendan Bitz
601 Taylor Street West, Saskatoon, SK S7M 0C9
306-242-1916 director@queenshouse.org

People work for hours and can’t pay rent

Continued from page 3

services for the poor across the province. ISARC often piggy-backs on the work of Campaign 2000, a coalition that addresses child poverty and is supported by the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Providence and others.

ISARC’s response to the problem is a campaign called Billion or Bust. It demands \$1 billion in new spending on social programs in the next Ontario budget and another \$1 billion to build new social housing.

“The combination of people telling us all the things that are not happening right now, along with this real momentum to do something about it, really fed into the launch of the Billion or Bust campaign,” ISARC chair Rev. Susan Eagle told The Catholic Register.

ISARC is also arguing for an immediate raise in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. A phrase first used by Pope Leo XIII, “the living wage,” has become an ISARC watchword.

“If we increase social assistance rates and do nothing about minimum wage, all we do is create an inequity,” Eagle said.

“People who work for hours every day and still not be able to pay the rent.”

Spending money to eliminate

poverty isn’t some sort of bottomless pit, but a practical plan to save money, said Campaign 2000 national co-ordinator Anita Khanna.

“We’re talking about upstream solutions that actually are cheaper than providing these programs,” she said. “The costs are very high for letting poverty exist, for maintaining it.”

A 2008 study commissioned by the Ontario Association of Food Banks found poverty costs Canada \$7.6 billion per year in health care costs, \$1 billion to \$2

billion in crime, \$35.8 to \$41.2 billion in lost productivity.

As long as hospital emergency wards are full of poor people seeking help for chronic health problems — problems that would never have come up if they had good housing and a good diet as children — child poverty is costing the nation billions, said Khanna.

“We’ve seen some positive steps — the federal government acknowledging this reality and putting some programs in place,” said Khanna. “But we need to move more quickly.”

Five steps to tackle poverty in Canada

Speaking to ISARC in the Ontario legislature on the same day as Campaign 2000 released its annual report card on child poverty, Senator Art Eggleton proposed five ways Canada could tackle entrenched poverty — a problem that, according to some estimates, costs the Canadian economy \$30 billion per year.

- Implement a guaranteed annual income or basic income to simplify the administration of complicated welfare systems and ensure the working poor a basic standard of living.
- Establish a living income of about 1.5-times the current minimum wage to lift people out of poverty.
- Initiate a complete review and reform of the tax system, not attempted since the 1970 Carter Commission, to close loopholes and lessen inequality.
- Create a national housing strategy to eliminate the threat of homelessness for the poor.
- Launch a national dental and pharmacare plan to provide the poor affordable access to these services.

Second L'Arche home officially opens in Saskatoon

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — With great joy, L'Arche resident Christopher Powell cut the ribbon to officially open Alma House, the second L'Arche home in Saskatoon, during a celebration Dec. 2 that included residents, family members and friends, board members and government representatives.

Located at 546 Christopher Lane in southeast Saskatoon, the newly renovated Alma House is home to four core residents and four live-in assistants who share life together in a model pioneered by Jean Vanier some 52 years ago in France.

"We all need community, a place of belonging, a place where we can celebrate and be committed to each other, a place where we learn to accept ourselves as we are and to forgive," Vanier says in a quote summarizing the L'Arche vision.

Today there are over 150 L'Arche communities around the world in 37 different countries, including 29 in Canada, noted executive director Wyndham Thiessen.

Historically, L'Arche stood at the start of the movement to de-institutionalize care for those with intellectual disabilities, said Thiessen, describing how the L'Arche vision was born when Jean Vanier went to visit people living in institutions and was struck by their loneliness, isolation and longing for friendship.

Vanier welcomed two men who had been living in an institution to come and live with him, and this vision of L'Arche was born. "This vision was of people with and without disabilities, sharing life together, creating mutual relationships and friendships, creating a place where everyone and their gifts can be celebrated," Thiessen explained.

Two of the four core residents now living at Alma House are former residents of Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw. That institution is closing, and residents are gradually being moved into residential care.

"It is a pleasure to be here today, especially to be here for

(core residents) Christopher, Milton, Adeline and Shaun," said Social Services Minister Tina Beaudry-Mellor.

"I know that two of you have come from Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw, and I am really thrilled to see you experiencing life in the community of your choice, while living in a great new home."

She emphasized the importance of a home environment, such as that shared at Alma House. "It really means belonging, it means inclusion and it's good for all of us as well," Beaudry-Mellor said. "It might seem like a simple thing, but a sense of belonging is important for all of us, just like clothing and shelter. I am really proud of the work across the province to open homes like this."

The government of Saskatchewan provided some \$560,000 toward the mortgage of Alma House, as well as some \$420,000 in annual operational funding.

"It's an investment that will go a long way toward insuring the residents of this home are included, supported, and living enriched lives in the Saskatoon community, and also aligns with our government's commitment to make Saskatchewan a more inclusive and accessible province for all people, no matter what their abilities are."

L'Arche Saskatoon board chair Myron Rogal also spoke, thanking partners in government and the community, and expressing appreciation for the provincial ministry's "person-centred approach."

L'Arche Saskatoon also operates Christopher House, which opened in 2008 as a home to four core residents and four live-in assistants, as well as providing vocational support for adults with intellectual disabilities in a workshop day program in Saskatoon.

"In 2012 we began the workshop to facilitate interaction with the wider community. With ministry funding in 2015, that workshop was transformed to a full-time program," Rogal said. "Our workshop is designed to meet the needs of individuals, particular to their abilities, and aligned with their interests, the workshop



Kiply Yaworski

SECOND L'ARCHE HOME — A ribbon-cutting ceremony Dec. 2 marked the official opening of Alma House, L'Arche Saskatoon's second home in Saskatoon, with (from left) L'Arche Saskatoon chair Myron Rogal, executive director Wyndham Thiessen, residents Shaun Becker and Christopher Powell, Social Services Minister Tina Beaudry-Mellor, Saskatoon City Councillor Bev Dubois, and Saskatchewan Education Minister Don Morgan.

encourages expression through art, music and other mediums."

Workshop participants come from beyond the L'Arche community, he noted, and also serve others in the community through various projects and initiatives.

For the past 17 years, monthly Friends of L'Arche gatherings have also been held in Saskatoon, Rogal added. "They are an opportunity to come together as friends and family to support those with

intellectual disabilities in the wider community, who live beyond the walls of these homes."

Thiessen explained the evolution and meaning of the name Alma House, noting the crabapple tree that grows in the yard.

"One of our assistants who had a Hungarian background said that the Hungarian word for apple is *alma*. So we started thinking about that word," Thiessen said. "*Alma* is a word that actually has

meanings in different languages: it means 'soul' in Spanish and 'on the water' in Arabic, but it also means 'nourishing' in Latin."

Thiessen concluded: "That's my hope and that's my prayer for this home, for Alma House: that the people who live here will be nourished — and that those who come and visit, and are part of the life of this home, will be nourished as well — by the relationships that they build here."

Euthanasia damages respect for life in society

Continued from page 1

respect for individual autonomy, a pro-euthanasia value, and respect for human life, which is what people like me believe should be the priority value."

According to Somerville, calling the legalization of euthanasia a "progressive value" tells us that individual autonomy takes priority over other values such as respect for human life. We must, however, consider the impact of legalizing euthanasia at levels other than just the individual one, "which is the sole focus of the pro-euthanasia lobby."

Somerville proposed examining the issue of euthanasia at the "meso" or institutional level, questioning what it will look like for hospitals and hospices, what it means for freedom of conscience and/or religion, and what it means for institutions of law and medicine that reflect the value of respect for life for society as a whole.

"In the past, religion was the main carrier of the value of respect for life, now it's law and medicine. Until this past year

(in Canada) these institutions have upheld the value, 'Thou shall not kill.' That has all changed. The fact that the state is authorizing the medical profession to (euthanize), seriously damages respect for life in society as a whole."

The issue of legalized euthanasia raises the question: will our societies and ultimately our world become less compassionate, and what will be the impact on fragile and vulnerable people?

Somerville stressed the importance of language. "Words matter," she said.

"Consider describing euthanasia as 'state-sanctioned suicide' or as 'physicians killing their patients,'" she continued, as compared to the language of "medically assisted death." "Using terms such as euthanasia and suicide reduces support for inflicted death."

Somerville went on to ask: what will be the impact of euthanasia on our future? Will the option become normalized? She proposed some ways to minimize the damage of the "song of death" with approaches that embody the "song of life."

"Both pro-euthanasia advocates and anti-euthanasia opponents are responding to the same question: how do we deal with death in a postmodern, pluralistic, democratic society such as Canada, and in particular, how should we respond to suffering? Where the pro-euthanasia answer is a lethal injection, the anti-euthanasia answer is with hope and love."

In light of this, how do we

generate hope and what does love require in the context of terminal illness? For Somerville it requires access to good palliative care, which is the best response to euthanasia in her estimation, and in particular it requires access to adequate pain management.

"We know from research that even among those who ask for euthanasia, the vast majority change their minds when given good palliative care" explained Somerville.

She went on to quote the Declaration of Montreal, which was adopted by delegates of the International Pain Summit of the International Association for the Study of Pain in 2010, which states, "it is a breach of fundamental human rights for a health care professional to unreasonably leave a person in serious pain."

Yet in Canada, Somerville pointed out, "only 16 - 30 per cent of people who need palliative care actually get it. So the first thing we've got to do is pressure government and hospitals and institutions to get fully adequate palliative care for everyone who needs it."

