



## Global citizens

The Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation (SCIC) presented Global Citizen Awards Feb. 11 in Saskatoon to three of the four winners: Trudi Gunia, Klaus Gruber, and Armella Sonntag. The fourth recipient, Cindy Hanson, was honoured at a Feb. 9 celebration in Regina.

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## Women's voices

Archbishop Paul-André Durocher wants to hear women's voices, take their advice and see them active in the church, writes Michael Swan.

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## 100 years

Sister Victoria Seibel, RNDM, celebrated 100 years well lived with friends and members of her community Feb. 16.



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## Noisy and dirty

For Catholic schools to fulfil the hope of Pope Francis, they will have to make some noise, get dirty and proclaim the joy of the Gospel, says Rev. Len Altília, SJ, president of St. Paul's High School in Winnipeg. "There is no other reason for their existence."

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## Phoenix Academy

Phoenix Academy, an alternative high school in Moose Jaw, is a school that seeks the "lost" in order to get the person back into the "fold." It is a lived example of the parable Jesus told of the 99 sheep and the lost one.

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## Oscar predictions

Thank goodness for the Oscar party to add cinematic sparkle during February



when new film pickings are slim, writes Gerald

Schmitz. He gives his Oscar top picks.

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# Strong words at U.S.-Mexico border: pope

By David Agren

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (CNS) — Speaking from the symbolic platform of the U.S.-Mexico border, Pope Francis pleaded for the plight of immigrants while warning those refusing to offer safe shelter and passage that their actions and inhospitable attitudes were bringing about dishonour and self-destruction as their hearts hardened and they "lost their sensitivity to pain."

Recalling the story of Jonah and his instructions from God to save the sinful city of Ninevah by telling the residents that "injustice has infected their way of seeing the world," Pope Francis' homily called for compassion, change and conversion on migration issues.

He alluded to Mexico and the United States as Ninevah, the city he said was showing symptoms of "self-destruction as a result of oppression, dishonour, violence

— MERCY, page 19



CNS/Paul Haring

**POPE VISITS U.S.- MEXICAN BORDER** — Pope Francis arrives to pray at a cross on the border with El Paso, Texas, before celebrating mass at the fairgrounds in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Feb. 17.

## Restoration of refugee health care funding welcome

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Refugee advocates welcomed the Liberal government's Feb. 18 announcement it will restore health care funding to refugees which the previous Conservative government cut in 2012.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister John McCallum and Health Minister Jane Philpott announced the government will fully restore the Interim Federal Health Program to pre-2012 levels as of April 1 this year.

"The reform will ensure that all refugees and refugee claimants can access services based exclusively on their health needs," McCallum said.

In addition, the ministers announced that as of April 1, 2017, the government will expand health care services for refugees prior to their departure to Canada. McCallum said these services will include coverage for "immigration medical examinations, certain vaccinations, management of outbreaks in refugee camps and medical support during travel to Canada."

"We're relieved because in the end this will make a huge difference to disconnected and defenceless people who could not really speak on their own behalf while in Canada," said Dr. Philip Berger, the co-co-chair of Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care and medical director of the inner-city health program at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto.

"Obviously there's still another month and a half for people to be without full coverage, but excellent news for all refugees and everyone

who cares about refugees," said Canadian Council for Refugees executive director Janet Dench.

Dench said the impact of the cuts was "absolutely devastating," leaving people without coverage or incomplete coverage. One refugee had enough money for chemotherapy to treat his cancer, but not enough for drugs to mitigate the side-effects, she said. There were children and pregnant women left without coverage.

"There was a sigh of relief from church-based organizations

and all sponsorship agreement holders when this announcement was finally made," said Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) executive director Joe Gunn.

Not only did the cuts put the health of refugees at risk, they created a risky financial burden on churches and groups doing private refugee sponsorships, said Gunn.

"With these cuts in place, private sponsors have been on the line for vision and dental care, prosthetics, mobility devices, and medication," he said. "This is a

huge financial risk for refugee-sponsoring churches."

"Economically it's a sound decision because it's better to take care of people before they get really sick, than have the system take care of them when they develop some permanent chronic illness that could have been prevented," Berger said.

The Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care were co-litigants in a court battle to reinstate the cuts

— PROCESS, page 8

## Catholics can learn from Evangelicals

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Beginning with his own conversion story, Dr. Robert Stackpole explored What Can Catholics Learn from Evangelicals? at a gathering Feb. 4 at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Saskatoon.

Organized by the Saskatoon Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue, the event was a followup to the April 2015 lecture What Can Evangelicals Learn from Catholics? by Dr. Gordon Smith of Ambrose University, Calgary.

The son of a "classical, liberal Protestant" minister, Stackpole described growing up with an idealized understanding of Jesus as the greatest inspired prophet and a shining example of love of God and neighbour. "We believed that with the help of God's Spirit we too could learn to love God with our whole hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves."



Yaworski

**Dr. Robert Stackpole**

However, as he began to see the sin and corruption of the world, and to experience something of that corruption in his own heart, Stackpole began to understand that humanity needed more from Jesus than a strong example.

"We need more than just a wise teacher and a moral example to

follow. We need a Saviour — we need someone to rescue us from the debt and the burden of our guilt; the guilt we all carry around like a ball and chain from our failures in the past to love God and our neighbours. We need someone to radically transform and heal us from deep within from our chronic inability to do any better."

As a teenager watching a Billy Graham Crusade on television, Stackpole experienced a call to conversion that many Evangelical Christians would recognize; kneeling down in the basement, Stackpole gave himself to Jesus. "I accepted Christ into my heart, and my life has never been the same since. For the first time I knew Jesus not just as a wise teacher, not as a shining example from the past, but as a living and personal Saviour, right now, in the present, and no farther than my own heart."

— SALVATION, page 6



# Walls keeping immigrants out is not Christian

By Cindy Wooden

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM MEXICO (CNS) — As the plane carrying him back to Rome from Mexico was flying over Texas, Pope Francis insisted building walls to keep immigrants

out of one's country is un-Christian.

Holding his customary in-flight news conference Feb. 17 after a six-day trip that ended at the Mexico-U.S. border, Pope Francis was asked about his reaction to U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump's proposal that the

United States extend the fence along the full length of the border and his comments to Fox Business Network that Pope Francis is a politician and is being used by Mexicans.

"Aristotle defined the human person as *animal politicus* — (so)

at least I'm a human person" in Trump's eyes, Pope Francis said.

"As far as being 'a pawn,' " the pope said, "that's up to you, to the people, to decide."

But one thing Pope Francis said he did know was that "a person who thinks only of building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, isn't Christian."

Asked if a Catholic could vote for such a candidate in good conscience, the pope told reporters: "I'm not going to get mixed up in that. I'll just say, this man is not Christian if he says this" about building walls.

Pope Francis spent an hour answering questions, including about contraception and the Zika virus, the recently publicized letters between St. John Paul II and a woman philosopher, the sex abuse scandal and the reaction of Ukrainian Catholics to the joint declaration he signed with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow Feb. 12 in Cuba.

A reporter asked why he had spent so much of the week denouncing the ills that plague Mexico, but said nothing of the scandal of clerical sexual abuse and, in particular, about the late Rev. Marcial Maciel Degollado, the Mexican founder of the Legionaries of Christ. The priest lived a double life, fathering children and sexually abusing numerous seminarians.

Pope Francis' comment on Maciel's case was to praise retired Pope Benedict XVI who, as a cardinal and prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, tenaciously investigated the allegations and insisted "there was a need to clean the church's dirt, the garbage."

The pope was asked about an interview Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kiev-Halych, major archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, gave Feb. 13 in which he said Ukrainians felt "deep disappointment" over the joint declaration.

"When I read this, I was wor-

ried," said the pope, who explained that he has known and respected Shevchuk for years.

The archbishop's criticism seemed "a bit strange," he said, but when people speak, their words must be read in the context of what they are living. The Ukrainians have the experience of Russian aggression toward the Ukrainian Catholic Church and Russian support for separatist fighting in Eastern Ukraine. That experience cannot be ignored, he said.

"You can understand how people in that situation feel this way," the pope said. The archbishop's right to express his opinion must be respected, he said, "especially in this situation."

## Pope challenges Mexican prison strategy

By David Agren

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (CNS) — Pope Francis urged society to rethink its ideas of locking up inmates and throwing away the key, calling such an approach another symptom of the "throw-

aways in Ciudad Juarez say their facility — once considered the most violent in Latin America — has vastly improved since the horror of its worst year 2010, when 216 murders were committed there and rival gangs, fighting for control of drugs running through

Ciudad Juarez, carried out crimes from behind bars.

His trip drew attention to the horrors of Mexico's oft-maligned prison system, marked by overcrowding, corruption and inmates paying for privileges, protection and basics — everything from toilet paper to proper food. Inmate control inside correctional facilities is common.

The trip follows a brawl — blamed on incarcerated members of

rival cartels clashing — in a Monterrey prison a week earlier. Forty-nine inmates died. Pope Francis sent condolences for the tragedy in the Topo Chico prison, where state officials subsequently found luxury cells with king-size beds, bars and even a sauna.

In Ciudad Juarez, the pope proposed prevention, along with reintegration and rehabilitation, which he said, "begins outside, in the streets of the city."

It also "begins by creating a system which we could call social health, that is, a society which seeks not to cause sickness, polluting relationships in neighborhoods, schools, town squares, the streets, homes and in the whole of the social spectrum . . . a system of social health that endeavours to promote a culture which acts and seeks to prevent those situations and pathways that end in damaging and impairing the social fabric."

Pope Francis mentioned the Year of Mercy often in his address to inmates, saying: "Jesus urges us to have mercy that embraces everyone and is found in every corner of the world. There is no place beyond the reach of his mercy, no space or person it cannot touch."

He called concern for prisoners "a moral imperative for the whole society," in working toward an improved "common life."

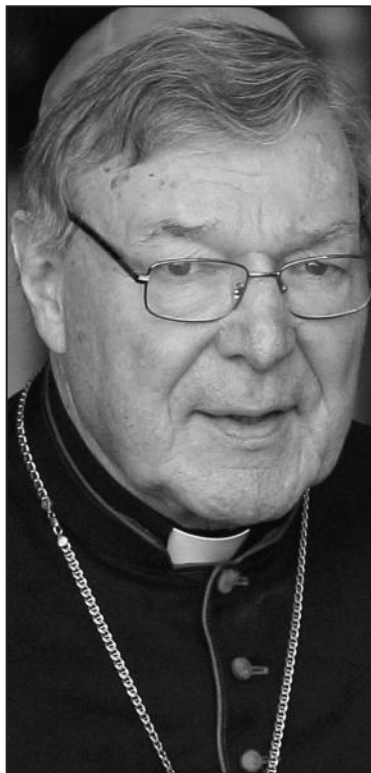
"It is within a society's capaci-

ty to include the poor, infirm and imprisoned, that we see its ability to heal their wounds and make them builders of a peaceful coexistence," Pope Francis said. "Social reintegration begins by making sure that all of our children go to school and that their families obtain dignified work by creating public spaces for leisure and recreation, and by fostering civic participation, health services and access to basic services, to name just a few possible measures."

"Social reintegration begins by making sure that all of our children go to school and that their families obtain dignified work by creating public spaces for leisure and recreation, and by fostering civic participation, health services and access to basic services, to name just a few possible measures."

Toward the end of the brief meeting, Pope Francis joined the inmates for a moment of silent prayer, telling them that only they knew what they would ask forgiveness for. Several inmates were seen crying as they prayed.

"I tell you from my own wounds, errors and sin," he said, "that the Lord wants to forgive."



CNS/Paul Haring

**PELL INQUIRY — Australian Cardinal George Pell is seen in this 2014 file photo at the Vatican. The Australian cardinal called for an inquiry into the leaking of accusations that he is under police investigation for the alleged abuse of minors. Calling the accusations "without foundation and utterly false," the cardinal "strongly denies any wrongdoing. If the police wish to question him, he will co-operate, as he has with each and every public inquiry," said a statement from the cardinal's office in Rome Feb. 19.**



CNS/Paul Haring

**POPE VISITS PRISONERS — Pope Francis prays in the chapel during a visit to Cereso prison in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Feb. 17.**

away culture" he often decries and "a symptom of a culture that has stopped supporting life, of a society that has abandoned its children."

Speaking in a prison previously plagued by riots and controlled by drug cartels in a city once considered the "murder capital of the world," the pope proposed focusing on prevention, reintegration and a system of "social health," instead of only on incarceration and insisting that inmates pay for their crimes.

"Celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy with you is recalling the pressing journey that we must undertake in order to break the cycle of violence and crime," Pope Francis said Feb. 17 at Cereso prison, home to some 3,000 inmates.

"We have already lost many decades thinking and believing that everything will be resolved by isolating, separating, incarcerating, and ridding ourselves of problems, believing that these policies really solve problems," the pope continued. "We have forgotten to focus on what must truly be our concern: people's lives; their lives, those of their families, and those who have suffered because of this cycle of violence."

Pope Francis often includes prison visits in his papal tours, drawing attention to a population on the periphery of the church he is trying to construct. Prison offi-



CNS/Nancy Phelan Wiechec

**SCALIA DIES — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, seen in an 2013 file photo, died Feb. 13 at a Texas ranch while on a hunting trip. He once said in an interview that while he took his Catholic faith seriously, he never allowed it to influence his work on the high court.**

## Contraceptives may be 'lesser evil,' pope says of Zika

By Cindy Wooden

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM MEXICO (CNS) — With physicians across Central and South America urging women to postpone pregnancy because of the Zika virus that causes birth defects, Pope Francis said using contraceptives could be a "lesser evil."

Holding a news conference Feb. 17 on his way back to Rome after a six-day visit to Cuba and Mexico, the pope was asked if the use of artificial contraceptives or abortion could be considered "a lesser evil" when the baby had a high risk of birth defects.