Somerville concluded by referencing Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche. "The ethical tone of our society is not set by how it treats its strongest, most powerful, most privileged members, but by how it treats those who are weakest, most vulnerable and in need. We need to reopen a sense of enchantment with the world — we need to reclaim amazement, wonder and awe and put into practice a little sign of love."



Tim Yaworski

ROBB NASH — Robb Nash (right) and his band sang and spoke to students at Bishop James Mahoney High School Dec. 2 in Saskatoon. Having survived a serious head injury in a motor vehicle accident at 17, Nash recovered and started a successful musical career. He walked away from a recording contract to focus on spreading his message of hope and inspiration to high school students, prisoners and other vulnerable youth. He speaks on bullying, addiction, self-harm and suicide. He has spoken to some million youth across Canada.

Sion Academy plans 100th reunion in 2017

By E. Kennedy and M. Falby

SASKATOON — The Friends of Sion are planning a reunion of all former students of Sion Academy to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Sion in Saskatoon. The reunion will be held on the 2017 Labour Day weekend at the Cathedral of the Holy Family.

“The Sisters of Sion have generously made a huge contribution to Catholic education in our city and in the lives of their students. We want to honour and celebrate them. We are all getting older, as are our much-loved teachers, and this will probably be the last general reunion of our academy,” said Elaine Zakreski, a Sion alumna and chair of The Friends of Sion.

On Aug. 21, 1917, a story in the Saskatoon *Daily Star* announced the arrival to the city of the Sisters of Sion. “The large white house on the corner of Spadina Crescent and 21st Street is undergoing a complete renovation,” stated the article. “Altogether, the appearance of the house has been so greatly improved it simply had to have a name, so the sisters have named it Rosary Hall.”

By 1919, the sisters had acceded to a request from the Catholic community to open a boarding school for girls. The *Star* reported on Aug. 22 that the sisters would open their school



Sisters of Sion

SION ACADEMY — Students of Sion Academy in the 1920s; the school was operated by the Sisters of Sion in Saskatoon from 1919 to 1967. A reunion of former students is planned to mark the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Sion in the community.

on Sept. 9, 1919, for girls in Grades 1 - 6. “The convent is beautifully located in the former Drinkle property on the slope of Caswell Hill. It is a large brick residence, with extensive grounds, shade trees, wide verandahs (sic) and every modern convenience,” the newspaper reported.

The school flourished, so that by 1923 a stucco annex was built to accommodate the growing enrolment, and in 1926 a large brick building was constructed, which was named The Academy

area of Saskatoon. When St. Joseph’s School opened, the Sisters of Sion were asked to take charge. From that day, members of the community formed part of the staff in many of Saskatoon’s separate schools.

Every year from 1934 to 1963 the sisters operated a summer catechism school for about 200 students who were housed at the academy. In 1937 sisters started to accompany priests to their Sunday missions to teach the children after mass. After 1963 some of the sisters went to various parishes to give classes. Sion Academy was also used to house the bishop and his clergy for their annual retreats. For several years the CWL held their retreats at the convent.

Planning the reunion for September 2017 is difficult because it is hard to find former students. “Most Sionians married and changed their names, and that added to the fact that the youngest of our alumnae are now 68 years old makes finding everyone a huge task,” said committee member Eleanor Kennedy.

Those who may know someone who attended Sion Academy between 1919 and the final graduation in 1967 are urged to contact the committee, added Marikay Falby. Contacts can be found online at <http://www.sion-reunion2017.org/>



OSU

URSULINE DIES — Sister Helen Hoffart, OSU (Prelate), died at St. Angela Merici Residence in Saskatoon Nov. 23 at the age of 101. She lived a long and interesting life in service to the church and to her religious community in formation and as local leader, as well as in her profession as teacher and artist. Her missionary dream was realized when she taught in La Loche in Northern Saskatchewan, and again when she went to Swaziland, Africa, working with handicapped people in the rehabilitation centre at St. Joseph’s mission near Manzini. She is remembered for her appreciation of creation, her stamina and her commitment to her call.

Campion kicks off 100th anniversary in Regina

By Joanne Kozlowski

REGINA — Campion College officially kicked off the start of yearlong 100th anniversary celebrations with the opening of new and enhanced spaces designed to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities throughout the college building.

“We are very excited to mark the launch of our 100th anniversary year with the opening of the new entryway and elevator. As a Jesuit college, we are committed to creating a barrier-free environment for all and the completion of this project brings us much closer to that goal,” says Dr. John Meehan, SJ, president of the college.

The project allowed the college to address many of the deferred maintenance needs of its 50-year-old building, and to better meet the demands placed on college programs and services by a growing university campus. The project includes the replacement and relocation of its elevator, the addition of spacious entryways at each floor, direct access into the college building, improvements to fire/life safety throughout, and the creation of an underground pedestrian corridor and service

tunnel that connects Campion College to a University of Regina residence tower.

“The underground pedestrian corridor is an example of the strong partnership and collaboration between the University of Regina and its federated colleges. Thanks to joint efforts of our two institutions, we were able to make even greater improvements to accessibility on campus than originally imagined,” says James Gustafson, executive director, Campion College.

The project is funded in part by contributions to previous annual campaigns, as well as a donation from the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus, Regina councils, that allowed for the purchase of a wheelchair lift at the entrance of the underground pedestrian corridor. The Ministry of Advanced Education provided assistance through the Preventative Maintenance and Renewal Fund, which enabled the college to move ahead with and complete the project.

Campion College was founded in 1917 as the Catholic College of Regina. The college originally began as a secondary school, and later offered undergraduate Arts courses as a junior college of the University of Saskatchewan. In 1965, Campion became a federated college of the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, which is now the University of Regina. With the closure of the high school in 1975, Campion College became solely an undergraduate college at the University of Regina. Campion is the only Jesuit undergraduate college in Canada, and a centre of educa-

tional excellence offering academic programs and services in partnership with the University of Our Lady of Sion. The academy operated as a private school until 1967.

Through the years, the Sisters of Sion assumed major roles in providing instruction in catechism throughout the diocese, starting in 1920 in the Nutana

of Regina, Luther College, and First Nations University of Canada.

Lord’s generosity is immense

Continued from page 3

that started at baptism,” Gagnon said. “Faith is all about communion; every sacrament is a sacrament of communion with Jesus Christ and at the very centre is the eucharist; communion.”

The archbishop said a challenge for catechists is renewal. “Cradle Catholics get used to holy things and that’s why we have to be renewing, renewing, renewing.”

Young people, especially the very young, the archbishop said, “have a natural openness to the supernatural. That’s why Jesus loves them.” But many older children, he said, “don’t know how to live the faith; simple things like church on Sunday, or the liturgical seasons.”

“The Lord’s generosity is immense,” Gagnon said, as he spoke of Matthew 13 and the Parable of the Sower. He said some seeds are well-planted but need watering; in other places the soil is not so good and needs some fertilizer; other seed lands on rocky ground.

“Jesus is the seed on the world, always in abundance, in all climates, on all terrains. The sower knows the difficulty of sowing seeds but knows each seed has potential, the harvest will come. We can recall in our own hearts some difficult conditions. We are grateful to those who have planted seeds in us.”

The archbishop listed five objectives for a catechist:

1. To promote the knowledge of the faith, to know Christ and to live a sacramental life.
2. To provide a liturgical education. To teach how saints are heroes, to know the mass; “The more we understand about the mass the more we appreciate it.”
3. To encourage moral formation with respect to others and ourselves.
4. To learn about personal prayer and to study the Our Father and others (Hail Mary, Glory Be and the Creed) to know by heart. “Talk to God as you talk to a good friend and also listen to God.”
5. Formation of community life, to be aware that we are a part of a great community called a church.

“Do the best you can and do not be too discouraged if it doesn’t turn out,” Gagnon said. “Prepare well. Have recourse to prayer at all times and when you pray recognize Christ is there, without him we can do nothing.”

The archbishop confessed; “I’ve always found prayer difficult. I’d rather read or hear music, that’s much easier, but prayer demands our attention. When it is difficult, the Holy Spirit is present and the rewards are there.”

“All pastoral activity is found in the ministry of presence,” he said, “and catechism is a ministry of presence.”

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Author hides message of hope in bleak landscape

By Mike Mastromatteo

TORONTO (CNS) — Canadian author David Adams Richards seems unafraid to include issues like the existence of evil, sin and redemption in his extensive body of work.

A native of Newcastle, New Brunswick, Richards, 66, has drawn extensively on his often-hardscrabble life experience in the rustic Miramichi region of the province to produce a collection of prose that speaks of sacrifice, endurance and faith.

Richards is a Catholic writer who does not refer to himself quite that way.

“I deal with Catholicism because I am a Catholic,” Richards told Catholic News Service. “It is what I believe, so it is a central part of my work, but strangely I don’t think of myself as a Catholic writer. I am a writer of books first and foremost. I know others think of my work as the work of a Catholic writer. I don’t mind that, but I don’t think of myself like that.”

In the early 1970s, Richard studied briefly at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, but quickly became disenchanted with the elitism and secular “group think” that seemed to prevail in academic circles of the day. He pursued writing full time and soon adopted themes

Mastromatteo is a Toronto writer and editor.

and narratives that would prove unpopular to certain segments of Canada’s literary insiders.

Since publishing his first novel, *The Coming of Winter* in 1974, Richards has produced 15 novels, a book of poetry, three dramas and two works of short stories. He has also authored half a dozen non-fiction works, including *Hockey Dreams: Memories of a Man Who Couldn’t Play* (1996).

His 2001 work, *Mercy Among the Children*, similarly based on the lives and struggles of residents in the primarily Catholic Miramichi region, was a co-winner of the Giller Prize, awarded annually for general excellence in Canadian fiction.

In addition to highlighting the struggles of working-class Catholics in his native Miramichi area, Richards’ work often defends the ideals of religious faith and takes aim at some of the early proponents of what came to be regarded as politically correct thinking.

The author’s views are revealed in the description of Alex Chapman, a protagonist in the 2007 novel, *The Lost Highway*. Chapman is a former priest who struggles to rationalize a loss of personal integrity and eventually becomes a party to theft and murder.

“Alex Chapman believed that man was the creator of his own destiny. He dressed warmly because of it, made sure he took aspirin and vitamins and blood pressure pills. He had millions of intellectuals who agreed with him;

the Canadian broadcast radio defined him and them every day as being the most rational and astute, and even the ones willing to save the world from itself. Sanctity of the faith was almost always laughed at. He was devoted especially to the rights of women and First Nations people. He was devoted especially to exposed social ills that others had created. He laughed at all religion as superstition. And if anyone called him on it he said: ‘I was a priest so I should know.’ He mocked G.K. Chesterton and C.S Lewis and applauded Dan Brown.”

Despite the variety of his writing, it is primarily as a novelist that Richards has carved a niche

for himself amid an often dismissive Canadian literary elite. His most recent novel, *Principles to Live By* (2016) is a tale of a protagonist who makes many discoveries on life’s journey, but is still looking for answers as his time runs short.

Tony Tremblay, a professor of English at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, where he also is Canada Research Chair in New Brunswick Studies, is one observer who celebrates Richards’ resolve and dedication to his art. The author of a critical biography, *David Adams Richards of the Miramichi*, (2010), Tremblay said his subject continues to fight an uphill literary and artistic battle.

“Yes, Richards has suffered, partly because he has chosen the narrative of suffering,” Tremblay told CNS. “Richards has chosen to champion and also be the underdog in the larger moral drama of his time. Religion and spirituality are suffering terribly at the moment because of fundamentalists on the left and right. Personal spirituality has been maligned by those who associate it with the alternative practices of the ’60s, and collective worship — the Christian churches — have been co-opted by the evangelical fundamentalists and the Catholic right. Most people want nothing to do with either practice, and choose to opt out, which is possible today in ways not possible even a decade ago. For a writer who has been labelled ‘Catholic,’ the assumption is that he is aligned with the radical right.”

Tremblay suggested a lack of appreciation of writers such as Richards stems, in part, from society’s growing distaste for “moral correctives.” People are weary of the judgment and scolding inherent in such messages, Tremblay adds.

“That’s why a writer like Richards, more than earlier Catholic writers like Walker Percy or Flannery O’Connor, attracts such oppositional response. Readers either love his work or hate it. There is no in-between.”

For his part, Richards has suc-



CNS /courtesy Penguin Random House Canada
CANADIAN NOVELIST — David Adams Richards poses for a photo in this undated image.

— WRITERS, page 9

To be a sports fan is a good distraction from the troubles of the world

By Caitlin Ward

The Spanish words my sister knows can be divided into two categories: the names of small animals, and words related to soccer. The first category has come about largely because she

La Roja Baila
By Sergio Ramos and Niña Pastori
(an excerpt)

periodically asks me how you say bunny (*conejito*), or little bear (*osito*), or turtle (*tortuga*). Later, she will call a member of our family her *tortugita preciosa* (precious little turtle). The second category is down to how often we watch soccer games with Spanish commentary. Even with the most basic understanding of soccer or Spanish, it’s hard not to pick up the words they say over and over: *pelota* (ball), *el campo* (the field), *peligroso* (dangerous), and of course, *gol* (goal).

My Spanish is better than hers, but we both miss most of the commentary. It’s an occupational hazard of following the

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

Spanish soccer league, *La Liga* — most people who watch it are native Spanish speakers, so there’s not much call for English language commentary unless it’s one of the more famous teams. Of course, we don’t follow one of the more famous teams, like Real Madrid or Barcelona FC. We follow the lesser-known and less successful Atletico Madrid, because — well, to be honest, it’s a rather complicated and winding story that’s not of much interest to people who don’t follow soccer, so I’ll spare you the details.

The point is, though, that we watch a lot of soccer. We talk a lot about soccer, too. I commiserated with her when her favourite player retired young because his arthritis had gotten the best of him. We rant about the misuse of statistics in the game. We have long and serious conversations about the poor choices the Spanish national team’s managers have been making this year. Well, mostly, she’s annoyed that Fernando Torres wasn’t called up for Euro 2016, and I don’t see why Cesc Fabregas has been dropped for the World Cup qualifiers. When I was helping her pack up her belongings last week, we put some serious thought into which team jerseys she would take with her to England. She settled on her old No. 5 Liverpool FC jersey (Daniel Agger) and her No. 9 Spain jersey (Fernando Torres). I am keeping the rest in

trust for her until she can ship the rest of her belongings across the Atlantic.

The last game we watched together was three day before she moved to England to be with her husband. It was the Madrid derby — Atletico versus Real — and for our side, it was a disaster. Our father retreated upstairs as we commandeered our parents’ living room to eat cookies and yell expletives at the television for the better part of two hours. I’m not sure he understands where this fervour has

La la la,la,la (Red One)
La la la la la . . .

Gritaremos con más fuerza una vez más,
Vamos a ponerle ganas.

Pon tu alma, pon tus sueños a volar,
Ganaremos la batalla.

Sobre el campo y el terreno está el colour
Que nosotros defendemos.
Por la ‘Roja’ moriré, soy español.
Con orgullo lucharemos.

Soñaremos por tí, lucharemos hasta el fin
Y te haremos sentir que la ‘Roja’ juega y canta.

CHORUS (x2)
España ey ey!
Cantamos gol gol!
España ey ey!
La roja baila

come from.

To be honest, I’m not sure I understand where it’s come from, either. I’ve always been a little wary of sports culture: the huge sums of money invested in it, the sexism of professional sports, the way it distracts us from the world’s problems. The way it creates some of the world’s problems, too, if you look at the debacle that was the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, or the hideous things happening with the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

And yet. And yet. There I was, yelling at Cristiano Ronaldo for being such a *cabron*, worrying that Filipe Luis had been kicked in the face yet again, and being secretly grateful that Alvaro Morata and Sergio Ramos were both out with injuries so it didn’t complicate my negative feelings toward Real Madrid.

Morata and Ramos play on the Spanish national team as well as Real Madrid, you see, so in certain contexts I like them. They both made valiant efforts at the 2016 Euros, though Spain was eliminated from the competition quite early. The Spanish national team’s real triumph this year, so far as I’m concerned, was the song next to this col-

umn, *La Roja Baila*. In addition to being one of the best defenders in the world, it turns out that Sergio Ramos is also a gifted singer. This year, the team released a song for Euro 2016. It’s more silly than properly good, and the music video demonstrates that you can be both Spanish and a very talented soccer player, and still have absolutely no sense of rhythm. But the song is upbeat and hopeful, and it’s contributed a lot to my sister’s Spanish vocabulary. Now, she’s learning about struggling (*luchar*) and dreaming (*soñar*) and singing (*cantar*).

It’s a complicated business in one sense, but in another, it’s really not. If you ask any sports fan why they watch, the answer makes a lot of sense. My officemate loves the Blue Jays because he watched them with his dad growing up. One colleague watched the Jays with her grandfather from the age of 12, and another has a love-hate relationship with the Edmonton Oilers because though he can’t stand what they do, that’s his hometown team. My brother-in-law supports Hull City because that’s where he’s from. And I watch Atletico Madrid games, because even though my sister and I once again live on opposite sides of the Atlantic, I know we’ll be watching them at the same time. It’s almost like watching them together.

In the blue light of two masterful movies

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Back in January as concerns were being voiced about “Oscars so white,” Nate Parker’s intense dramatization of a 19th-century slave revolt, provocatively titled *The Birth of a Nation*, took the Sundance festival by storm. But by the time of the movie’s October release, controversy over Parker’s own past — he’d been found innocent on a charge of sexual assault many years earlier — overshadowed and dimmed its prospects. Instead, another film by an

Moonlight (U.S.)
Elle
(France/German/Belgium)

African-American director has emerged to great acclaim, Barry Jenkins’ *Moonlight* (<http://moonlight-movie.com/>), to be joined later this month by Denzel Washington’s *Fences*.

Adapted from Tarell Alvin McCraney’s play “In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue,” *Moonlight* follows the boyhood to manhood evolution of Chiron, the only child of a single mother in the tough Liberty City neighbourhood of Miami. It is also a movie wholly immersed in the African-American experience.

The first of three chapters begins with the diminutive 10-year-old Chiron (Alex Hibbert) being chased by other boys who tease him with the nickname “Little” and call him soft. However, Chiron finds a protector in Juan (Mahershala Ali), a burly Cuban American drug dealer who takes a shine to the “little man” and brings him home to his girlfriend Teresa (Janelle Monáe). Juan becomes a sort of surrogate father if not role model to Chiron. Their place is a refuge from an unstable home life complicated by the fact that his mother Paula (Naomie Harris) is a crack user and customer of Juan, resorting to sex work to support her addiction. We get the sense of a wide-eyed boy, a target of schoolyard taunts of “faggot,” anxiously looking for adult guidance where he can find it.