"Abortion is not a lesser evil — it's a crime," Pope Francis said. It is the deliberate taking of an innocent human life. "It's an absolute evil."

"Don't confuse avoiding pregnancy with abortion," the pope said.

The concept of a "lesser evil" may apply to artificial birth con-

trol, however, he said, pointing to Blessed Paul VI's consent in the early 1960s for women religious in the then-Belgian Congo to take the pill when rape was being used as a weapon of war.

Unlike abortion, he said, "avoiding pregnancy is not an absolute evil. In certain cases, as in this one and such as the one I mentioned of Blessed Paul VI, it was clear."

At the same time, Pope Francis pleaded with doctors and scientists "to do their utmost to find vaccines against these mosquitoes that carry this disease."

Health officials have urged women to postpone their pregnancies for two years, because the Zika virus can produce microcephaly, a rare neurological condition that causes smaller heads in newborns, affecting the normal development of their brain.

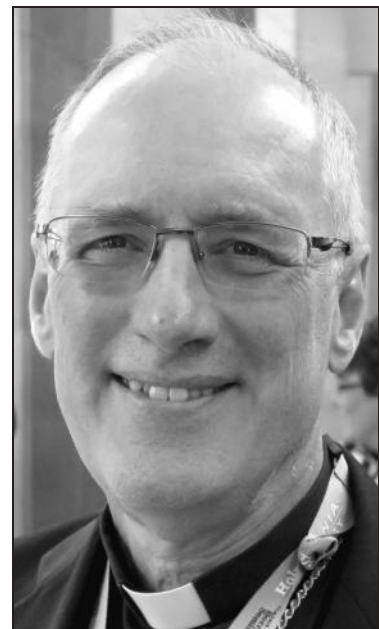
In general, the Catholic Church is opposed to artificial birth control, but promotes natural family planning to space births.



# The female voice needs to be heard, says Durocher

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Archbishop Paul-André Durocher loves women. He wants to hear their voices, take their advice and see them active in the church.



CNS/Phillipe Vaillancourt

Archbishop Paul-André Durocher

“Let us accept Pope Francis’ invitation to elaborate in our

churches a true synodality in which all voices are heard, those of women too,” the archbishop of Gatineau wrote in the Feb. 1 issue of the Vatican’s semi-official newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano*.

Durocher was invited to contribute to one of the church’s most influential organs by Lucetta Scaraffia, editor of the paper’s monthly supplement called *Women Church World*. Scaraffia is the Christian feminist who has almost single-handedly redeemed the name of feminism inside the Vatican.

For the Canadian archbishop the invitation was a chance to push his arguments for women in the church a little deeper than his headline-grabbing proposal to ordain women deacons launched at the beginning of last year’s synod on the family.

Durocher’s proposal at that time went beyond just the idea of women deacons and was concerned mainly with violence against women in the family. When the media reached for a headline in his three-minute speech, Durocher was left frustrated by the shallowness of the resulting debate.

This time Durocher wrote his own headline, “Speaking, advis-

ing and deciding — the future of women in the church.”

Durocher’s proposals this time include: married couples preaching in the context of a homily at mass; decision-making roles for women at the Vatican and in dioceses around the world; more women as speakers and organizers of Catholic conferences and events; ex-officio roles for leaders of women’s religious congregations, particularly the International Union of Superiors General; and invitations to women to attend and participate in meetings of bishops’ conferences around the world.

“I saw this as an occasion to look at other aspects than simply

the question of ordination of women to the diaconate,” he told The Catholic Register.

Whether women might be ordained as deacons is an open question debated seriously by canon lawyers, theologians and historians. Durocher recognizes it “would be a huge step within the church.”

But in his essay, Durocher wanted to look at “smaller steps that we could take without changing any structures, any discipline within the church.”

So far, Durocher is only talking about possibilities. If you want to hear a woman or a married couple preach next Sunday, don’t rush off

to Gatineau’s St. Joseph Cathedral.

“I also very much believe in church unity,” the archbishop said. “I don’t think it’s proper for people to be setting out in directions of their own choosing. . . . We need to debate these ideas and work together.”

There’s plenty of room within church practice, liturgical and canon law for experimentation, said Durocher.

“There’s a lot of space for creativity. There’s a lot of space for innovation without having to break down or to go against church discipline,” he said.

— WOMEN, page 9

## Four honoured as Global Citizens

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The provincial animator for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace is one of four winners of a 2016 Global Citizen Award from the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation.

Armella Sonntag has served as Development and Peace animator for Saskatchewan and Keewatin-Le Pas since 2009 — the latest contribution in a lifetime of international work and advocacy highlighted at an SCIC award night held Feb. 11 at Frances Morrison Library in Saskatoon.

Longtime peace activist Trudi Gunia and refugee sponsorship advocate Klaus Gruber also received Global Citizen Awards at the Saskatoon event.

The fourth SCIC award recipient- activist Cindy Hanson — was honoured at a Regina gathering Feb. 9 at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

At the Saskatoon event, Global Citizen award winners Sonntag, Gunia and Gruber each spoke, reflecting on their background, inspirations, international involvement and advocacy work.

Born and raised on a mixed farm at Goodsoil, Sask., Sonntag has been involved in international co-operation for over 30 years, something that has taken her from Panama to Peru to Cambodia and the Philippines, said her nominator Marcella Pederson.

“She was an active member of Development and Peace before joining the staff in 2009,” she said.

Quoting from SCIC literature, Pederson said: “A global citizen is someone who can look beyond the needs of their own community, their own country or their own ethnic group, and feel a connection with their fellow human beings worldwide. Global citizenship requires the protection of and the care for the living world in all of its diversity. Armella embraces all of that.”

Sonntag described her background, including involvement as a young adult with the Scarboro Mission Society in an “egalitarian community of lay and clerics . . . salt of the earth people, many from rural Canada, who wanted to work in community in a cross-cultural setting.”

Five years spent in Peru as part



K. Yaworski

**GLOBAL CITIZENS — The Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation (SCIC) presented Global Citizen Awards Feb. 11 in Saskatoon to three of the four winners: Trudi Gunia, Klaus Gruber, and Armella Sonntag (from left). The fourth recipient, Cindy Hanson, received her award at a Feb. 9 celebration in Regina.**

of a Scarboro Mission Society community were challenging, Sonntag described. “There was huge disparity between rich and poor, and deep lines of racism against impoverished indigenous people. The country was under a hijacked democracy, there was an armed guerrilla movement, a violent and corrupt military, with a paramilitary faction and a terrorist group called Shining Path.”

Violence and brutal tactics by the various factions were frightening; the Scarboro Mission Society planned emergency escape plans, and urged missionaries to self-censor their writing and their words. “There was a real feeling of isolation and vulnerability,” Sonntag said. “All I wanted to do was feel safe. I really understand people living in violence — how the fear just goes into your body and psyche.”

After that experience, there was “cultural shock” in moving back to Canada, first to Toronto, and then to Saskatchewan, Sonntag described. “With the good connection between Scarboro and Development and Peace, Kim (her husband) and I were put in touch with the D&P community of Saskatchewan,” she said. “From that point on, we had our bearing. Here were people who already knew what was happening in Latin America. They asked informed questions, shared similar analysis and their spirituality was fully integrated into their social engagement in the province.”

Involved in D&P campaigns and committee work, Sonntag

found that the campaigns helped situate their own Latin American experience into a global framework.

“D&P’s continual updating of the knowledge and analysis related to development work at the global level is phenomenal. I am convinced about D&P’s development model: it is always evolving, and the basic development principals are inspiring for me,” she said.

“One of the fundamental premises of Development and Peace’s work is that we have to recognize our share of the responsibility for global injustices.” This premise means that much of the organization’s development work is done right here in Canada, Sonntag noted.

“Our work in Canada is the essential and irreplaceable path of global development work.”

Sonntag said that she also admires how Development and Peace is in relationship with the organizations around the world that receive support. “Another premise that Development and Peace operates by is that the needs, perspectives, and knowledge of the most marginalized people must shape policies and programs. They are the authors. It ensures that the work is culturally appropriate and effective, using knowledge and approaches of the local protagonists.”

In accepting the Global Citizen Award, Sonntag recognized all of

— SONNTAG, page 7

## Bennett receives temporary extension on contract

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Religious Freedom Ambassador Andrew Bennett has received a temporary extension of his contract with Global Affairs Canada — at least until March 31.

“Dr. Andrew Bennett has shown remarkable ingenuity, sensitivity and competency over the past three years in serving as head of Canada’s Office for Religious Freedom and we are grateful for his continued service,” said an emailed statement from Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Dion Feb. 15. “Dr. Bennett will be staying on until at least the end of March as the Government carefully considers how best to preserve and protect all human rights, including the vital freedom of religion or belief.”

Bennett’s three-year contract was to end Feb. 19, but the mandate for the Office of Religious Freedom and its annual budget of roughly \$5 million a year comes to an end in March.

The future of the Office of Religious Freedom, created by the previous Tory government, has seemed shaky in recent weeks as Dion has signalled a change in emphasis from religious freedom on its own to a greater focus on human rights in general.

In a Jan. 28 speech to the Ottawa Forum, Dion said: “As Canadians, we are driven by the principles that human rights are universal, interdependent and indivisible.”

He explained the protection of human rights meant, for him, “the triumph of freedom of religion over theocracy, freedom of speech over censorship, freedom of movement over restriction and freedom of thought over fear.”

Religious leaders from a range

of faiths have urged the Liberal government to retain the Office of Religious Freedom and Ambassador Bennett.

The Catholic Civil Rights League added its voice to those of various Muslim, Jewish and other Christian groups in a Feb. 5 letter to the prime minister and to Dion in support of the Office of Religious Freedom.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Andrew Bennett

“We are deeply concerned about suggestions that the office might be closed and that Ambassador Bennett might not be renewed. At this particular period in international affairs, Canada cannot afford an abandonment of our strong commitment to freedom of conscience and religion at home and especially pursuing that objective abroad,” wrote the League’s executive director Christian Elia. “We join with organizations representing Canadians of all faiths in seeking the renewal of the Office of Religious Freedom and its mandate.”



# D&P’s Share Lent campaign seeks to foster change

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Each year during Lent the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace makes its major push for funding, tapping the one source that not only keeps the organization afloat but also the only source of funding that can validate its existence — ordinary Canadian Catholics.

This is the 49th year of Share Lent for Development and Peace and every year the need has been great. Development and Peace supports partners in the Global South facing unfair social, political and economic structures, allying with groups there for social change while educating Canadians about the causes of poverty. “The sense of urgency with every year seems to increase,”

Development and Peace executive director David Leduc told The Catholic Register as Share Lent got underway Ash Wednesday. This will be the second Share Lent campaign in which Development and Peace offers a free lenten app on Google Play and the iTunes App Store. The app offers daily reflections that connect Lent with the work of Development and Peace partners in countries such as Palestine, Paraguay and

the Central African Republic. The app and the entire Share Lent campaign start with the phrase Create a Climate of Change. But it’s not just any change. The campaign aims for the kind of change Pope Francis called for in *Laudato Si’*, his major encyclical on the environment. “The impact of climate change, which is highlighted so tremendously by Pope Francis’ encyclical this year, has really given tremendous wind beneath the wings of a collective movement to bring change and action to the question of climate change,” said Leduc. “That requires a two-pronged approach — here in Canada, reflecting on the choices we make in life and on where we are, which is in the spirit of Lent; and making choices that will have an impact on our lives locally and on the global community we’re part of.”

It’s a traditional lenten call for conversion. The program highlights connections between personal, individual choices and a better world in a six-minute YouTube video. This year’s campaign is just as interested in helping Canadians reduce their carbon footprint as it is in persuading people to give. It isn’t just about the money. It’s also about bringing Catholics together in shared concern for the world they live in, said Leduc. “People have been extremely generous in Catholic communities across Canada in the work of Development and Peace,” he said. “It’s something we would like to continue to grow — the element of sharing with all of those who so generously support us. We want to share the impact of the work we’re doing, so it becomes a little bit more part of their daily lives.”



Photo courtesy of Trevor Tracey

**NEW FUNERAL HOME — Holy Family Church in Glace Bay, N.S., is being turned into a funeral home. It is one of six area churches closed by the Diocese of Antigonish.**

## Parish church becomes lifelong dream

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

GLACE BAY, N.S. (CCN) — Growing up in Glace Bay, N.S., Trevor Tracey watched funerals pass by the windows of his elementary school and dreamed that one day he would be the man leading the procession. By the end of the month, Tracey’s dream will have come true when T.J. Tracey Cremation and Burial Specialists opens in Glace Bay.

Tracey recently completed a deal with the Diocese of Antigonish to purchase Holy Family Church, one of six Glace Bay-area Catholic churches to close since 2013, and turn it into a funeral home.