In the next chapter Chiron (Ashton Sanders) is a skinny reticent 16-year-old who gets pushed around by high school bullies. His mother takes her troubles out on him so he sometimes seeks comfort at Teresa’s place. The adolescent Chiron is also wrestling with his sexuality. One night on a beach, a more confident schoolmate named Kevin (Jharell Jerome), who’s bragged about female conquests, seduces him into a homosexual encounter. When Kevin, who nicknames him “Black,” then takes part in a schoolyard beating, the biggest bruise Chiron suffers is of betrayal. In his closeted confusion he strikes back leading to an arrest for assault. He seems set to follow the troubled path of so many African American young men.

In the final chapter a decade later, Chiron (now played by Trevante Rhodes) has moved to Atlanta and bulked up. He’s become on the outside the macho black man, dealing drugs and imitating the style of Juan — the fancy car, the diamond ear studs and gold neck chain. But on the inside he’s still hurting. A possibility of healing is suggested by two visits — to his mother in what appears to be a rehab facility, and a return to Miami to reconnect with Kevin (André Holland), now an ex-con on probation working as a cook in a restaurant. Kevin also has a little son with a woman from whom he’s estranged. When Kevin probes Chiron with the question “Who is you?” their reunion moves from wary awkwardness to a moment of tender reconciliation and acceptance. A poignant last scene gives hope of overcoming the ghetto past — what Jenkins has called the effects of “bad nurturing” (the character of Paula is partly based on his and McCraney’s own mothers) and “the performance of toxic masculinity.”

While a parallel might be drawn with Linklater’s masterpiece *Boyhood*, Jenkins, who uses three different actors over a single shooting period, is focused on



A24

MOONLIGHT — *Moonlight*, a film by African-American director Barry Jenkins, has emerged to great acclaim, writes Gerald Schmitz.

portraying a minority lower-class existence on the margins of American society. He does so with immense skill and sensitivity.

Everything about this movie is exceptional — the writing, the performances, the fluid camera angles, the music, all adding up to a profound feeling of authenticity. Jenkins has struggled as a filmmaker. This is only his second feature after an absence of eight years. Yet he has created the year’s best film to date, one that is destined to become a classic of the American cinema.

Controversial Dutch director Paul Verhoeven’s *Elle*, which premiered at Cannes, isn’t a “blue movie” but, be warned, its take on the subject of sexual violence is certainly provocative. Adapted by David Birke from the Philippe Djian novel *Oh...*, the protagonist is a middle-aged woman, Michèle Leblanc, the co-owner of a video game business steeped in sexually violent content, and the daughter of a now elderly prisoner convicted of mass murder (27 victims) when she was 10 years old. (There’s a suggestion of traumatic psychopathic effects on the child.) Michèle lives alone with a charcoal-coloured cat. Isabelle Huppert, magnificent in *Things to Come* playing an aging single woman who inherits a black cat, is even more amazing in the challenging role of Michèle.

The movie opens to a shockingly brutal scene as Michèle is raped by a black-clad intruder in a ski mask while the cat looks on.

It goes unreported, as she wants nothing to do with police. She simply cleans up and orders sushi. In the following days she carries on stoically, although she does take precautions — getting checked out at a hospital, changing the locks, buying pepper spray and a weapon, later learning to shoot. She maintains a remarkable sangfroid in the midst of relationships that are troubled to say the least — with her hated father, her ex-husband Richard and mother Irène who’ve taken young lovers, her hot-headed son Vincent and his unstable pregnant girlfriend, the young male video designers over whom she presides. She’s also having an affair behind the back of her best friend and business partner Hélène.

The most bizarre and fateful relationship develops with a neighbour, Patrick, a seemingly mild-mannered banker whose wife is a devout Catholic. When she invites them to a Christmas Eve party there’s an extraordinary scene in which Michèle, after flirting with Patrick furtively over dinner, confides the events of her father’s murderous rampage to him while in another room his unsuspecting wife is watching *Midnight Mass* from the Vatican on television.

The tension keeps rising as Michèle suspects the rapist is someone she knows. After a second break-in and assault she fantasizes about one in which she kills her assailant. What happens after his identity is revealed is perhaps the most disturbing of all. Throughout, Michèle’s icy self-possession is something to behold.

Verhoeven has made some awful

exploitative movies. But I’m recommending this one in contrast to those because, however transgressive the territory it explores, *Elle* brilliantly constructs a complex psychological portrait anchored in Huppert’s riveting performance that stands conventional notions of misogyny and revenge on their head. This is a story with a tortured soul you won’t soon forget.

Briefly Noted:
Moana (<http://movies.disney.com/moana>): Disney’s latest animated feature, is a musical delight that centres on Moana Waialiki, a Polynesian princess from a long line of expert navigators who sets out on an ocean journey of epic mythological proportions in order to help her family.

Rules Don’t Apply (<http://www.foxmovies.com/movies/rules-dont-apply>): Warren Beatty makes a modestly entertaining return to the screen after a long absence as director, writer and actor in the role of the eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes. The nostalgic setting is 1958 Hollywood and the bizarre entanglements that follow when a newly arrived innocent young actress under contract to Hughes and her driver, who’s engaged to a devout Christian, fall for each other against Hughes’ rules.

Lion (<http://lionmovie.com/>): This award-winning Australian drama directed by Garth Davis was the “people’s choice” runner-up at the Toronto Film Festival and also stars Dev Patel whose breakthrough role was in *Slumdog Millionaire* which went on to win the 2009 best-picture Oscar after its Toronto festival triumph. The story begins with an impoverished Indian family when five-year-old Saroo (a great child performance by Sunny Pawar) gets separated from his older brother on a train, ending up on the streets of Kolkata where he survives on his wits until taken in by an orphanage. After being adopted by an Australian couple, the Brierleys, he grows to manhood in Tasmania. The adult Saroo (Patel) becomes determined to find his birth family using clues from Google Earth. A remarkable story of powerful emotions, it’s based on the real Saroo Brierley’s autobiographical account of his 25-year journey *A Long Way Home*.



Sony Pictures Classics

PROVOCATIVE FILM — Isabelle Huppert stars in *Elle* by Dutch director Paul Verhoeven. The film isn’t a “blue movie,” writes Gerald Schmitz, “but, be warned, its take on the subject of sexual violence is certainly provocative.”

Writers need to write truth

Continued from page 8

ceeded in overcoming earlier characterizations as a regional or parochial type of writer. The characters in many of Richards’ more recent works often endure hardship, betrayal, violence and exploitation, leading some critics to treat his work as too bleak or insufficiently uplifting. Such responses however, misread Richards’ steadfast reliance on a religious faith that continues to underpin and offer hope to troubled communities.

“I think writers have to try and write the truth to the best of their ability,” Richards said.

“That’s what I do.”

Although much of his work appears at odds with prevailing popular culture, Richards is prepared to carry on. A regular parishioner at St. Dunstan’s Church in Fredericton, Richards has two more books coming out in the next couple of years, and he is busy with a fresh collection of essays.

He directs readers to reflect on Proverbs 31:8-9 (“Open your mouth in behalf of the mute, and for the rights of the destitute; open your mouth, judge justly, defend the needy and the poor!”) to provide some insight into his writing imagination.

Emmanuel — God is indeed with us



Liturgy and Life

Michael Dougherty

Would it have been in late spring when Joseph found out that Mary was “with child”? In a small agricultural village like Nazareth keen-eyed women must have noted Mary’s changed condition. Loose tongues, whispered innuendos must have gotten back to Joseph. In a tradition-bound society this would have pained him very much. Hadn’t they just become engaged. His pledge to marry her couldn’t be taken lightly. As a “righteous man” he didn’t want to “expose her to public disgrace.” He resolved to “dismiss her quietly.” No doubt, though, Mary would suffer no matter how discreet his rejection might be. Surely he would have spent a long troubled night contemplating this action.

He likely would have been resting on a mud-brick sleeping platform covered by a blanket with his robe drawn over him as he sought the relief of sleep. We know from excavations in Nazareth that the houses of most ordinary first-century villagers had rough stone foundations supporting whitewashed mud-brick walls. The basic layout had small rooms with maybe one shuttered window each off a common courtyard. A simple stairway or a ladder would lead up the flat roof which would serve as an outdoor room shaded by hung matting. This would be a work area by day and a sleeping area during the time of summer heat. All Jewish homes would also have had a mezuzah on an entry post proclaiming their faith.

Cool spring nights probably meant that Joseph in his true “tiny house” would have slept indoors. There he had a dream about Mary, the child in her womb, and the Holy

Dougherty is co-chair of the Social Justice Committee at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Spirit. It profoundly changed his life. Joseph then awoke and made his resolution. He “took her as his wife.” Jesus would be born into a family.

The story of Joseph’s acceptance, which we hear again now, has been told for over two millennia. The child Mary was carrying, we hear, would fulfil the words of the prophet Isaiah written a further 700 years before the first Christmas. “And they shall name him Emmanuel which means ‘God is with us.’”

Joseph made his decision. He accepted Mary and would accompany her through the remaining months of her pregnancy. Alone with her in Bethlehem, had he assisted in the birth? Having witnessed the birth of both of my children, images of the birthing pain, the blood and anxiety then followed by the exhilaration of greeting a new baby remain strong for me to this day. This powerful experience left me with an overwhelming sense of obligation, a bond, not only to the new life before me but also to the family that I, my wife, Eva, and our children, had become. And through our family we found our place among our extended family, in community, society and indeed the whole web of life.