“In Grade Primary I would watch the funeral processions coming down the street,” he said. “I used to be really, really intrigued by that. (My teacher) would come and she’d have to close the blind so that I would pay attention.” Tracey came by his passion for the funeral business early. When the final school bell rang for the day many of his classmates would turn their attention to hockey, but not Tracey. Instead he learned the trade of grave digging from his uncle. “My father died when I was young so I’d chum around with my uncle on weekends and after school. I’d go with him and he’d fill in graves and when that was done I’d help with the flowers.” Along with apprenticing under his uncle, Tracey soon found himself the student of Vince

MacGillivray, owner of V.J. MacGillivray Funeral Homes. MacGillivray — “the classiest man God every created,” he said — is the man Tracey first admired from the classroom window. “(So) I was brought up around the funeral profession all my life,” said the 40-year-old funeral director. The diocese sold the property to Tracey last October, Holy Family falling victim to the decline in Catholics attending mass in parishes across the diocese that has led to a number of church closings. “The building is so phenomenal, it is so sound,” said Tracey, who opened the first funeral home in Bedford, N.S., in September. “There was no demolition, the pews were already removed from the property and . . . it was probably the simplest building that any project person could find to get what we are going to get out of it.” Work included building two visitation rooms, an area outfitted for preparing the bodies as well as a showroom to display the casket and urn options. The new funeral home will also house a non-denominational chapel with seating for 130 mourners. Tracey’s hope is that by offering a one-stop shop funeral service (as opposed to a funeral mass) at about half the cost of his two competitors in Glace Bay he’ll be able to take in 50 to 100 of the roughly 320 funerals that take place annually in the area. “It is giving people another option,” he said. “Not everyone can afford to pay \$20,000 and not

everyone can afford to pay \$10,000. But just because they don’t have the money doesn’t mean they are not entitled to have exactly what they want to say goodbye.” But a one-stop-shop funeral home brings some worry to those who sold Tracey the property. “Many people are not opting for church services,” but rather they’re using chapels inside funeral homes, said Rev. Donald MacGillivray, director of pastoral planning for the Diocese of Antigonish. “In certain parts of the diocese people are opting for funeral home services which means of course that you don’t have the eucharist. That is kind of a disturbing trend.” MacGillivray hopes the Catholics of Glace Bay are not enticed away from the church services, noting that the diocese charges the family nothing to hold a funeral mass. Tracey, a Catholic, said the community supports what he is doing with Holy Family. “The community is very happy that we have it and are converting it into a funeral home and not an apartment or tearing it down,” he said. “The community loves that building.” Although Tracey admits the months ahead will be shaky and full of uncertainty, there is no looking back as he fulfils his childhood dream. “It is going to shake the market up in Glace Bay,” he said. “(But) I’ve never looked back because this is the one and only thing that I’ve ever wanted to do.”

## Laudato Si’: walk the talk

By Thandiwe Konguavi  
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — Living simply, according to Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*, does not mean giving up candy for 40 days or using Lent as a good time to lose a few pounds. Stopping to give thanks to God before and after meals; admiring nature on a walk through the river valley; using less heating and wearing warmer clothes even if you could afford to consume more; or spending time with people, and really encountering them as people, are all practical ways of living out the principles of the encyclical. Those were some practical suggestions for implementing the papal encyclical that were discussed at Living Within Limits: Living Well, a lenten workshop with Bob McKeon at the Edmonton Pastoral and Administration office building Feb. 13. Development and Peace held the workshop to reflect on the pope’s call to live simply with joy during Lent, a time of conversion. “It’s a different view of letting go in a consumerist culture but clearly the emphasis is saying ‘yes’ to grounding ourselves in a spiritual reality with the world, ‘yes’ to being present to family members, to our community, to being open to creation, and to God speaking to us in creation,” said McKeon. Citing Isaiah 58, which is used in the liturgy on the Friday and Saturday after Ash Wednesday, McKeon linked the scripture to “walking the talk” on the environment.

The passage was addressed to a community that felt its prayers were not being heard; it was in crisis because the people were not living the way they were called to live in their daily lives. “By putting that passage in the first week of Lent, the church is telling us as we go through Lent, this is a new beginning: walk the talk; live what you pray,” said McKeon. Conversion is a long path of renewal, said McKeon. “It’s not just electing a certain government or getting more blue bags in our

homes. It’s ongoing and touches us at the most basic part of our life.” Focusing on the spiritual aspect of *Laudato Si’*, the workshop explored a Christian spirituality marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. That approach can help overcome the unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers. “It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack,” the pope says. A sober and satisfying life can only be cultivated with inner peace, which is closely related to care for ecology and the common good. It is an attitude taught by Jesus, who was completely present to everyone and everything. “He always says to us, don’t be without joy when you’re fasting,” said Anupama Ranawana, regional animator of Development and Peace. “The idea of taking on humility and poverty is not to be grim, but to take on Christ in that humility.” About 15 people attended the workshop from different communities, including Anglicans, youth leaders, teachers, parish assistants and associates, and theology students.



WCR/Konguavi

Bob McKeon



# Clergy face moral questions on assisted suicide

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

With doctor-assisted suicide now legal in Quebec and available across Canada to anyone granted permission from a Superior Court judge, bishops and pastors will face new pastoral dilemmas.

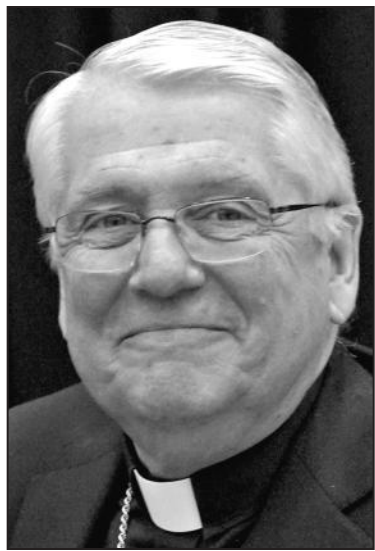
Can they give the sacrament of the sick to someone intent on having a doctor end their life? Can the church allow them a Catholic funeral and burial in consecrated ground?

“Somebody comes to you and says, ‘Tomorrow I’m going to get the needle and I would like the sacrament of the sick.’ How are we going to handle those kinds of questions?” asked Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops president Bishop Douglas Crosby.

Through most of church history people who committed suicide were buried outside of consecrated ground and denied a funeral mass and other forms of prayer. They had, by virtue of their act, excommunicated themselves.

But by the middle of the 20th century the evolution of psychology led to the understanding that the minds of people suffering depression, addiction and other mental disease endured enormous internal pressures. The usual pastoral judgment became that suicides were not freely chosen and salvation remained possible. Mercy for those who kill themselves is reflected in The Catechism of the Catholic Church.

“Grave psychological disturbances, anguish or grave fear of hardship, suffering or torture can diminish the responsibility of the



CCN/D. Gyapong

Bishop Douglas Crosby

one committing suicide,” reads paragraph 2282. “We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives.”

Yet mercy is different from the morality of taking a life — even your own. “Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope and charity,” reads paragraph 2325. “It is forbidden by the fifth commandment.”

Church teaching against murder and suicide has been constant throughout history.

“From the earliest times in the church there were three sins never allowed — murder, adultery and apostasy,” said Regis College moral theologian John Berkman. “Suicide is just a 17th-century term for self-murder, at least if done freely. To tell people that self-murder can be OK is scandal in the traditional Catholic meaning of the term.”

Scandal, defined in the catechism as a grave offence, an attitude or behaviour which leads another to do evil, is a major concern expressed by the Quebec bishops in a December pastoral letter reacting to that province’s new “medical aid in dying” law.

“‘Medical aid in dying’ is in truth euthanasia on demand,” wrote Bishop Paul Lortie, Quebec Assembly of Bishops president. “This is not care and should never be associated in any way whatsoever with true end-of-life care, that is palliative care.”

A year ago the Supreme Court ruled that to access a doctor’s help to commit suicide the applicant must be judged of sound mind and there must be reasonable assurance the choice is free and informed. This rigid criteria makes it difficult for a pastor, however merciful, to say that someone who opts for assisted suicide meets the catechism standard for “psychological disturbances, anguish or grave fear of hardship.” So should these people be buried in unconsecrated ground and denied a funeral mass?

“There are so many things that would go into a decision like that,” said Crosby. “You wouldn’t just sit down and make a decision on the brute facts.”

Crosby does not foresee a national policy on how to bury suicides. That is up to individual bishops. But he expects bishops would seek expert opinion from theologians, Crosby said.

“It is a pastoral question,” said moral theologian Rev. Leo Walsh of the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute at Assumption

University in Windsor. “But part of that pastoral question is the notion of scandal. That should not be something that the individual priest has to deal with. That should be a diocesan thing.”

Given guidelines a priest should “be able to make prudent, pastoral and merciful judgments” that consider the full picture, Walsh said.

“What you’re dealing with can be loved ones who were against this,” he said. “You know you’re hurting them badly (denying the family a funeral in church),” said Walsh. “Not only are the people dealing with suicide, which is awful, but then rejection by the church, which is a double whammy.”

Crosby believes every case must be decided individually and pastorally. Pastors are caught between the poles of mercy and the true meaning of suicide.

“You would have to know what was going on — what was going on in their minds and their hearts. Are they rejecting their faith? What are they doing?” said Crosby.

For Berkman, there may be

“issues of invincible ignorance” to be considered.

“I’m not necessarily going to say flat out, ‘Kill yourself and you’re damned,’ ” he said. “But you certainly don’t want to give the opposite impression that if you kill yourself everything is OK.”

When government and popular opinion are in favour of death as the solution to suffering, the church must provide a counter-witness, Berkman said.

“We cannot judge conscience, ever,” he said. “We just cannot do that. It’s not that we think this person has obviously died in mortal sin and therefore they’re going to hell.”

At the same time, the scandal of suicide can not be ignored.

“What we could be doing by giving Catholic funeral rites would be saying that there’s nothing wrong with suicide itself,” Berkman warned. “To say it’s ultimately OK would fundamentally undermine the church’s witness against the culture of death and euthanasia more generally. I would be shocked if the Canadian church capitulated on this one, and I wouldn’t want them to.”

## Priests, hospital chaplains will face challenges

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — It would be inappropriate for a person intent on assisted suicide to request the sacrament of anointing of the sick, said Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast.

“Asking your priest to be present to something that is in direct contradiction to our Catholic values is not fair to the pastor,” Prendergast said. “Of course a pastor will try and dissuade a patient from requesting suicide and will pray with them and their family, but asking him to be present is in effect asking him to condone a serious sin.”

A person who requests a lethal injection “lacks the proper disposition for the anointing of the sick,” he said.

“Asking to be killed is gravely disordered and is a rejection of the hope that the rite calls for and tries to bring into the situation.”

Prendergast said a priest should go when his presence is requested to pray for the person or to try to dissuade them from assisted suicide. But withholding the sacrament can be a pastoral way to help a patient realize the gravity of their decision.

“The rite is for people who are gravely ill or labour under the burden of years and it contains the forgiveness of sins as part of the rite, in either form,” he said. “But we cannot be forgiven pre-emptively for something we are going to do — like ask for assisted suicide when suicide is a grave sin.”

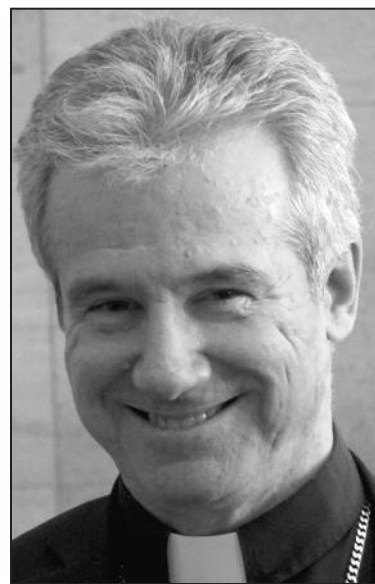
The Alberta bishops issued a statement Feb. 11, on the World Day of the Sick, that said participating in assisted suicide is “morally wrong” and “no Catholic may advocate for, or participate in any way, whether by act or omission, in the intentional killing of another human being either by

assisted suicide or euthanasia.”

The advent of legalized assisted suicide means priests and hospital chaplains will inevitably face moral challenges.

“When someone asks for the presence of a priest, whatever the situation, you always say yes,” said Montreal Archbishop Christian Lépine.

Without speaking specifically about administering the sacra-



CCN/D. Gyapong

Archbishop Christian Lépine

ments, the archbishop said suicide is “a grave evil” and the focus “has to be to promote the sacred character of life from conception to natural death.”

He compared attending to a person intent on assisted suicide to seeing someone ready to jump to their death from a bridge and rushing to talk them out of it. “It’s the same thing with the terminally ill,” he said.

Hospital chaplains already face similar moral quandaries when dealing with abortion.

Catholic priests can only pray the person will “turn away from it,” Prendergast said.

## Decision to whip vote on bill now on hold

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CNN) — The Liberal government’s decision to whip the vote on an upcoming assisted-dying bill has been put on hold, pending the report of a special parliamentary committee due Feb. 25.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Margaret Somerville

“We still don’t know what they are going to do with their bill,” said Euthanasia Prevention Coalition executive director Alex Schadenberg. “It was very premature to think this is something they could impose on the Liberal caucus.”

Government House Leader Dominic Leblanc told the Globe

and Mail Feb. 20 he had suspended a decision on a whipped vote until after the committee’s report is tabled in the House.

Earlier in February both Leblanc and Liberal whip Andrew Leslie had said the vote would be whipped — meaning Liberal MPs would be forced to support the party line — because the bill represents a charter issue.

“Their argument this is a charter issue is false,” said Schadenberg. “The Supreme Court did not go so far as to make it a charter issue. They did strike down the old law, that’s correct.”

“The ‘Charter cloak’ is another obfuscation just like the ‘medical white coat’ on euthanasia,” said McGill University Centre for Medicine, Ethics and the Law founding director Margaret Somerville. “Yes, the Charter applies but that in itself doesn’t tell us what it requires.”

“It’s also a version of the ‘obedience to higher orders’ defence to wrongdoing which the law has never accepted as valid,” Somerville said.

Schadenberg said there would be no need to whip a vote on a tightly crafted bill with adequate protections for the vulnerable. It could mean “the bill is going to be more radical, more wide open than some of the caucus members are willing to accept,” he said.

Conservative MP Michael Cooper, who is a member of the joint committee, said it was “re-

markable” Leblanc would call for a whipped vote before the committee’s report was even finished. “It really raises the spectre that the outcome was predetermined all along and this special committee was nothing more than a façade to allegedly consult broadly but come back with a recommendation that supported the government’s predetermined agenda.”

“It’s tough to have any other conclusion than the fix was in,” Cooper said. At the same time, he stressed his comments are not directed at any individual members of the committee. “They came to the committee in good faith and tried to take their role and their responsibility seriously.”

Cooper pointed out the Supreme Court also called for balancing of the rights of those seeking a physician-assisted death with strong protection for vulnerable people.

“If the government brings in legislations that provides unrestricted and unregulated euthanasia and assisted suicide, they may very well have charter challenges” by disabled persons or persons with psychiatric conditions whose life liberty and security of the person is endangered without “a regime of robust safeguards,” he said.