Fourth Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 7:10-14 Psalm 24 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-24
December 18, 2016	

As a new father Joseph must have felt similarly united in love to his wife and child. His actions confirmed it. He sheltered this woman whose travails brought forth a new life. He protected this baby. He consciously took on this responsibility and committed himself to help raise this child. He became a father to Jesus.

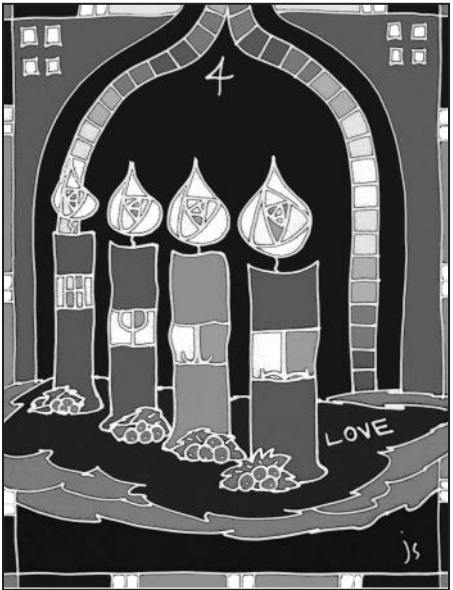
The family Jesus grew up in, we know from later in the Gospel of Matthew as well as in Mark, included James, Joses, Judas, and Simon who are referred to as his brothers. As well we are told that he had sisters also but they remained unnamed by the gospel authors. Some commentators offer that these were maybe Joseph’s children by an unrecorded previous marriage. Others argue that the words “brothers and sisters” actually refer to cousins. Whatever interpretation we accept, we know that Jesus, because of Joseph’s decision, grew up in a large family.

One Spanish expression I have always appreciated is one which refers to the act of giving birth. It is to “*dar luz*” which literally means “to give light.” A small, vulnerable, totally dependent baby coming into the light mirrors our own continual spiritual birthing. We all are vulnerable and in need of succour. We seek the light consciously or unconsciously. Paul tells us that we are “called to belong to Jesus Christ.” We are welcomed into the light of a spiritual family where we can grow confident in God’s limitless love for us. When we deeply feel the security of this attachment, we can also learn to give love without limit.

The hymn

O Come, O Come Emmanuel draws its inspiration from a ninth-century poem and put to music centuries later. As again this Advent season we raise our voices singing its verses, we are pleading to God to “ransom captive Israel,” to “put death’s dark shadows to flight” and to “make safe the way that leads on high.” In the face of life’s adversity and the litany of woes besetting our world today, we need the special gift of awareness of Emmanuel — that God is indeed with us. Just as the small hand of a child seeks out the hand of a parent to guide and comfort them, so too do we need the spiritual hand which is always held out to us to offer hope and solace.

Assuredly Joseph took the hand of Jesus many times as they walked dusty village paths. Just as confidently we need to extend our hand to hold and be held, for indeed God is with us.



Stushie Art

Being awake or alert does not mean living in fear of the end of the world

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



People are forever predicting the end of the world. In Christian circles this is generally connected with speculation around the promise Jesus made at his ascension, namely, that he would be coming back, and soon, to bring history to its culmination and establish God’s eternal kingdom. There have been speculations about the end of the world ever since.

This was rampant among the first generation of Christians. They lived inside a matrix of intense expectation, fully expecting that Jesus would return before many of them died. Indeed, in John’s Gospel, Jesus assures his followers that some of them would not taste death until they had seen the kingdom of God. Initially this was

interpreted to mean that some of them would not die before Jesus returned and the world ended.

And so they lived with this expectation, believing that the world, at least as they knew it, would end before their deaths. Not surprisingly this led to all kinds of apocalyptic musings: What signs would signal the end? Would there be massive alterations in the sun and the moon? Would there be great earthquakes and wars across the world that would help precipitate the end?

Generally, though, the early Christians took Jesus’ advice and believed it was useless and counterproductive to speculate about the end of the world and about what signs would accompany the end. The lesson rather, they believed, was to live in vigilance, in high alert, ready, so that the end, whenever it would come, would not catch them asleep, unprepared, carousing, and drunk.

However, as the years moved on and Jesus did not return, their understanding began to evolve so

that by the time John’s Gospel is written, probably about 70 years after Jesus’ death, they had begun to understand things differently: they now understood Jesus’ promise that some of his contemporaries would not taste death until they had seen the kingdom of God as being fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was, in fact, already back and the world had not ended. And so they began to believe the end of the world was not necessarily imminent.

That didn’t change their emphasis on vigilance, on staying awake, and on being ready for the end. But now that invitation to stay awake and live in vigilance was related more to not knowing the hour of one’s own death. As well, more deeply, the invitation to live in vigilance began to be understood as code for God’s invitation to enter into the fullness of life right now and not be lulled asleep by the pressures of ordinary life, wherein we are consumed with eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage. All of these ordinary things, while good in themselves, can lull us to sleep by keeping us from being truly attentive and grateful within our own lives.

And that’s the challenge that comes down to us: our real worry should not be that the world might suddenly end or that we might unexpectedly die, but that we might live and then die, asleep, that is, without really lov-

ing, without properly expressing our love, and without tasting deeply the real joy of living because we are so consumed by the business and busy pressures of living that we never quite get around to fully living.

Hence being alert, awake, and vigilant in the biblical sense is not a matter of living in fear of the world ending or of our lives ending. Rather, it is a question of having love and reconciliation as our chief concerns, of thanking, appreciating, affirming, forgiving, apologizing, and being more mindful of the joys of living in human community and within the sure embrace of God.

Buddha warned against something he called, “slouching.” We slouch physically when we let our posture break down and become slothful. Any combination of tiredness, laziness, depression, anxiety, tension, over-extension, or excessive pressure can bring down our guard and make our bodies slouch. But that can also happen to us psychologically and morally.

We can let a combination of busyness, pressure, anxiety, laziness, depression, tension, and weariness break down our spiritual posture so that, in biblical terms, we “fall asleep,” we cease being vigilant, we are no longer alert.

We need to be awake spiritually, not slouching. But the end of the world shouldn’t concern us, nor should we worry excessively about when we will die. What we should worry about is in what state our dying will find us. As Kathleen Dowling Singh puts in her book *The Grace in Aging*: “What a waste it would be to enter the time of dying with the same old petty and weary thoughts and reactions running through our mind.”

But, still, what about the question of when the world will end?

Perhaps, given the infinity of God, it will never end. Because when do infinite creativity and love reach their limit? When do they say: “Enough! That’s all! These are the limits of our creativity and love!”

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Smudging ceremony crosses line into spirituality



Everyday Theology

Louise McEwan

Imagine if a public school put up a nativity scene to teach students the Christian view of Christmas, and invited a priest to bless the figurines, the school, and the school community. Parents would accuse the school of promoting Christian beliefs. They would see the blessing as an imposition of those beliefs on their children. The parents would be justified in objecting. The school would have blurred the lines between culture, traditional practices and spiritual beliefs.

When a Port Alberni school held a smudging ceremony, it did just that.

Candice Servatius, a parent at John Howitt Elementary School (JHES), is taking the school district to court. In September 2015, JHES held a smudging ceremony. A teacher told Servatius’s daughter that she must participate. Servatius maintains that the smudging ceremony was religious in nature, that the school violated her religious freedom and breached its duty of neutrality. The Justice centre for Constitutional Freedoms is acting on her behalf.

The school district maintains that the smudging was cultural. It argues that the ceremony fits the mandate of incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into the British Columbia curriculum.

I spoke with an Elder here in the Kootenays about smudging. “It’s cultural, not religious,” she said. She went on to explain that smudging was not (and is not) a universal practice. In some communities, it was practical. It cleansed the air of unpleasant odours and the smoke drove insects away. It may be that the spiritual connotations commonly associated with smudging devel-

oped over time.

Niigaan Sinclair, associate professor and acting head of the Native Studies Department at the University of Manitoba, has a different understanding of smudging. Speaking on the CBC Radio show *The Current*, Sinclair called the ceremony spiritual, but not religious. He described smudging as the taking and burning of medicines to bring them to a person’s emotional, mental, physical, and, usually, spiritual side. He described bringing the smoke to one’s self as a way of committing to a relationship with the earth.

Whether the *Nuu-chah-nulth* smudging at JHES was cultural, spiritual or religious, the school imposed a set of beliefs on its students. This is evident from the contents of the letter that the school sent home to parents to explain the reasons for smudging.

“*Nuu-chah-nulth* people believe strongly that *Hii-Suukish-Tswalk* (everything is one; all is connected). Everything has a spirit and energy that exists beyond the end of one school year and into the next. This will be our opportunity to . . . experience cleansing of energy from previous students in our classroom and previous energy in our classroom and cleanse our own spirits to allow GREAT new experiences to occur for all of us.”

When a school begins to talk about cleansing spirits, it is moving away from something that is strictly cultural in nature into the realm of the sacred.

A group of figurines in a stable tells a story about a baby sleeping in the hay surrounded by animals. There is nothing inherently religious about that. But, blessing the scene illuminates the Christian belief in the incarnation, in God becoming human. An innocuous tableau suddenly becomes a place of reflection for Christian belief.

Smudging to cleanse the air of odours or to chase away mosquitoes falls under culture. Smudging to cleanse spirits communi-

cates a specific set of spiritual beliefs. It crosses the line between culture and religion, between the ordinary and the sacred.

When the City of Saguenay, Quebec, insisted on reciting the Lord’s Prayer before its council meetings, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the state could not use culture, heritage or tradition to justify a religious practice in the public domain.

Public schools, like other state institutions, have a duty of religious neutrality.

It will be unfortunate if this case pits two cultures against one another, and hampers the work of reconciliation. This case is not

about whether schools should teach authentic Aboriginal content. Rather, the question is how to appropriately present that content.

Canadian schools can best support the national task of reconciliation with meaningful, well-developed curriculum. This can include presentations but children do not have to be directly involved. Children can learn about Aboriginal traditions without participating in a ceremony that blurs the lines between culture, religion and spirituality.

When JHES held its smudging ceremony, it imposed a set of spiritual beliefs. And in doing so, it breached the duty of neutrality.



Design Pics

CHRISTMAS TREE SEASON — “. . . freshly cut Christmas trees smelling of stars and snow and pine resin — inhale deeply and fill your soul with wintry night . . .” — John Geddes

Loving gaze focuses on capacity to overcome difficulty

Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



Half of any person is wrong and weak and off the path. Half! The other half is dancing and swimming and flying in the Invisible Joy. — Rumi

Nobody knows what the soul is . . . it comes and goes like the wind over the water. — Mary Oliver

I know we’re not supposed to put God to the test, but sometimes it’s OK to do a little experiment. I was in one of my

Speyer is a Benedictine Oblate as well as an author, subject matter expert for e-therapy, clinical consultant and director of InnerView Guidance International (IGI). He also directs a documentary series entitled GuideLives for the Journey: Ordinary Persons, Extraordinary Pathfinders. <http://www.guidelives.ca/> Connect with Cedric on <https://www.facebook.com/cms94> or via cms94@hotmail.com

favourite places to anonymously bond with “salt of the earth” citizens in a big cosmopolitan city, namely the Costco cafeteria. It gladdens the heart to see a multitude of mostly boisterous ethnic families there, with English rarely overheard. And to screen out anyone thinking of descending from the Trump Tower, hot dogs previously priced at \$2 (including a refillable drink) have since been reduced to \$1.50.

It can get crowded at the close congregation of tables, and when I came back from garnishing my hot dog, a grey-haired gaunt looking man was seated directly across from me, turned sideways.

He acknowledged my arrival with a perfunctory nod; then returned to staring into the cashier-commotion distance, interrupted with vacant *lectio ennui* by the light of his silvery cellphone. His face looked as grim and unforgiving as it gets — not the kind of man who invites striking up a conversation. A frown appeared to be permanently etched on his mouth. His demeanour made it difficult to believe in the divine spark, the pilot light within each of us that can dim to default level or flare with passion, but never goes out.

A sidebar on this spiritual exercise: in training and supervising counsellors, we speak of the *glare* and the *gaze*. “While the ‘glare’ (of assessment) provides valuable insight into self-defeating attitudes and patterns, the ‘gaze’ is focused squarely on the inherent capacity to overcome, transform, or transcend painful life predicaments” (Yaphe, J. & Speyer, C., 2010).

Without infringing on the man’s “personal space” I began silently practising conscious presence and prayerfully directing the gaze of the heart into his energy field. I did this with the intention of sharing the unconditional love available to both of us by virtue

of being made in the image of God. I had no way of knowing what that image of God would be for the man in front of me, yet the kind of enlivening, healing energy I was praying to “send” goes to wherever it is needed, as pure gift, managed by the divine economy. This kind of presence, which Jesus promised to leave with us as his emissaries in the world, dissolves the duality between self and other such that we can simply hold the space for our common humanity. Any needful healing can then unfold in accordance with the mystery of readiness — it has a seed-planting life of its own. Our job is simply to ask God to “Make me a channel of your peace” as per the prayer of St. Francis.

After a while of doing my best to keep the channel open, and then getting ready to leave, the man spontaneously turned toward me, his face transfigured by a big, crinkled smile and said he was waiting for his wife. We joked about how waiting to meet the love of his life in the first place still involved waiting . . . some 40 years later. As we parted, I thanked him for the gourmet dining company and we blessed each other on the rest of our respective life journeys.

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Porch Light

Stephen Berg



In all the years I’ve contemplated upon “desiring mercy not sacrifice” — that seemingly cryptic thing Jesus said, which is at the heart of human survival, well-being and peace — there’s never been a clearer example of “sacrifice,” and there’s never been a clearer example of what is necessary for healing.

Sacrifice, here, is that ancient mode of creating and maintaining group cohesion through any form of scapegoating violence, sacrificial violence, redemptive violence — from the ritual slaughtering of animals on altars to the exiling or lynching, actually or figuratively, of some supposed identifiable guilty party, coterie, company, or community; more concretely: anything from the schoolyard or office-clique shunning of one who doesn’t quite fit, to the pogroms of

Berg, a freelance writer and poet, currently lives in Victoria, B.C., where he also volunteers at Our Place, a care facility for homeless people. His poetry and prose have been in staged performances and have appeared in such publications as the Edmonton Journal, Orion, Geez, and Earth Shine. He blogs at www.growmercy.org

the old Russian Empire. The election south of us was won through a relentless and monstrous application of this kind of “sacrifice,” this scapegoating mechanism. Scapegoated were: Mexicans, Muslims, LGBTQ people, people of colour, women, and of course the elitist establishment and its overlord.

On the other side were the avant-garde-cloaked vilifiers of the Vilifier. And with them, an entire industry setup to smear the “basket of deplorables” — the name given to the supporters of the Scapegoater, from, well, another scapegoater.

In the meantime, ordinarily better people found their baser bents and were swept up in the fascination of the *old sacred*. And all the cultist flare was there: the neo-nationalist chants of “Build that wall!”; the allegiance to an imagined past and the promised kingdom of future greatness; solidarity within the new salvific circle, against all those real or imagined fiends who’ve made life hell; and the mantle of a new and purer identity, gained through the expulsion of all that contaminates and opposes the good and the white.

Not that there weren’t deep

legitimate grievances — there certainly were — enough to give traction to what seemed an unthinkable result, for what seemed an unthinkable candidate.

Unfortunately, tragically, there were and are real victims, and now the potential is great for many more. Already the election has given licence to a growing fringe, resulting in a surge of abuses, slurs, and physical violence toward all those targeted minorities.

And yet, thousands of people showed up at “Love Still Trumps Hate” marches across the U.S. There is hope.

As naive and seemingly facile as it sounds, *mercy* is the only path to healing, peace and learning love. Mercy is a dynamic that allows us to see our own inner basement, our culpability, our susceptibility to the mechanism, and turn away from any kind of reciprocal violence.

While sacrificial violence always requires more violence, always feeds violence, mercy relaxes us into kindness and love, releases us to desire the well-being and joy of our neighbour here, and across the borders.

The choice, perhaps, has never been clearer — mercy or sacrifice: sacrificial violence will finally collapse on its inherent escalation, taking us with it. Mercy will bring us to the garden.



CNS/David Alire Garcia, Reuters

DESIRING MERCY — Wooden crosses in Nogales, Mexico, lean on the border fence with the United States Nov. 10. The crosses represent lives lost during migration. During the American presidential election, Donald Trump spoke repeatedly about building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. “While sacrificial violence always requires more violence, always feeds violence, mercy relaxes us into kindness and love, releases us to desire the well-being and joy of our neighbour here, and across the borders,” writes Stephen Berg.

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Handwritten recipes reveal more than ingredients

Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



Some time ago I discovered an old notebook of my mother's handwritten recipes, but set it into a cupboard and forgot about it until recently. Last weekend my daughters Janice and Allison and I were discussing Christmas menu plans and recipes as we prepared a batch of antipasto, and I remembered the book.

There are all kinds of things in it — handwritten recipes, recipes cut and pasted from magazines, recipe cards given to Mom by friends.

There's a typewritten recipe for Vanilla Mousse on floral sta-

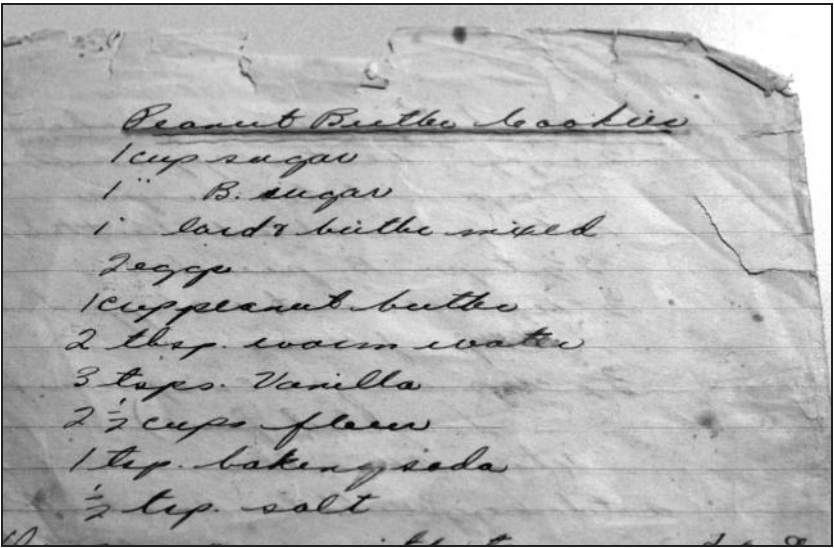
tionery. I remember well how we came to have it. Mom occasionally played the organ at the Elizabethan Convent for the sisters' masses, and sometimes our family attended too. Once in awhile we were invited to stay afterward for a meal or snack. On one occasion they served "vanilla mousse" for dessert (the sisters were skilled in their baking) and I was enthusiastic in my praise. One day my mom came home after visiting at the convent and she had the recipe — one of the sisters had given it to her because "Maureen liked it so much."