NDP MP Murray Rankin, who is also on the committee, noted the issues the committee has looked at have been wide-ranging from

— NDP, page 8



# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd offered

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A group of parents and ministry leaders recently attended a training session for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a program that nurtures young children's love for Jesus.

Hands-on and grounded in the Montessori understanding of the developmental needs of children, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd recognizes the great spiritual capacity of even the youngest children to form a meaningful relationship with God, as well as to understand, participate and respond to Scripture and liturgy, and express their deep faith.

Two representatives of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada, Dr. Deborah Zeni and Carolyne-Marie Petch of Ontario, facilitated the first part of a Level One training course Jan. 25 - 30 in Saskatoon. The Saskatoon course continues in May.

Under the leadership of Rev. Bernard Nectarios Funk and his wife Linda, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) program has been introduced at St. Vincent of Lerins Church, which has established a CGS atrium — a sacred space of prayer especially prepared for children, filled with simple and beautiful materials that

help them to get close to God.

Funk began her training in CGS in 2010. The CGS atrium she has established at the west-side Orthodox church for children ages three - six is the first one in the province. The focal point is a model of the sheepfold, with figures of Christ the Good Shepherd and the sheep — which can be set up next to a model of an altar surrounded by the People of God — all used in presenting the parable of the Good Shepherd and the meaning of the eucharist. Centres throughout the atrium permit children to become fully and prayerfully engaged in Scripture and the liturgical year, through hands-on activity and reflective experience.

These CGS materials are not purchased ready made but are developed by the leaders, who themselves undertake a spiritual journey of deepening and expressing faith as part of preparing to offer the program.

"It really is a grassroots program: it requires a community," said Linda.

In CGS, the catechist is not considered a teacher — "remembering that the only teacher is Christ" but rather as one who journeys and celebrates with the children in respect and humility, grounded in the Word of God, the liturgical year, and the sacramental life of the

church, explained organizers.

Founded in Rome by Scripture scholar Sofia Cavaletti with the help of Montessori collaborator Gianna Gobbi some 60 years ago, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was introduced to Canada by Patricia Coulter of Toronto, related Zeni. "Patricia spent two years in Rome with Sofia," she said, describing the support of clergy in the Archdiocese of Toronto in introducing the program in the 1980s.

Gradually interest grew, with more people asking for the course in Canada, and in 2005 the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada was formed as a registered charitable organization.

"The prime reason to have an association, was to be able to offer to adults training in CGS," said Zeni. "We need an association, because we can't do it alone. The community works because of the participation of every member."

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd introduces children to scripture, invites them into a relationship with Jesus the Good Shepherd, and brings forth a deep, spiritual response, described Zeni, a physician with a family practice in Georgetown, Ont., as well as serving as a catechist in her local parish.

Zeni cited the words of one small child after a liturgical experience modelled during the Saskatoon training session: "She said: 'the Holy Spirit came into



K. Yaworski

**CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD — Linda Funk of St. Vincent of Lerins Orthodox Church sets up figures depicting the Good Shepherd and the celebration of the eucharist at one of the prayer stations in the Saskatoon church's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) atrium. Founded some 60 years ago in Italy, CGS is a hands-on, Montessori-style program that nurtures the spirituality of young children, their love for Jesus and their relationship with God and the church.**

my heart' — it was truly an encounter with Christ."

The program's distinct approach helps children to build deep, lifelong relationships with Christ and his church, Zeni said. "This is holy space and holy time that we offer. It is a gift. It is a gift to every family involved, and it is a gift to witness the transformation of the children, it is a gift to every child, and it is a gift to the church."

Zeni added: "As someone who does pediatrics, I can see that this is all grounded in their development, with tremendous respect for the child, and for the child's needs and abilities."

Participants were enthusiastic about CGS and the training provided at the recent Saskatoon training session. "I'm so glad I came, I'm

— RELATIONSHIP, page 7

## Sister Victoria Seibel celebrates 100 years

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — She was born Feb. 16, 1916, and celebrated 100 years of life well lived with friends and members of her RNDM community Feb. 16 at Santa Maria Senior Citizens Home in Regina.



Flegel

**Sister Victoria Seibel, RNDM**

She was a teacher for many years in Regina and she has also travelled the world in service to her community. Sister Victoria Seibel, RNDM (more familiarly known as the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions; RNDM is the French acronym) will be remembered by many of her students as a math teacher in Regina Catholic schools. She chatted with the PM between bites of cake and ice cream and related some of the events in her life. Her memory is clear.

She was born on a farm just east of Regina, the middle child in a family of seven. She entered the convent in Regina in 1937 when she was 21 years old, and thus began a vocation that now extends over 77 years.

"I was in Rome for 11 years looking after the finances for the whole congregation," she recalled.

She didn't have any formal training as an accountant but she had a natural gift, said Sister Imelda Grimes, RNDM. "She was the bursar for the entire congregation and was a great help to all the bursars showing them how to keep their finances in order."

And she travelled the world. "I went to New Zealand, Australia, England, France, Italy. I was in all those places. India, Vietnam too, helping them to straighten up their books so they all would be done the same way."

Much of that was done prior to Vatican II when many religious wore habits. It made travelling a little more challenging. "I couldn't wear my habit when I was in Vietnam. They knew we had arrived and they made sure they knew exactly where I was." She described her travels as "fascinating." Asked if there was a highlight in any of those travels, she didn't hesitate: "I'd go back to Italy."

"She also helped looking after orphans and young children," said Sister Claire Himbeault, RNDM. "Sometimes if a mother died in childbirth or had a very young child, the father would bring them to the Academy (Sacred Heart Academy) because they couldn't look after them and she would care for them."

Sister Anna Aulie, RNDM, remembers when she was doing some studying in Rome Seibel loved to tour people around. "She knew absolutely everything and she would tell you everything."

Seibel enjoyed telling one story about wearing the habit and being caught in a Regina rainstorm. "You know, it had a lot of starch and the rain melted the starch and by the time I got home my black habit was streaked white." She laughed at the memory.

## Salvation not a moment, but a process

Continued from page 1

This conversion experience marked a step on a lifelong journey of faith. "Jesus convinced me that salvation is not just a moment, but a life process."

He began to study Christian doctrine — first the trunk of the tree, all the basics of C.S. Lewis' Mere Christianity. Then, with the help of Anglican writers and eventually the Catholic writers that he also began to read, he studied and accepted other doctrines that Evangelical Christians might not accept as part of the Christian "tree" — the sacraments, the nature and mission of the church as the Body of Christ, the real presence of Christ in the eucharist, the communion of saints, the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her heavenly intercession for us, the role of the successor of St. Peter as bishop of Rome, and the purification of purgatory for those who die not fully sanctified.

Ordained an Anglican pastor, Stackpole eventually became a Catholic in 1994. He married a Catholic, and they went to Rome together, where Robert obtained a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum). In 1997 he began work as the research director, and then director, of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, based in Stockbridge, Mass.

Stackpole's interest in ecumenical dialogue with Evangelical Christians grew during his 10 years of teaching theology to undergraduates at Catholic (Redeemer) Pacific College, which is affiliated with Trinity Western University, established in Langley, B.C., by the

Evangelical Free Church of America. Beginning in 2012, Stackpole served as assistant director of formation at St. Therese Institute in Bruno, Sask., and became a Catholic member of the Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue in Saskatoon.

Continuing with the analogy of the tree, Stackpole said that Evangelical Christians remind Catholics of the importance of paying attention to the roots — of "keeping the main thing the main thing."

"Seen in one way, Catholicism might seem like a great flowering, fruit-bearing tree, but the danger is that those who live from and tend that tree can sometimes spend so much time looking after the leaves and fruit that we forget about the roots from which the tree draws its life," he said. "The root of the tree of the church is supposed to be that life-giving Gospel, the same Gospel that I heard for the first time on my basement TV as a teenager, namely: the saving life and death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Evangelicals as a rule spend much more time and attention than Catholics pondering, preaching and spreading that "main thing" — Jesus Christ who died and rose to save us from our sin, said Stackpole. "It is the message and reality at the heart of every Catholic mass, of course, but it is astonishing how few of us Catholics really get the message from the liturgy, and how rarely that message is preached from Catholic parish pulpits. But the main thing is the kerygma — the heart of the Gospel, the primary life-giving root of the whole tree."

Stackpole continued: "Thanks to our Evangelical brothers and sisters for continually calling us back to the roots and the trunk, and thereby helping us to keep first things first."

Reflecting on his time at the first Catholic college since the Reformation to be part of an Evangelical Christian university (Trinity Western University), Stackpole said: "There are all sorts of ways that we can become better Catholics by learning from our Evangelical brothers and sisters."

He suggested that every great community of faith, including the Catholic Church, "suffers from collective amnesia — and one of the best things we can do for each other, with the help of ecumenical dialogue, is to help wake each other up to life-giving aspects of our own heritage that we are forgetting, or ignoring, or just plain failing to appreciate."

Stackpole cited four ways in which Evangelicals help Catholics become better, more spiritually healthy Catholic Christians: through a focus on the primacy of God's grace; in an emphasis on the privileged expression of divine revelation in Scripture; by modelling the fullness of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; and operating with a profound passion for evangelization.

"Our Protestant Evangelical brothers and sisters discovered long ago the New Testament and early church principle that every member of a Christian community, every member of the Body of Christ is called to be an evangelist, in ways great or small. All of us to follow Christ's great commission: go and make disciples of all



# Catholic schools must make noise, get dirty

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — For Catholic schools to fulfil the hopes and dreams of Pope Francis, they will have to make some noise, get dirty and do so by proclaiming the joy of the Gospel.

“Catholic education exists to serve the mission of the church, which is the proclamation of the Gospel,” said Rev. Len Altília, SJ. “There is no other reason for its existence. It is the only thing that distinguishes Catholic education

## Relationship with God is established

Continued from page 6

going to change my direction in so many ways,” said one participant.

Lisette Fontaine of the Trinity pastoral region in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon first heard about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at a presentation to the Time Out For Moms group in Saskatoon, and has been eager to take the training.

“Once there are more atriums established, more people will understand it and get involved,” she predicted.

“You have to understand that this is establishing a relationship with God; the children are establishing a relationship with God,” Fontaine stressed. “It is all-encompassing in how it is working with the child where they are in all of their development: physical, mental, social, emotional, spiritual,” she said. “This is how to keep people in the church.”

If young children experience the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, they will then go into sacramental preparation already understanding the Paschal Mystery deeply in their hearts, said Fontaine.

She hopes to introduce CGS to the Trinity parishes at St. Denis, Prud’homme and Vonda, convinced that when the program is seen and experienced, parents and ministry leaders will see that it is worth the effort.



Tim Yaworski

**CATECHIST SCHOOL** — Nick Wagner and Mary Birmingham of TeamRCIA facilitated a two-day Catechist School in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon Feb. 5 - 6, speaking at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, with live-streaming to satellite sites at St. Augustine Parish in Humboldt and St. Joseph Parish in Kindersley. Providing practical insights into how to implement catechesis rooted in conversion and evangelization to form lifelong disciples of Christ, Wagner and Birmingham explored how to be an effective catechist, evangelizing as Jesus did.

from any other form of education. And that mission must be firmly established at the core of Catholic education, and not be simply some peripheral adjunct. From the highest levels of leadership to the classrooms and playgrounds and cafeterias the mission of the church must guide, inform, and inspire the work of Catholic education.”

Altília, president of St. Paul’s High School in Winnipeg, was speaking to about 400 Catholic educators and support staff on Catholic Schools Day Feb. 12, co-ordinated by the Archdiocese of Winnipeg’s Catholic Schools office with the participation of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface and the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Winnipeg.

“Is the compassionate love of Jesus Christ at the core of your work? Do people see in you a reflection of Jesus Christ?,” Altília asked the teachers present.

“You will be tested by government, by society, by parents. Your leadership will be judged by your responses. Only those responses

that reflect the compassion, the joy and the active love of Christ can be considered acceptable. Anything less is inadequate.”

Francis’ vision is one of mercy, joy and action, Altília said. “These three themes, then, being at the centre of the mission of Pope Francis, and therefore of the church, become of necessity the principal themes of the mission of Catholic education, as an embodiment of the mission of the church under the leadership of the pope.”

Altília said when Francis spoke at World Youth Day in Rio in 2013 he told the crowd to go out into the streets. “I hope there will be noise,” the pope said. “He was challenging young people to stir things up.”

From *Evangelii Gaudium*, Altília quoted Francis, who writes: “I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out in the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”

Altília further quoted Francis,

saying: “The school is not a parking lot. It’s a meeting place for teachers, students and parents, to know each other, love each other as a complement to the family.”

Catholic schools also “need to do a far better job at teaching kids to pray,” Altília said. “All schools need to work on teaching kids how to pray.” And prayer, he added, does not only mean talking to God, one must also listen. “God speaks. If you’re not paying attention you’re not hearing it.”

Altília said everything Francis does, he does with a smile, and he quoted Francis again, saying: “We live for the joy of being believers, for the joy that Jesus Christ gives us, for the joy of having hope, for the joy of being courageous, for the joy of not throwing ourselves down. We live for that!”

“Francis wants the church to move out of the comfortable confines of its buildings and to engage the world on its own turf, to enter into the hurly-burly of everyday life, and the messiness



Rev. Len Altília, SJ

of human existence, to be out in the streets,” Altília said. “But that means confronting the confusion and commotion of life.”

“So if the church is going to deal with that messiness it cannot respond ‘by the book’ unless that book is the Gospel.”

# Sonntag recognizes all ‘global citizens’ in D&P

Continued from page 3

the “global citizens” working in the Development and Peace movement, asking members in the crowd to stand for acknowledgment.

In accepting her Global Citizen award, Trudi Gunia recalled the political education and inspiration she received from her father, and listed many of the causes and actions she has been involved with over decades of working for justice and peace.

She was co-founder of two peace groups while living in Manitoba, and involved with Development and Peace for many years. She joined the Saskatoon Peace Coalition in 2008, becoming an active member and co-chair, helping to lead many initiatives including campaigns, letter writing, demonstrations, and public education events.

Violent conflict, environmental problems and the rise of intolerance

Saskatoon Refugee Coalition since 1994 and a member of the Canadian Council for Refugees.

Gruber has also been on the council of the Canadian Sponsorship Agreement Holders Association, and a member of the NGO-Government Committee, a national body addressing refugee policies and procedures. Gruber is also a member of the Primate’s World Relief Fund refugee network, and has visited refugee camps and programs in Kenya, Cairo and Columbia.

He and his wife, Margie, have been personally involved in some 15 sponsorship cases involving about 50 - 60 people. Refugees have lived with the Saskatoon couple for various periods of time, from six months to about two years.

“Global citizenship means that all of humanity is one extended family,” said Gruber. “There have been many artificial divisions that humans have used to organize humanity: tribes, race, religion, geography, borders. However, we have much more in common than we have divisions.”

One of the greatest challenges is that “so many people still consider their self-interest compromised if others’ interests are also elevated. This sense of constant competition means that many of our systems (politics, education, economic, geographic) tend to advance skills to “win” over others, rather than advancing everyone,” Gruber said. “There are no easy solutions to the challenges we face. It involves education, healing, working together to accomplish common goals. Perhaps the most important work is to continue to help develop empathy.”

Increasing global awareness and interaction means that more people than ever before have exposure to other cultures, differing world views and different life experiences, he noted. “This has created the opportunity for understanding and more of a sense of connectedness. However, for some, it has also expanded their sense of suspicion and fear,” Gruber said. “All efforts

of people coming together to enhance our collective nature and to ensure the common good must be supported and strengthened.”

Cindy Hanson, who was not present at the Saskatoon celebration, received the Global Citizen Award in recognition of her “life-long commitment to activism,” which has included Latin American solidarity work, feminism, indigenous rights and international development, primarily as a gender, training and education adviser. She is currently an Associate Professor of Adult Education (University of Regina) where her academic and research interests continue to support global learning.

In a profile on the SCIC website, Hanson said: “Global citizenship is multi-faceted: taking care of each other, sharing with each other, and being mindful of the natural world.” She pointed to fundamen-

talism, militarism, and individualism as three global challenges that “increase global inequality in multiple and complex forms.”

Hanson added: “Possible solutions to global challenges can occur when people work together for change (for example, through participatory and direct democracy); change inequitable structures; and engage in activism; and finally, support communities and organizations that are working for change.”

The annual Global Citizen Awards are presented by the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation (SCIC), which was formed in 1974 by international development agencies active in Saskatchewan. Today it encompasses international development agencies, educational organizations, local community organizations, and the international relief committees of major churches.



Flegel

**FORTY DAYS FOR LIFE** — Members and supporters of Regina Pro-Life have been turning up near the General Hospital entrance since the beginning of Lent in their annual 40-Days for Life protest. About a dozen showed up Feb. 19 wearing placards asking passersby to pray to end abortion. There are no restrictions on abortion in Canada. A child can be aborted at any time in the nine months of pregnancy, but most are aborted early in the gestation period. Canada’s Supreme Court in a 1988 ruling effectively eliminated any restrictions on abortion by striking down a 1968 law that allowed abortions under strict conditions involving a committee of doctors who determined if the woman’s life was at risk. According to statistics from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) there were 1,921 abortions performed in Saskatchewan in 2013, the latest year for which statistics are available. There are no abortion clinics in Saskatchewan and all abortions are performed in Regina and Saskatoon hospitals. According to CIHI, most abortions are performed between nine and 12 weeks of gestation.



# Moral question can't be ignored in battling ISIS

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

There's more than political interest, strategic advantage, and military considerations in the decision to end Canadian bomb-



Art Babych

**ELECTION PROMISES** — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, fulfilling an election promise, has changed tack on Canada's contribution to the fight against the Islamic State, recalling the CF-18s the former government had contributed to the cause. Instead, Canada will ramp up its training mission for local forces opposing Islamic State fighters.

ing runs over Syria and Iraq in favour of more military trainers on the ground and additional spending on aid and development.

"Every judgment is a moral judgment," political scientist Matt Dinan told The Catholic Register. "One of the real tragedies about contemporary international poli-

tics and foreign policy, and the way in which it is waged, is that we allow ourselves to slide into action in an unconsidered way that doesn't allow us time for that kind of reflection."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, fulfilling an election promise, has changed tack on Canada's contribution to the fight against the Islamic State, recalling the CF-18s the former government had contributed to the cause. Instead, Canada will ramp up its training mission for local forces opposing Islamic State fighters.

Dinan holds the St. John XXIII Chair in Catholic Studies at St. Thomas University in New Brunswick. As an expert in the political thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, he thinks the saint's principles have plenty to teach us about how Canada should participate in the war against Islamic State terror.

"War is never a positive good. It is sought for the purpose of peace. So there has to be some consideration of whether or not peace can be achieved at the end," he said. "People are right to be wary about that. But the genocide of Middle Eastern religious minorities and people who aren't religious minorities in Syria in particular is also a tragedy."

On just political grounds, the decision to withdraw Canada's CF-18s from the American-led bombing campaign isn't clear cut, said Thomas Tiekku, a political scientist at St. Jerome's College in Waterloo, Ont.

"It certainly has implications for our membership and our allies, in particular our NATO partners," Tiekku said.

But what kind of war Canada

should wage in the Middle East is not just a matter of alliances and political standing.

"From a moral perspective, changing the strategy to reflect development fits with more of the moral standard in which we try not to destroy," said Tiekku. "Bombardment, for sure you would destroy infrastructure."

The trouble with flattening cities held by Islamic State forces is that the strategy creates even more refugees. The city may have been liberated, but citizens can't return to uninhabitable buildings with no water, no services.

"The other moral dilemma has to do with the fact that after the bombardment most of the countries which would have engaged in this bombardment would have some of their citizens competing for contracts to rebuild," Tiekku said. "On the one hand your military destroys it. On the other hand your business groups" bid to rebuild.

Ottawa has pledged \$1.1 billion over the next three years in development and humanitarian assistance in the region. It includes \$840 million to provide water, food, shelter, health care, sanitation, hygiene, protection and education to 6.5 million internally displaced Syrians and 4.2 million Syrian refugees in the region. Another \$270 million will help governments deal with their infrastructure needs.

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace intends to be part of that effort.

"Development and Peace is a huge player with tremendous capacity to help advance a number of priorities outlined by this gov-

ernment," said executive director David Leduc.

But Leduc wants to see some coherence between Canada's military and humanitarian strategies.

"Any time force is used there's a side that loses," he said. "When a side loses there are feelings of anger and resentment that can grow into more powerful sentiments, such as hate. Those do nothing but fuel conflict in communities."

Development and Peace works with local organizations in Syria and the surrounding countries which are trying to create peace and understanding across ethnic, tribal and religious lines. Military victory by foreign forces could undermine the goodwill such efforts create, leaving another defeated, humiliated generation to identify with Islamic State or similar organizations who promise revenge and victory for their side.

"You can have a military or

political peace on the surface, but unless there's buy-in and ownership over that from civil society and local populations, it will only be a matter of time before such a peace fails," said Leduc.

The Catholic judgment on mass bombing campaigns is pretty unequivocal — "indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man," says *Gaudium et Spes*.

But the situation in the Middle East isn't just about applying high principles from the comfort of an easy chair, said Dinan. The politics and morality call for prudence, first of St. Thomas' list of virtues.

"The danger is that (military intervention) would become either a proxy war or an outright war with Russia. That is a risk not worth taking. The moral hazard there far outweighs the benefit that could be achieved at this point."



CCN/D. Gyapong

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE** — The Senate and House of Commons co-chairs of the special joint-parliamentary committee on physician-assisted dying Conservative Senator Kelvin Ogilvie and Liberal MP Robert Oliphant.

## NDP will have a free vote on assisted dying

Continued from page 5

"advanced directives, to providing access in northern and remote communities and how to make sure there are constitutionally required services appropriate for indigenous people."

Rankin said he has been trying to ensure the report includes a recommendation implementing a national strategy to make palliative care available across the country.

"I have argued palliative care is part of that package," Rankin said. "I'm very worried so few can have access to palliative care."

Rankin said he is proud the NDP will have a free vote on assisted dying. "It's not for me to say how other parties arrange themselves in this regard," he said.

"Everybody should be allowed to vote on an unwhipped basis," said Rankin, noting the matter is "very sensitive" and goes well beyond the Charter.

"Members of Parliament must not be forced to approve legislation setting out the persons who may have access to euthanasia or

the conditions which must be fulfilled for access, when they have ethical or conscience objections to doing so," Somerville said. "It must be kept in mind that respect for members of Parliament's freedom of conscience is not only necessary to respect them, it is also required to protect Canadians and can be the last such protection against doing them serious harm or other serious wrongdoing."

"This is a conscience rights vote, equivalent to capital punishment, abortion, or taking a country to war," said Campaign Life Coalition Ottawa lobbyist Johanne Brownrigg. "I am concerned the government that allows the Supreme Court to overrule the democratic process in turn will overrule the Supreme Court by disregarding the parameters of the Carter decision."

Brownrigg said this issue is not like determining where to build a bridge or how much we tax cigarettes.

"This is huge," she said. "Very few pieces of legislations irrevocably change a society and this is one of them."

## Process will be greatly simplified

Continued from page 1

that resulted in a July 2014 Federal Court decision that described the cuts as unconstitutional and "cruel and unusual" treatment.

"Members of our groups had documented that doctors, health care facilities, and some hospitals were denying refugees care even though they had valid interim federal health coverage just because no one understood the new system that the Conservatives brought in," said Berger.

The Conservatives, in an attempt to discourage what they called "bogus refugee claimants," had cut back coverage for refugee claimants who were in the process of getting their refugee status determined.

Dench said many legitimate refugees were cut off because they were in the refugee claim process. Many would eventually be found to be refugees. "It's not their fault if they are waiting to have a hearing," Dench said. "Sometimes they are waiting years."

At the news conference the health minister pointed out refugee claimants and refugees who have completed the process will all be eligible for the same level of care, greatly simplifying the process.

Berger said the federal government is going to have to be "unambiguously clear" in communicating to health care profes-



CCN/D. Gyapong

**HEALTH CARE FUNDING** — Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister John McCallum and Health Minister Jane Philpott announced last week that the government will fully restore the Interim Federal Health Program to pre-2012 levels as of April 1 this year.

sionals that refugees are "guaranteed coverage and they don't have to worry about the failure to be compensated."

Philpott noted the administrative burden on health care providers has been so difficult some have decided not to become involved in refugee health care. Other health care providers have helped refugees, but given up expecting to be remunerated for it, she said.

McCallum said Syrian refugees coming into Canada have already been receiving the full health care coverage. On April 1,

the program expands to include all refugee claimants.

McCallum said \$51 million per year has been budgeted for the Interim Federal Health Care Program, but not all that money has been spent due to the previous government's cutbacks.

"The cost of the measures we're announcing today to restore the program as of 2016 - 17 will cost \$5.9 million per year and the additional measures for resettled refugees are estimated to cost \$5.6 million beginning in 2017 - 2018," he said.



# Phoenix Academy is about hope and new life

## Catholic Connections

Joan Stumborg and Jeff Lynnes

If you had \$100 and lost a loonie, would you go looking for the one dollar? Most of us probably wouldn't bother.

If you worked in a school and had 99 eager young people who wanted to learn and were working hard to pursue their dreams, and one who had attitude, issues, little or no work ethic and quit school, would you focus on the 99 or the one?

Most would focus on the 99 young people who want to be there or at least come and engage the process. Phoenix Academy, an alternative high school in Moose Jaw, however, is a school that seeks the "lost" in order to get him or her back into the "fold." It is a lived example of the parable Jesus told of the 99 sheep and the lost one.

*Note: The following is not a "real" student, but a composite of different people's barriers to accessing or completing their high school education.*

He has been in three schools before setting foot inside the doors of Phoenix Academy. He didn't succeed in any of them. None of them ever met him where he was at, in his opinion, and he does not hold out much hope that things can be different at Phoenix, yet his friends have told him it is very different. Whatever!

He was told he has to have an interview to see if he will be admitted or not. The interview is with the principal, Jeff Lynnes. The "new" student is 19 years old and has not completed Grade 10, let alone any Grade 12 courses. Every time he has tried to work on his education, he has gotten in trouble because of attendance,

Joan Stumborg is a school counsellor at Phoenix Academy. Jeff Lynnes is the principal at Phoenix Academy.

defiance, drugs, or jobs. He was identified as "at risk" when he was still in elementary school. He has seen counsellors, been through detox, and failed most of his classes every year since being given that label.

Something is different now, though. He realizes he needs to finish high school to go after his dream and he wants to get his Grade 12.

He didn't feel he could return to any of the schools he was "kicked" out of so he picked up the phone and, with considerable hesitation, called Phoenix Academy. They gave him an interview. It is a second chance — more like a fourth chance, but then, that is the reputation of Phoenix Academy. It is all about second, third, and fourth chances.

The alternative high school lives up to its name. A phoenix rises from the ashes as a way of regenerating itself. It is a symbol that has been associated with Christ and the resurrection event. A phoenix is all about hope and new life. That is an accurate description of Phoenix Academy. Its Vision Statement is, "Meeting individual needs in a welcoming, empowering, and hope-filled learning community." Part of that is helping students remove barriers and linking them with supports.