Memories of kindness taped inside a recipe book.

Looking at someone's handwriting brings the person's presence into the room in a strange and powerful way. Mom's writing runs smoothly across the page in gentle, even letters — as gentle as she was. She would have enjoyed being with us as we chopped ingredients for antipasto.

Mom was a good "basic" cook in that our meals were never spicy or with unusual ingredients, so it's not surprising to me that many of the recipes in this book are baking recipes, and she was a wonderful baker: lemon squares, pumpkin cake, date loaf, crumb cake. On one page was a recipe for Light Apricot Fruitcake with a note: "Tony loved this/92." Tony was my dad.

The real surprise was turning a



M. Weber

BURIED TREASURE — Discovering a decades-old cookie recipe from my Auntie Marg was like discovering an archeological treasure.

page to find two smaller loose pieces of paper tucked inside — from a "scribbler," as my mother would have called it. The two pages are like yellowed parchment with tattered edges and must be decades old. But the writing isn't my mother's. They're pages from my Auntie Marg's baking notebook. I don't know what they were doing there, but it was like discovering an archeological treasure.

Auntie Marg's cookies were legendary. She always had baking in her tin on the cupboard, but her annual array of Christmas cookies was a wonder to behold — almond shortbread crescents dipped in chocolate, ginger sparklers, jam-jams, pinwheels (my favourite), Santa-, bell-, and star-shaped sugar cookies decorated with coloured icing (Santa's jacket always turned out a bright fuchsia, which seemed a more bold fashion statement than red) and sprinkles, neapolitan ice box cookies (I loved the cylinders of cookie dough wrapped in waxed paper and stacked like logs in the freezer).

I had been lamenting that I was missing the page of my little Robin Hood cookbook with the peanut butter cookie recipe, and here was Auntie Marg's in her own handwriting on paper so delicate I lifted it carefully lest it crumble in my fingers. The pinwheel cookie recipe was there too.

Auntie Marg died Dec. 7, 2004. Weeks later, shortly before Christmas that year, each family received a labelled container of assorted Christmas cookies, baked, packaged and frozen by Auntie Marg.

Handwriting reveals more than mere ingredients. Auntie Marg's curly letters remind me of the '50s cookie and cake illustrations in my vintage Robin Hood Flour cookbook — her letters jump off the page with the spirit of love she baked into all of her creations. In my mother's flowing script I can smell the cinnamon-and-cloves warmth of her crumb cake — simple and comforting.

My mother's book has pages that are clean, and pages that are spattered with batter and grease — the indications of family favourites made over and over. When I think of how I cook now, it's with either a laptop or an iPad perched on the counter. iPads are wiped clean if they are spattered. There are no dog-eared pages or grease marks to indicate which recipes are favoured. No "Russ loved this one" in the margins.

What will my children have to look through when I'm gone? There aren't that many examples of my handwriting around the house.

Recently I went away for a weekend to visit my kids, and left Russ a note on the counter with some cat-care instructions. A few hours after I left I received a text: "I can't read your writing beside the bowls on the island." I texted back that it was instructions about Perdy's canned cat food and Linus' kibble, as well as something about the fresh water I hoped he would give them before he went to bed. Oh, he said. He thought it was a message from a client who had called, but he couldn't make out the name.

It's probably good I don't handwrite any of my recipes.

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Homeless man makes impact

Homeless people don’t usually get a good press in our society.

So, the story of the death of a homeless man in San Francisco strikes a warm chord in the heart, especially at this season of the year when we prepare to honour Jesus who was born in a stable because there was “no room in the inn.”

As reported on page 16, Thomas Myron Hooker lived on the streets of San Francisco the last 20 years of his life. But his personality and gentle spirit endeared him to the parishioners of the Star of the Sea Catholic Church.

They brought him food and some gave their money to him instead of to the church.

Hooker spent a part of each day praying in the back pews of the church. Otherwise, he’d be found pushing a shopping cart along the street and talking to himself. His “house” was a tarp on a street corner.

“Thomas was a kind and friendly soul, always had a smile on his face, always had something complimentary to say to you,” a parishioner noted at the funeral. A funeral home donated his casket and prepared his body for burial. A collection was taken up at the funeral mass to provide him a proper burial.

“The meaning of being homeless beyond shelter is when you lack a home, lack a family who under-

stands you. You are homeless when you don’t feel you belong anywhere,” said pastor Rev. Joseph Illo. “Many of us who live in more comfort are more homeless than Thomas was. He had a home with us.”

Hundreds of people attended the funeral. Illo eulogized Hooker as “a kind of patron saint of the homeless.”

Born in Trinidad, Hooker emigrated to the United States. His story stands in marked contrast to the current mood in America about other immigrants. — PWN

First American martyr

Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of Rev. Stanley Rother of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, making him the first martyr born in the United States. The announcement was made Dec. 2, and it clears the way for his beatification and eventual canonization.

Rother was born in 1935 on his family’s farm near Okarche, Oklahoma.

He was assigned by the archdiocese in 1968 to go to Guatemala. There he helped the people build a small hospital, school and its first Catholic radio station. He was beloved by the locals, who called him “Padre Francisco.”

Many priests and religious in Guatemala became targets during the country’s 1960 - 1996 civil war as

government forces cracked down on leftist rebels supported by the rural poor. Hundreds of thousands of Catholics were kidnapped and killed during the state-sponsored oppression, normally after being placed on death lists.

Rother came home to Oklahoma after his name was put on a death list, but he returned to Guatemala since, he said, “The shepherd cannot run.”

A few days after his return, he was shot in the rectory of his church in Santiago Atitlan. He was 46. Government officials blamed the Catholic Church for the unrest in the country that they said led to his death. On the day he died, troops also killed 13 townspeople and wounded 24 others in the isolated village 80 kilometres west of Guatemala City.

The traditional criterion for being called a martyr is to be killed in *odium fidei* or “in hatred of the faith.” Pope Francis expanded the definition in 2015 for the case of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero.

He said one of the questions about Romero’s case was whether *odium fidei* could be proven only against a person’s beliefs or also against the good works the person did because of his beliefs.

Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, author of a 2015 biography of Rother, “The Shepherd Who Didn’t Run: Fr. Stanley Rother, Martyr from Oklahoma,” says he’s an example of the difference one person can make. — PWN

Trump election reveals the true ugliness of our culture of death

Soul Mending

Yvonne A. Zarowny



“No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon (money).”
— Matthew 6:24

My last column began an exploration of how a too-narrow conceptualization of “pro-life” helps perpetuate our culture of

death.

It was prompted by the persistence of “pro-life” still being falsely equated with “anti-choice” legislation by many clerics and the Knights of Columbus in the 2016 March for Life.

With some clerics and Supreme Knight Carl Anderson stat-

ing in the 2016 U.S. election cycle that the only issue Catholics were to consider is abortion, this exploration continues.

Given *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis insistence on integral human development that respects life with dignity for all God’s Creation, and the threats with which we are confronted, why do some powerful Catholics persist in reducing our rich tradition to a single issue?

These threats include:

- the existential threat to our and other species caused by the environmental devastation of a development mode which requires infinite growth on a finite planet;

- a socially engineered economy intentionally designed to siphon wealth and power to a tiny few while risking the common good of all;

- the greatest number of people in human history displaced or seeking refuge; and

- an increasingly chaotic world socially, politically and economically due to the above.

Neither the Clintons nor the Obamas actually addressed these.

Like Paul Martin and Justin Trudeau, they gave a polite veneer to a mode of development which systemically enables the corporate elite to murder people, destroy communities, sue governments and rape the Earth — for profit.

The arrogant, lying, bullying

Donald Trump ripped off that veneer.

Being represented to the world by such a man is traumatizing for many Americans. This is evidenced by the throngs demonstrating against his manipulation of people’s valid fears, anger and disenchantment with their political elite.

To me, he more accurately represents how many in the world experience the manner in which the U.S. and “the west” use its enormous economic and military power.

By ripping off the veneer, Trump revealed to Americans and the world the true ugliness of our culture of death.

Once again people realize we live in a “post-truth” world where emotional manipulation rules. We have been living in such a world since the turn of the last century.

That is when the British, then the Americans and then global corporations started to use the

We can’t take charities for granted

By Milton Friesen, Hamilton

Imagine you’re the crew of a ship sailing from Italy to Canada. You arrive in Hamilton, Ont., only to discover that complications related to the sale of your vessel means it’s in limbo in the harbour, you with it. Who will look after you?

This happened to the crew of the 9,000-ton Italian freighter *Ardita* in April. The ship is still there.

The crew still gets paid, and is free to come and go. However, the crew has many unmet needs. So members of the Mission to Seafarers, organized in 1856 in England, stepped in to help the crew of 14. At its founding, the organization recognized the varied needs of sailors, and sought to bring comfort, hope and material support to that most intrepid of workforces. The long chain of care stretching from 1856 reached the *Ardita* crew and offered phone calls home, Internet, recognition of their plight and other supports.