As Phoenix Academy's educational assistant tours this young man through the building, the young man sees symbols of faith, First Nations artwork, as well as fresh fruit and healthy snacks. He notices students working independently in every room with teachers providing individual instruction and support. He is introduced to a school counsellor who he can access any day of the week for help and support, a counsellor from Five Hills Health Region who is available once a week and offers small-group ses-



Phoenix Academy

**OUTDOOR LEARNING — Students from Phoenix Academy enjoy a camping trip to Buffalo Pound. Phoenix Academy "is about responding to the deepest longing of young people's hearts: being accepted, finding belonging, and being loved for who they are, not who we think they should be," write Joan Stumborg and Jeff Lynnes.**

sions for anxiety in addition to individual services for mental health and addictions.

He checks the student/teacher ratio and quickly realizes there are only seven or eight students for each teacher and students are calling teachers by their first names. He is told that school doesn't start until 9:30 a.m. and that night school is offered three nights each week. Maybe he won't be late every day since students can contract and set their own hours. He can still work and support himself while attending school. This is different, as is the concept of working at his own pace and setting goals for that work at Friday meetings with staff. His initial sense of dread turns into hope. This really is a new beginning. He is the phoenix.

Phoenix Academy is an alternate high school in Holy Trinity Catholic School Division. It was designed to accommodate students whose needs were not being met in the traditional school system. It strives to facilitate academic success for at-risk youth who may have dropped out of school.

Phoenix Academy offers regu-

lar and modified classes at the 10, 20, and 30 level for students 15 - 22 years of age. The school believes that "Learning is the constant; time is the variable." In keeping with that philosophy, students work at their own pace with clear goals they establish in meetings with the instructional team every two weeks. If they are not meeting those goals, then learning contracts are set up with the individual: barriers are identified, supports are offered, timelines are created collaboratively.

Students with learning challenges have ready access to teachers who provide one-on-one instruction. There are also night school options three days per week for students who work in the day or day students who would like extra help at night. This allows considerable flexibility for those students who are trying to support themselves or their family or are trying to hold a job at the same time as completing their education.

Phoenix is part of Holy Trinity Catholic School Division so it is a Catholic school with an exceptional daily focus on being lived examples of the Gospel. It is about responding to the deepest longing of young people's hearts: being accepted, finding belonging, and being loved for who they are, not who we think they should be. The church comes to them and meets them where they are at. It may be Right To Life providing free clothing and other items for our young moms and dads; it may be Kids First offering support in the home for the new parents as well as free access to the Good Food Box for a period of time; it may be our parish or school division responding to a call for a rug, a couch, warm clothing, or food hampers. It is the staff that welcomes all who come through the school's doors, whether it is their first time or their fifth attempt at getting an education.

Many of our students need the

one-on-one attention that the staff at Phoenix can provide. That time is often more about creating relationships and discussing life issues beyond the academic material. That significant adult mentor might be the turning point the student needs to find his/her motivation to succeed. Being a lived example of the Gospel for the students might also be an entire community pooling resources to support these young people as they deal head on with issues like addiction, anxiety, depression, so they can forge a new path. The interagency supports are celebrated at Christmas with invitations to Phoenix Academy's Christmas luncheon where staff, students and outside agencies break bread together. We celebrate individual successes and milestones on the journey.

Grace, Mercy, Peace is the theme for Holy Trinity Catholic School Division this year. It is in keeping with Pope Francis' call to the global Catholic community.

Grace, for Phoenix Academy, is recognizing the need in each person and responding to that need while maintaining the dignity of the person. It is about seeing the face of God in each student and celebrating the successes or "God moments" along the way.

Mercy is giving people second, third, fourth, and fifth chances, which is done by employing individual contracts for learning hours, having staff mentors for students, providing counselling supports and small groups, serving meals, and connecting students with outside agencies either on site or off.

Peace is helping students discover the wonder of who they are, their strengths and gifts, their supports and resiliency so they can become all God is calling them to be. Peace is about building hope. That is Phoenix Academy — a place of Grace, Mercy, Peace, and Hope.

## Women advisers already a reality in Canada

Continued from page 3

In fact, when it comes to women attending plenary meetings and advising bishops' conferences, that's already a reality in Canada.

"The CCCB plenary assembly has for many years invited women to their annual meeting," said Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops spokesperson René Laprise.

But that isn't necessarily the case in every part of the world, said Durocher.

The Canadian prelate isn't trying to win over women who have dismissed the church as hopelessly patriarchal — a boys' club

bonded by fear and suspicion of women. But he does want to talk with women who are frustrated with the pace of change.

"It's important to keep dialogue going with anybody who doesn't agree with what's going on in the church — to be able to truly understand and to be able to deepen our own understanding," he said. "It is in dialogue and it is in trying to explain where we're coming from that we understand ourselves better."

The pope's call for bishops to speak boldly and frankly, and listen with humility, at the beginning of the 2014 extraordinary synod on the family was not just intended for



# Children’s questions become book by Pope Francis

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Children may say the darnedest things, but when it comes to questions about faith they can make even the most learned parents and priests pause.

“These are tough,” Pope Francis said when presented with questions from 30 children from around the world.

Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro, who went through the questions with the pope, said half the time he personally was stumped when thinking about how he would have responded. But the pope wasn’t.

The questions, illustrated with the drawings of the children aged six - 13, and the pope’s answers will be published March 1 as the book *Dear Pope Francis*.

“What did God do before the world was made?” one child asked. “Do bad people have a guardian angel, too?” asked another.

In the book, co-ordinated and published by the U.S.-based Loyola Press, Pope Francis responds to those and 28 other queries; some of the questions are theological, others are practical and a few are about the pope personally, including what he wanted to be when he grew up.

To the question about what God was doing before creation, the heart of the pope’s answer is, “Think of it this way: Before creating anything, God loved. That’s what God was doing: God was loving.”

Questions about Jesus, war and peace and about heaven also are included, though Spadaro was keeping those exact questions and

answers under wraps during a late January interview.

Some of the personal questions made Pope Francis laugh and the pope’s answers to those questions made Spadaro laugh, the Jesuit said. The pope admits in the book that when he was small he wanted to be a butcher because the butcher his grandmother bought meat from had an apron with a big pocket that seemed to be full of money.

The children’s questions are “simple, but not silly,” said Spadaro, who discussed them with Pope Francis and recorded his answers.

Spadaro heads *La Civiltà Cattolica*, a Jesuit journal filled with articles on philosophy, theology, literary criticism and political theory. He has never worked with young children and said he was in awe of how the pope handled the questions — taking them seriously and responding to them honestly and clearly.

Some of the pope’s answers, he said, are “inspired.”

“This is important,” Spadaro said. “It says a lot about the magisterium of Pope Francis; he knows his ministry can reach children.”

At the request of Loyola Press, Spadaro asked Pope Francis last May if he would be willing to do the book. The Jesuit publishing house had asked Spadaro to approach the pope since he had conducted the first big interview with Pope Francis in 2013.

“The pope said yes immediately and with enthusiasm,” Spadaro said.

Loyola Press then reached out to dozens of Jesuits and collabora-

tors around the globe, asking them to solicit questions and drawings from children. Sometimes Loyola had to ship off crayons, markers

and paper because the children had none.

In the end, 259 children in 26 countries submitted questions.

The big batch of letters are in 14 languages and come from children in wealthy cities, poor rural areas and even refugee centres.

Choosing which letters the pope would answer in the book was done with input from the children, parents, grandparents, teachers and Jesuits, Spadaro said. But he went into the reserve pile and pulled out a few more as well.

In August, Spadaro read the letters out loud to the pope in Italian, but the pope also scrutinized the drawings, the Jesuit said. He commented on the scenes and colours and often had a good laugh over the way the kids drew the pope.

For the answers, “I was not just taking dictation,” Spadaro said. The pope enjoys a conversation; for the book, that meant the pope would sometimes discuss the questions and potential answers with the Jesuit scribe and, often, would return to add something to an answer after they had already moved on to other letters.

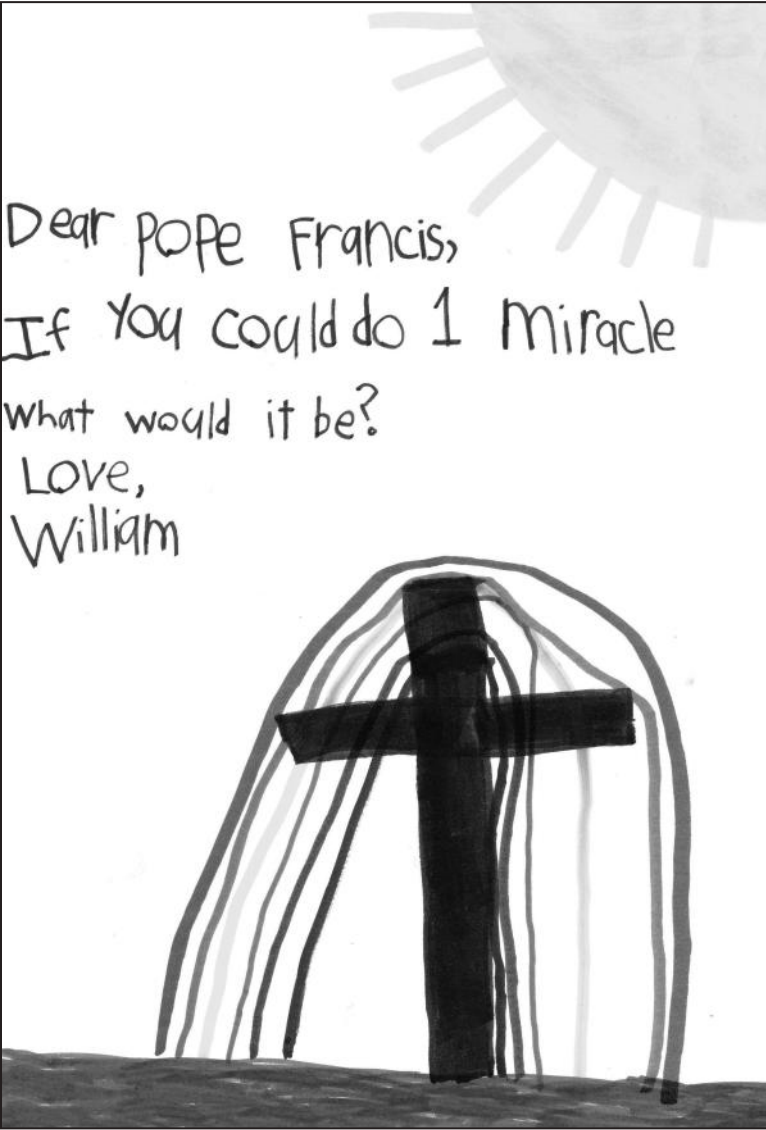
“He’s a volcano,” Spadaro said.

The pope would look off into space as if picturing the children and responding to them in person, usually in Spanish, but sometimes in Italian, the Jesuit said.

The questions stayed with the pope, who later referred to some of them in speeches and homilies, he said. The most noticeable example was the question from eight-year-old Ryan in Canada about what God was doing before creation.

In the pope’s unscripted talk at

— KIDS, page 11



DEAR POPE FRANCIS — This is one of many drawings by children ages six - 13 that appear in the book *Dear Pope Francis*, which will be published March 1.

## Music marks periods of our lives, but how we hear the songs changes

By Caitlin Ward

My sister always remembers 2006 and 2007 fondly. We were roommates at the time: going to school, getting on with our lives, and figuring out who and what we were going to be.

Things had gone wrong for both of us at different times and been hard, of course, but we had an optimism that I don’t think either of us even knew we had, it was so pervasive and all-encompassing.

Life  
mohair

We didn’t worry about things so much, and the things we felt deeply were often more abstract than concrete. That communicates a certain amount of privilege we both had, to be so untroubled at that age, but I don’t think that’s all of it. I’ve met a lot of people from many different backgrounds, and even those who’ve had very rough or

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

underprivileged upbringings seem to maintain a particular kind of optimism at that age.

I don’t know if it’s merely the fact of getting older that changes that, or if life starts pitching knuckle balls, or some combination of the two. I do know that, though I am younger than she is, I mark the end of that era earlier than my sister does. Part of that may be a difference in our personalities, but equally so, I think, were the circumstances.

For my sister, you see, that era ends with my mother’s hemorrhagic stroke in August of 2008. I think it was already on the wane by the time our mom got sick, but our mom’s illness and the stress of the subsequent months changed us. There’s been a constant low level of stress and anxiety that has never quite left either of us since, and our life choices have, to a certain extent, been dictated by these circumstances beyond our control. The decision to take on certain responsibilities within the confines of those circumstances has, to me, been what has defined adulthood.

That said, I’d already lost some of that confidence or optimism or innocence (whatever you’d like to call it) by the time our mom had her stroke. The watershed moment that forced reality on my

young self came almost a year and a half beforehand.

I still remember Sherri’s four-word electronic suicide note, so vague I didn’t realize that’s what it was until I found out she was dead: “well, this is anticlimactic . . .” It was not the first time she had tried. She had been wrestling with demons for years before I’d met her.

I remember it was Lent. I remember it was cold and wet. I remember that a few weeks before, I’d gone to Minneapolis to visit another friend for her birthday. Sherri couldn’t join us, so we printed out a picture of her and glued it to a popsicle stick.

I took a trip to the other side,  
Got as clean as the ocean,  
Found a place to rest my head;  
I got swallowed by the tide!

Clear thoughts are makin’ their way  
Out the door with emotion.  
Can’t recall what happened today:  
Am I losin’ my mind?

CHORUS (x5)  
You’ve got life written all over your face  
Friendly fires are burnin’ all over the place.  
All over the place.  
An’ we been working so long now  
We’ve been trying so hard now  
Oooh . . .

We took pictures and sent them to her, and she thought it was funny. We went to see my friend’s favourite band, Razorlight, the weekend I visited. Their lead singer was sick and their performance was just OK.

In my mind, the night was saved by the opening band: mohair, all lower-case.

Their Hammond player had come out to chat with us when we were waiting in line earlier that night, and I smoked silently with their bassist before he went in for sound check. It’s hard for an opening band to win over a crowd, but to my mind, they were better than the band we’d come to see. Their drummer played trumpet and drums at the same time in one song. They wore Edwardian waistcoats and Georgian coattails, and the lead singer had a cravat. We both bought their album, and I still have bumper stickers with the band’s name in a drawer in my apartment.

When Sherri killed herself, I thought of music, but I didn’t think of mohair. Our friendship had grown out of a mutual love for Ryan Adams, The Libertines, and later Dirty Pretty Things and

The Cooper Temple Clause. I thought I remembered a line from *Don’t Ask for the Water* by Ryan Adams, but I didn’t. It’s quite close to some of the lyrics, but I made it up: “don’t ask for the water ‘cause she’ll teach you to drown.” I listened to *Talking to Pylons* by The Cooper Temple Clause.

I didn’t realize I had stopped listening to mohair until many years later, when my sister was listening to the only single off their only album (they broke up shortly after we’d seen them). It was called *Life*. I couldn’t listen to it all the way through.

I don’t think of Sherri as often as I probably should, but I remember her during Lent — which she would find hilarious, I’m sure, because she was an atheist.

There’s something appropriate about it, though, and not just because she died at that time of year. Today, close to the ninth anniversary of her death, I don’t think of her suicide as the end of my youthful optimism, but as the beginning of something more deeply seated in me. If Lent is about mindfulness, self-sacrifice, hope in the midst of suffering, I can’t think of a better way to mark it than by remembering a woman who fought so hard for so long. Now that I’m older, I realize: she was more hopeful than I could have ever been.



# What and who deserves Oscar's embrace this year?

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Thank goodness for the Oscar party to add a little cinematic sparkle during February when new film pickings are slim. There is the Coens' **Hail, Caesar!**, feted at the Berlin festival. A satirical spoof on the early '50s Hollywood studio era (glorified biblical epics, gaudy musicals, and hokey westerns preferred) it's bookended by scenes of a production boss in a Catholic confessional, throwing in a kidnap plot involving "Commie" screenwriters. George Clooney hams it up as Caesar in the eponymous

The Revenant's leading 12 nominations will give it the edge, and its Mexican director Alejandro Iñárritu, whose *Birdman* bested *Boyhood* last year, may well grab another golden statuette in the directing category. The major omission to my mind is Carol and its director Todd Haynes.

Like the World Series in baseball, the Academy has never given much attention to non-American and especially "foreign-language" films, although there's some international content in two of this

year's best-picture nominees:

Room (Canada-Ireland) and the half-Australian *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Essentially world cinema gets to compete in single category limited to five films. The likely winner is *Son of Saul*, my top film of 2015 about which I wrote in detail two weeks ago. The *Embrace of the Serpent* is the other contender about which I'll say more.

First a look at the acting nominations, where non-Americans sometimes do well, and several other categories.

Among the men, whatever you make of Leonardo DiCaprio's agonizing endurance-ordeal performance in *The Revenant*, I think this is his turn for the big prize after a string of nominations. Last year's winner, Eddie

Redmayne, is unlikely to repeat for his shape-shifting gender-transforming role in *The Danish Girl*. The big omission here is Michael Keaton who was superb in *Spotlight*. After losing out last year for his best shot in *Birdman*, he's been unfairly overlooked. (Too bad there isn't a child Oscar as Canadian pre-teen Jacob Tremblay would surely take it as the little boy held captive with his mother in *Room*.)

In the supporting category my pick would be Brit Mark Rylance who was the best thing in *Bridge of Spies*. The sentimental vote may go to Golden Globe winner Sylvester Stallone for reprising his Rocky role in *Creed*, even though it makes no sense given the exclusion of Michael B. Jordan in that film's African-American starring role. Also left out were the lead actors in the African-themed *Beasts of No Nation*, lending credence to the complaints about an all-white bias. Another Brit, Tom Hardy, will have to be satisfied with having a banner year, scorching the screen as *Mad Max* and playing gangster twins in *Legend* before appearing as the treacherous vil-

lain in *The Revenant*.

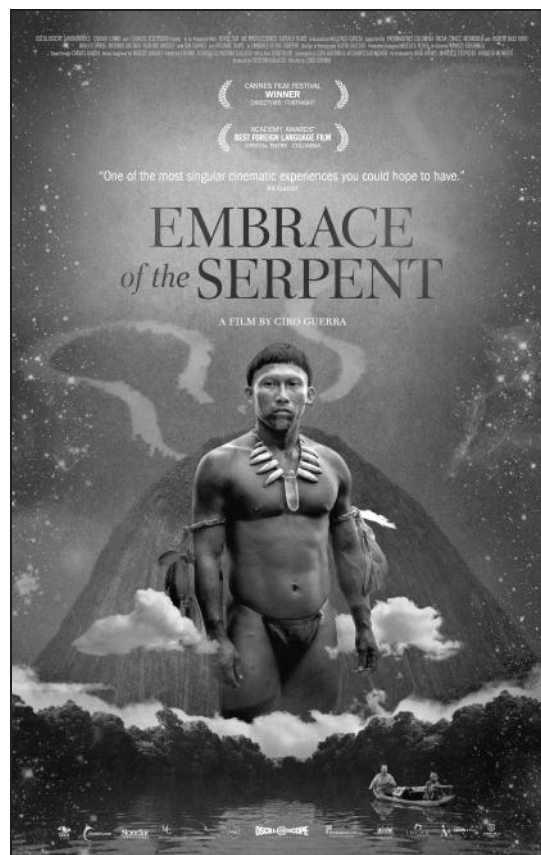
Among the women, I'd like to see Charlotte Rampling be rewarded for her great performance opposite Tom Courtenay in the marital drama *45 Years*. I suspect the odds may favour Golden Globe winner Brie Larson who was extremely affecting as the mother in *Room*. The major omission is Charlize Theron who as *Furiosa* gave *Mad Max: Fury Road* much of its punch. Also, Rooney Mara (best actress at Cannes for *Carol*) has been relegated to the supporting category for what is by any measure a leading role. She is one of only two Americans in that category. I give the edge to rising Swedish star Alicia Vikander (*The Danish Girl*) who was in a remarkable number of movies including the overlooked *Ex Machina*.

The wondrous *Inside Out* should be a lock for best animated feature. Indeed it should be a best picture nominee. The very adult and weirdly melancholic world of stop-motion puppetry in Charlie Kaufman's *Anomalisa* is the outlier in this otherwise family-friendly category.

Like foreign-language fare, Oscar relegates documentaries to a single category. Any number would have deserved nominations. Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Look of Silence* is the most outstanding of those nominated. When he appeared at the Sundance festival last month on a panel with Werner Herzog he said something that goes to the heart of how documentary film can illuminate the darkest aspects of the human condition: "The task is first of all to identify the immoral imagination. To shine a light on it. To help people see how it works. Its mechanism. Then, to help people imagine the terrible consequences of it. The fear. The silence . . . to see how urgently needed the social change is that might make possible the realization of a genuinely moral imagination."

Finally, in the foreign-language category *Son of Saul* is the likely winner and deservedly so. Tobias Lindholm's Afghanistan-themed *A War* (Denmark) is the only Oscar-nominated film I've yet to see. *Mustang* (France's submission though a Turkish co-production) and *Theeb* (Jordan's submission about a Bedouin boy's perilous journey during the First World War) are worthy selections. But the one I hope benefits most is Colombian director and co-writer **Ciro Guerra's *Embrace of the Serpent*** (<http://embraceoftheserpent.oscilloscope.net/>), which premiered at Cannes and added to its awards at Sundance. A true masterwork, five years in the making, it's also a testament to the mesmerizing power of black-and-white cinematography at its best.

The narrative toggles between two time periods as its principal characters follow a serpentine river into the deepest Amazon. In the early 20th century deathly ill German explorer-anthropologist Theo Koch-Grünberg (Jan Bijvoet), borne in a canoe by a native guide, encounters a lone tribal shaman, Karamakate (Nilbio Torres), a striking figure



**OSCAR NOMINATION — Embrace of the Serpent is nominated for an Oscar in the best foreign film category. The Academy Awards ceremony will be held Feb. 28.**

who blames the white man for the evils — rubber plantations and enslavement not the least — that have destroyed his people. Nevertheless Theo's promise of knowledge of tribal survivors is enough to bring a doubting Karamakate along on a journey into the rainforest where Theo is seeking a rare "yakruna" plant with healing powers. En route they are briefly detained by another tribal group and come across a Catholic mission school run by a dictatorial priest (shades of cultural and spiritual genocide in the guise of protection and saving the children from their "savagery").

Forty years later, an American anthropologist, Evan (Brionne Davis), drawing on Theo's diaries, embarks on a similar Amazonian odyssey to find the yakruna, encountering the now elderly Karamakate (Antonio Bolívar), more inscrutable than hostile, who leads him into a jungle heart of darkness.

Along the way, at the site of the abandoned mission, the travellers come across a bizarre messianic cult and are made to imbibe a liquid that results in hallucinatory visions (the film's one burst of colour). The journey ends in the awe-inspiring formations of the "workshop of the gods," its ethe-

real horizons a culminating witness to the enormity of what has been lost.

Behind this amazing production was a long process of historical research into early Amazonian explorations and indigenous cultures. Respect for their traditions was important both for authenticity and access to sacred locations. Non-professional native actors were recruited for the roles of the key tribal figures and the power of their portrayals is quite extraordinary in depicting the collision of contrasting civilizations. Explaining his interest in that past and its mysteries, director Guerra spoke of it as a

"journey to the unknown" that has been a "lifelong dream."

*Embrace of the Serpent* suggests comparisons to other movie voyages into madness such as Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* and Herzog's *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, and *Fitzcarraldo*. The sequence of coming across the jungle cult is so wildly outré that I wondered if it was fantastic invention. In fact, although a good deal of the scenario was fictionalized, this part was factually based on a 19th-century episode in which an escaped rubber slave from Brazil had proclaimed himself the son of God and attracted a group of fanatical followers. Indeed such cultic eruptions became a cyclical phenomenon in subsequent years, marked by strange rituals and even mass suicides. As Guerra answered me: "When you remove the indigenous spirituality you create a vacuum that leads to madness and fundamentalism."

We should not be surprised that the outrageous can be a result of the outrages that have been committed against the indigenous peoples of our hemisphere. Whether or not Guerra gets to address a global audience for a few minutes on Oscar night, this is a movie not to be missed.

## Kids ask difficult questions

Continued from page 10

the Festival of Families in Philadelphia in September, Pope Francis told the crowd, "A young person once asked me — you know how young people ask hard questions! — 'Father, what did God do before he created the world?'"

"Believe me, I had a hard time answering that one," the pope admitted in Philadelphia. "I told him what I am going to tell you now. Before he created the world, God loved, because God is love."

Although it might not be "theologically precise," the pope said that night, God's love was so great that "he had to go out from himself, in order to have someone to love outside of himself. So God created the world. . . . But the most beautiful thing God made — so the Bible tells us — was the family."

Pope Francis will have a chance to meet nine or 10 of the children in late February when he has promised a private audience for some of the people who took part in the project.



G. Schmitz

**FILM IN LIMITED RELEASE — Brionne Davis with *Embrace of the Serpent* director Cirio Guerra at the Sundance Film Festival Jan. 22, 2016. The film is currently in limited release.**

big-star epic subtitled *A Tale of the Christ*. Even minor Coen brothers offers some reward. And in light of the controversy over the Oscars lack of "diversity,"

I should mention ***Race***, the new biopic about sprinter Jesse Owens who triumphed under Hitler's gaze at the Berlin Olympics eight decades ago.

Having already reviewed the eight best-picture nominees I won't add much about them. My vote would go to *Spotlight*, the tremendous ensemble drama about how the Boston Globe's crack team of investigative journalists exposed the clerical sex abuse scandal in the Boston archdiocese. I suspect, however, that

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# Compassion, over time, a profound gift to the giver

## Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



This month of February marks the 17th anniversary of my mother's death. She died Feb. 2, 1999, and every year since then my sisters and I have gathered to remember and commemorate her.

*Prather, BEd, MTh, is a teacher and facilitator in the areas of faith and spirituality. She was executive director at Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert, Alta., for 21 years and resides in Sherwood Park with her husband, Bob. They are blessed with four children and 10 grandchildren.*

We tell the stories and, at first, they were accompanied by many tears and some laughter. Now, these many years later, there is much laughter and few, if any, tears. Mostly we treasure our being together and the memories we share.

Our mother gave us many gifts, but a particularly meaningful one came through the way she died. As one relative expressed it, my mother died a good death. Even at the time, amidst our grief, we knew that to be true. In her late 70s, having lived a faith-filled life, one marked with the love of

family and friends, she died peacefully at home, with her family around her. A lengthy battle with cancer had taken its toll on her body but had not destroyed her spirit.

Even as I write those statements, however, I find I must qualify them. My mother's death was not easy. She spent the last two years of her life becoming increasingly more debilitated and it was a long and often painful journey. Still, even those years were marked by grace and for those of us who travelled intimately with her, her adult children, we knew that we were blessed to be along.

That is where the gift came in. One of my sisters articulated it well at Mom's funeral vigil. She thanked my mother for the gift of those years and the privilege of caring for her. She recalled some elements of it: enduring together the seemingly endless rounds of doctor's visits and the anxious

periods of waiting in various offices and hospital rooms; the tasks of figuring out medicines and administering them; the eventual necessity of feeding, washing, dressing and tending to my mother's frail and wasted body. There were times when emotions ran high and fears, anxieties, exasperation, confusion and even anger flared. She recalled the precious moments of intimacy we all shared, the unbridled laughter and unchecked tears.

All of these things and my mother's vulnerability in enduring them had, my sister said, stretched us all. The day-to-day demands had pushed us and broken us, forcing each one to discover deep reserves of patience and compassion we never knew we had. Our mother's suffering had uncovered in us levels of tenderness, deep fidelity and a capacity to love that was new and precious.