The common good that makes our lives both possible and en-

riched does not happen by chance. We organize ourselves in order to learn, care for our needs, provide health care, worship, express ourselves artistically and myriad other goals. This organizing also includes formally registered charities.

Charities are legally structured to prevent a single individual from controlling, owning or disposing of common organizational goods. Built into this structure is a legal framework of collective, public benefit decision-making. It’s immensely important to recognize that we’ve learned over time to create rules and structures that allow the accumulation of goods and resources devoted to care and non-monetary enrichment.

We don’t need a legally-registered charity to organize a meal for a new mother or help a neighbour dig out a car after a snowstorm. But many forms of caring and cultural enrichment need lots of people working over time to be fully realized, like organizing an art gallery, establishing a library or building a cathedral. For these projects, charitable structures multiply the common good and promote continuity.

Charities don’t just exist because of formal endorsement

by the state. Collective care existed long before encoded laws and bureaucrats. We’ve taken that im-

— PROBLEM, page 15

An 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.

— PROPAGANDA, page 15



CNS/Fredy Builes, Reuters

Friesen is Social Cities program director at think tank Cardus. www.troymedia.com

BRAZIL SOCCER TRAGEDY — Soccer fans in Medellin, Colombia, pay tribute to the Chapecoense team from Brazil Dec. 1. A plane carrying 77 passengers, including the Brazilian team, crashed near Medellin, Colombia, Nov. 29. Only six travellers survived. The plane reportedly ran out of fuel.

Hundreds mourn beloved homeless man at funeral

By Christina Gray

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — Thomas Myron Hooker lived the last 20 years of his life without a roof over his head, but his death proved he was hardly without a home.

Hundreds of people — church families, neighbours, shopkeepers and perhaps even strangers touched by the cheerful kindness and generosity of the man who for years had made camp under a tarp on a street corner in San Francisco's Richmond District — streamed into Star of the Sea Catholic Church Nov. 7 to express their respect and affection.

Hooker had endeared himself to the parish and surrounding community with his gentle spirit. He spent a part of each day praying in the back pews, said Star of the Sea pastor Rev. Joseph Illo, who eulogized him as “a kind of patron saint of the homeless.”

“The meaning of being homeless beyond shelter is when you

lack a home, lack a family who understands you. You are homeless when you don't feel you belong anywhere,” said Illo. “Many of us who live in more comfort are more homeless than Thomas was. He had a home with us.”

Thomas had “overcome his homelessness,” said Illo, who claimed Hooker's body after his death Oct. 26 and planned the funeral mass and reception that followed. McAvoy O'Hara Evergreen Mortuary donated a casket and prepared the body for burial. A special collection was taken during the mass so that Hooker might be laid to rest with dignity and a headstone at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma.

According to a Richmond District blog, Hooker was originally from Trinidad and had spent time in Chicago before coming to San Francisco.

Every day, Hooker worked his way along Clement Street with his shopping cart and would stand at a corner near Walgreens, usually talking to himself.

“This was a man who never asked for anything,” Lea Grey Dimond, owner of Thidwick Books on Clement Street, told Catholic San Francisco, the archdiocesan newspaper.

Hooker was one of three individuals profiled in a documentary about mental illness called Voices. In the trailer for the documentary, Hooker says with a huge grin: “I suffer a lot, you know, and when you suffer, you must know to be kind.”

At a reception in the school gym following the funeral mass for him, the community took turns sharing memories of Hooker and offering parting thoughts. Voices was shown afterward.

“Thomas had a gift for loving generously and unconditionally,” said one speaker. “He brought our community something rare and special.”

A man in tears said he was overcome by the overflowing crowd who had come out to honour Hooker. The tears turned to



CNS/Christina Gray

FUNERAL HONOURS HOMELESS MAN — Mourners line the altar rail to receive communion from Rev. Joseph Illo, pastor of Star of the Sea Church in San Francisco, during a Nov. 7 funeral mass for Thomas Myron Hooker, a homeless man beloved by the community and pictured in a portrait near the altar.

laughter when he confessed he often “gave my money to Thomas instead of the church.”

Star of the Sea parishioners Arnold and Jean Low had brought food to Hooker for more than 20 years and were the ones to find him unresponsive on the morning of his death.

“Thomas was a kind and friendly soul, always had a smile on his face, always had something complimentary to say to you,” said Arnold Low. “There are other homeless souls for you to reach out to.”

Also keep this in mind, he said: “When I am thirsty, you gave me to drink, when I was hungry, you gave me to eat, when I was cold you gave me clothes. Whatever you do for others, you do for me your Lord our God.”

Pope pleads with billionaires to share resources

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis pleaded with a group of billionaires to take seriously their personal obligation to share their resources and make a real commitment to doing business in a way that helps other people realize their potential, too.

The global economic system, he said Dec. 3, needs a “fundamental renewal” that “does not have to do simply with market economics, figures to be balanced, the development of raw materials and improvements made to infrastructure.”

“What we are speaking about is the common good of humanity, of the right of each person to share in the resources of this world and to have the same opportunities to realize his or her potential, a potential that is ultimately based on the dignity of the children of God, created in his image and likeness,” the pope told CEOs and other leaders taking part in the Fortune-Time Global Forum.

Business leaders like Virgin's Richard Branson, LRN's Dov Seidman, Siemens' Joe Kaeser and IBM's Ginni Rometty met in Rome for two days to respond to what they described as Pope Francis' “passionate pleas for broader prosperity and lasting ways to lift the poor.” They also spoke with concern of growing popular discontent with the way big business and governments operate.

“Populism and protectionism are rearing their heads around the world, and trust in business — as well as other institutions — has plummeted,” the leaders said in their report to the pope.

After public sessions focused on what Branson defined as “moral leadership” — “leadership that accepts that the long-term sustainability of our actions is more important than short-term gain” — the CEOs and heads of major non-governmental organizations participated in working groups to develop practical commitments aimed at increasing people's access to finance, health care, the Internet,

energy, food, clean water, education and job training.

“Our great challenge,” Pope Francis told them, “is to respond to global levels of injustice by promoting a local and even personal sense of responsibility so that no one is excluded from participating in society.”

“The centrality and dignity of the human person,” especially the poor and refugees, must be the key factor in strategizing sustainable development, the pope said.

“When we ignore the cries of so many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, we not only deny them their God-given rights and worth, but we also reject their wisdom and prevent them from offering their talents, traditions and cultures to the world,” he told the CEOs. “In so doing, the poor and marginalized are made to suffer even more, and we ourselves grow impoverished, not only materially, but morally and spiritually.”

While the CEOs recognized that globalization and digitization “have created unprecedented growth and lifted billions of people out of poverty,” both they and Pope Francis also acknowledged that the growth has been uneven and “inequality within nations is on the rise.”

“People want to make their voices heard and express their concerns and fears,” Pope Francis told the leaders. They want to contribute and “to benefit from the resources and development too often reserved for the few.”

“While this may create conflict and lay bare the many sorrows of our world, it also makes us realize that we are living in a moment of hope. For when we finally recognize the evil in our midst, we can seek healing by applying the remedy,” the pope said.

“Institutional and personal conversion” is the only way forward, he said. “Seek ever more creative ways to transform our institutions and economic structures so that they may be able to respond to the needs of our day and be in service of the human person, especially

those marginalized and discarded.”

And that cannot be done from the boardroom, he said. “Involve in your efforts those whom you seek to help; give them a voice, listen to their stories, learn from their experiences and understand their needs. See in them a brother and a sister, a son and a daughter, a mother and a father. Amid the challenges of our day, see the human face of those you earnestly seek to help.”

Lithuanian archbishop says Russia making citizens tense

By Jonathan Luxmoore

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — Lithuanian Archbishop Gintaras Grusas said citizens are anxious about military threats from neighbouring Russia but said support from Europe and the United States helped calm those fears.

The U.S.-born archbishop, president of the Lithuanian bishops' conference, told Catholic News Service, “The old Soviet empire mentality is still alive, and there are many in Russia who consider the three Baltic states part of that empire.”

“But Lithuanians have fought hard to re-establish their independence and are committed to maintaining it. They've shown they're willing to pay a price for freedom — and they're showing it again today in the turnout of volunteers for military service,” said the Vilnius archbishop.

In early 2017, NATO plans to send 3,000 troops to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland, to counter Russia's military buildup in the Baltic region.

In a Nov. 29 interview with

Catholic News Service, Grusas said the projected U.S.-led deployments had provided “some reassurance,” but cautioned that concern remained high because of repeated airspace violations and the stationing of heavy weaponry in Russia's military enclave of Kaliningrad, on Lithuania's western border.

“There are always tensions because we're close to the Russian border and hard to defend, so having our NATO partners' boots on the ground here shows we're not left on our own,” Grusas said.

“As a church, we're following Pope Francis in encouraging prayers for peace. We're also maintaining a community spirit and helping people seek truth when a lot of negative propaganda is being spread by Russian-language media and the Internet.”

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991. They joined the European Union and NATO in 2004, gaining protection under the alliance's Article 5 collective defence guarantee.



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE MEETS BUSINESS LEADERS — Pope Francis greets Nancy Gibbs, editorial director of Time Inc. News Group, and Alan Murray (behind her), editor-in-chief of Fortune, during an audience with business leaders at the Vatican Dec. 3. The business leaders were taking part in the Fortune-Time Global Forum in Rome.

Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.

— John Milton