Our joint commitment to her and to her care had forged among us siblings unbreakable bonds. We knew in ways we had never known before how much we loved and needed each other. We had, together, learned some of the hard lessons of love, the lessons of the broken heart and we knew we were better persons because of it. We are grateful to my mother for that gift.

Author Ian Brown describes receiving the same hard gift in his book *The Boy on the Moon*. It's the emotionally powerful story of Brown's life with his son, Walker, who was born with a genetic condition that left him devastatingly handicapped, both physically and mentally.

Brown describes years of struggle: the severe medical crises and suffering Walker endures, the mostly futile efforts to find effective treatments, the gamut of emotions he and his wife went through, including sorrow, grief, anger, despair, hope, resignation, and always the *Why, why, why?* Yet every page res-

onates with the deep love Brown and his wife feel for the one whom Brown sometimes calls "his broken boy."

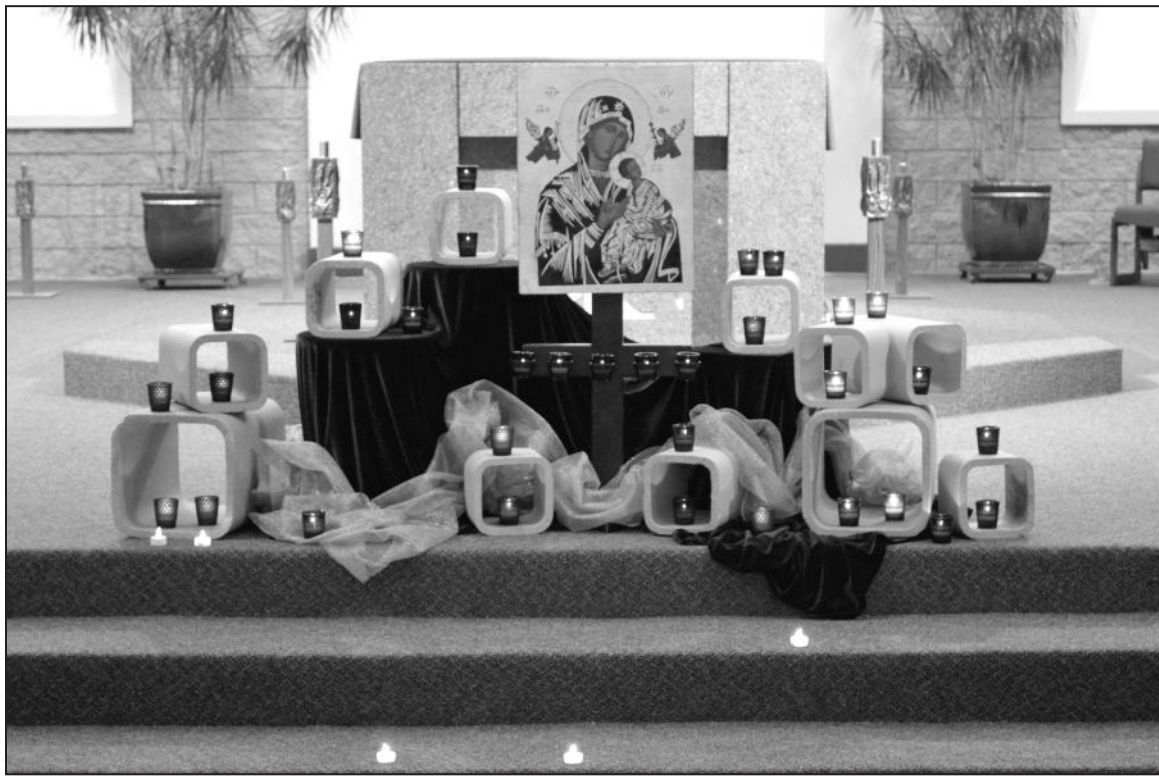
Brown's experience with Walker led him on a search to try and understand tragedy and loss. He was looking for meaning, for reasons and for a way to go forward. His search led him to Picardy and to Jean Vanier. He stayed there with the community for a time, visiting with the residents and the assistants, observing, struggling and reflecting.

In the end, Brown comes to a hard-won peace and some form of wisdom. Looking with eyes of love at his boy, he recognizes how the years of fidelity, of love, and of care, even with the pain and struggle, have shaped him. His love for Walker, as broken, challenging, suffering, and imperfect as it was, had nevertheless transformed him in powerful and ultimately good ways. He knows himself to be a more compassionate, gentler and even kinder man than he had been. He, too, learned the lesson of love.

When Jesus tells us to be compassionate as our heavenly Father is compassionate, I think of this lesson. Compassion is not simply the exterior act of caring for the other and not only a gift we give away. There is an interior dynamic at work in the heart of the one called to be compassionate.

Carried through with fidelity, it becomes a profound gift to the giver, working its mysterious grace deep within one's heart as it breaks, pushes, challenges and, ultimately, transforms.

The Good Samaritan was *moved with compassion*, Jesus tells us, and when such experiences come into our lives, we should stop to consider what gifts they are. They are, without a doubt, heart-breaking. But perhaps that's the point. In the breaking is the transforming and our hearts indeed, become more like God's.



C. Moore

**PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE** — The icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help is seen surrounded by votives during a winter pilgrimage for parishioners of St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church in Grande Prairie, Alta.

## 'Know my son as I do': a parish's pilgrimage experience

By Carmen Moore

It is February in Grande Prairie, Alta., and our parish, St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, decided to create and host a winter pilgrimage for our parishioners and guests who wanted to experience the warmth of journeying together. The pilgrimage was in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Redemptorist community receiving the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help from Pope Pius IX saying, "make her known throughout the world."

We have always had this image prominently displayed in our parish but, as a parishioner, I was not aware of its significance to the Redemptorist community or of the icon itself. The pilgrimage was a beautiful opportunity to "come out of the cold" and join my fel-

low pilgrims to journey together and find out more.

Our pastor, Rev. Remi Hebert, CSSR, asked six parishioners to each speak to one aspect of the icon during the evening. I was asked to specifically focus on the gentle hands of a mother, highlighted in the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Since I had very little knowledge of the icon specifically, but do have experience as a mother, I agreed.

Soft Taizé-style music was performed by our choir that aided in creating an immediate sense of holy and calm, a call to journey both outwardly and inwardly. A display of the icon at the front of the church was set up with rich blues and gold to complement the colours of the icon. Lights were set lower and candles were a source of soft light as well. The Holy Spirit could be felt as a powerful sense of the holy and was encountered simply by coming in and committing to this quiet time

out of the busy-ness of life.

We had six stations set up around different parts of the church. These stations all housed one speaker sharing on one of the following aspects of the icon: the falling sandal; the faces of Jesus and Mary; the fringe of Mary's gown; the gaze of Mary — human and divine; the gentle hands of a Mother; praying with icons; and prayers for healing.

A short explanation of each presentation was included in a booklet provided so that the pilgrims could choose three of the seven stations. Each presentation was 15 minutes, which included the presentation itself as well as some quiet reflection time.

A soft bell was rung throughout the church after 15 minutes and the choir would begin to sing as the people slowly made their way to their next stop on this personal yet communal pilgrimage.

The evening ended with a communal gathering in the pews for

prayer as pilgrims individually placed their lit tea light around the altar. Father Remi led us in prayer and invited us to join for social time after the pilgrimage.

Our parish is blessed with an abundance of willing and capable people who can share their own personal story framed within a holy context. As much as it is often considered out of a comfort zone for most people to give a talk in front of others, there is always a blessing and generosity that God shows to those who say "yes."

My short presentation focused on how our own hands could be a way to serve children/our families/those in our lives that need support by keeping in mind an attitude of holy service: a true and practical building up of the kingdom of God in our own spaces. These daily "chores" of a parent (or anyone caring for children) can be transformed into acts of living prayer in our own approach to them.

Afterward, some pilgrims shared with me how they were changed in their outlook and could now see the often thankless and arduous task of caring for children as a gift to be able to become more holy and share their faith and love with a little one. Others shared a new perspective on their careers (past and present) in caring for others, now framed in a holy light.

This is the gift of the icon: the gift of Jesus and Mary to us as willing and open pilgrims. If we search with an open heart and mind, giving time for reflection and sharing, the Spirit of God will move within us, as individuals, but also as a faith community.

It was a beautiful way to spend a cold winter evening — gazing upon the image of a mother, her son, our Saviour. Meister Eckhart tells us, "The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me." This truly is an "icon of love."

*Moore writes from Grande Prairie, Alta.*



# When will we ever reach our ‘promised land’?



On the plains of Jericho, camped at a place called Gilgal, the wanderings of the 12 tribes of Israel ended. Their exodus story came to a conclusion after 40 years in the desert. A new life in the Promised Land began for the chosen people. When will we reach our promised land?

A joyful tone marks this passage in the first reading from Joshua on what we used to call Laetare Sunday. The readings of the Fourth Sunday in Lent also place us at the mid-point in our lenten journey. You can imagine Paul reading his following letter to the Corinthians in a loud, exuberant, celebratory voice. “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.” Sins forgiven, reconciliation complete, we can truly live the lives we are called to. What stops us from doing so?

Confronted by a myriad of obstacles both local and global, our wandering continues. Here in Whitehorse, a city of up to 29,000 souls depending on which nearby outlying bedroom communities you include in the count, the daily journey for many begins with what some wags term a “rush minute” every morning. Commuters can experience big city stop-and-go traffic lineups as they make the couple-kilometre drive across the only two-lane bridge over the Yukon River into downtown from Riverdale, the community’s principal residential area. Often on my walk to work I

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

enjoy catching up to the cars that had passed me moments earlier slowed to a crawl then stopped by one of our few traffic lights in the brief jam of cars.

We have known the negative facts and figures about our auto-centric lifestyle for years. Environmental benefits such as limiting climate changing greenhouse gas emissions plus lessening the multiple direct and indirect public health effects top the list of reasons for ending our car-dependent culture. Have you ever considered the gross misappropriation of over 40 per cent of the land in most urban cores to the car and car-related activities? What alternative uses could that land be put to?

Ivan Illich, priest and social critic, noted in his 1973 book *Energy and Equity* that “The model American male devotes more than 1,600 hours a year to his car. He sits in it

<b>Fourth Sunday in Lent</b> <b>March 6, 2016</b>	<b>Joshua 5:9a, 10-12</b> <b>Psalms 34</b> <b>2 Corinthians 5:17-21</b> <b>Luke 15:1-3, 11-32</b>
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while it goes and while it stands idling. He parks it and searches for it. He earns the money to put down on it and to meet the monthly instalments. He works to pay for gasoline, tolls, insurance, taxes, and tickets. He spends four of his 16 waking hours on the road or gathering his resources for it. And this figure does not take into account the time consumed by other activities dictated by transport: time spent in hospitals, traffic courts, and garages; time spent watching automobile commercials or attending consumer education meetings to improve the quality of the next buy. The model American puts in 1,600 hours to get 7,500 miles: less than five miles per hour. In countries deprived of a transportation industry, people manage to do the same, walking wherever they want to go, and they allocate only three to eight per cent of their society’s time budget to traffic instead of 28 per cent.” Are there any signs of this changing?

A couple of weeks ago Whitehorse city councillors let a contract to Ride Shark, a company who runs an online app-

based mobility system encouraging sustainable travel. They hope to promote ride-sharing as a partial solution to the economic, social and environmental issues associated with single occupant car use. Another positive note came with the recent release of figures for local bus ridership here showing a 50 per cent increase since 2010.

A psychological shift may also be evolving. One student at the high school I work at told me recently that she had no desire to get a driver’s license. Is she part of the trend toward “sharing” economy that is moving away from individual car ownership altogether?

*Équiterre*, a Montreal-based environmental group, costed out alternatives to the car. They suggest that “a person living in a large urban centre who combines multiple modes of transportation, including cycling and walking in the summer, public transportation and taxis in the winter, Communauto and interurban transport, can expect those annual costs to decrease by 50 - 75 per cent.” They hope to encourage people to wean themselves of their car dependency with this “transportation cocktail.”

Transportation, of course, represents only one aspect of our teetering global system desperately in need of transformation. In the story of the Prodigal Son, Luke shares a parable told by Jesus. It speaks of profligacy and forgiveness, anger and abiding love. We hear how the squandering of resources brings ruin on a young man. Looking around us, isn’t it impossible to avoid seeing how unthinking consumption sparked by unbridled capitalism lays waste to our planet? The elder brother’s anger is assuaged by the love of the father. Building a just, equitable, environmentally sustainable system, a New Jerusalem, will provoke anger from guardians of privilege. Love will sustain us all.

The slogan for the World Social Forum to be held from Aug. 9 - 14 in Montreal is “Another world is needed. Together it is possible!” If only we could reconcile those prodigal and the elder son aspects of ourselves that we cling to so tenaciously, then we, as an Easter people, all might joyfully continue our journey to the Promised Land.

# Hope should never be confused with optimism or wishful thinking



Many of us, I am sure, have been inspired by the movie *Of Gods and Men*, which tells the story of a group of Trappist monks who, after making a painful decision not to flee from the violence in Algeria in the 1990s, are eventually martyred by Islamic extremists in 1996. Recently, I was much inspired by reading the diaries of one of those monks, Christophe Lebreton. Published under the title, *Born from the Gaze of God*, The Tibhirine Journal of a Martyr Monk, his diaries chronicle the last three years of his life and give us an insight into his, and his community’s, decision to remain in Algeria in the face of almost certain death.

In one of his journal entries, Christophe shares how in this situation of hatred and threat, caught between Islamic extremists on one side and a corrupt government on the other, in seeking ground for hope, he draws upon a poem, *The Well*, by French poet Jean-Claude Renard:

*But how can we affirm it's already too late  
to fulfil the desire —  
so patient does the gift remain;  
and when always, perhaps,  
something or  
someone says, from the depth  
of silence and nakedness,  
that an ineffable fire continues  
to dig in us  
beneath wastelands peopled by  
thorns  
a well that nothing exhausts.*

when we feel this way, when we have succumbed to the feeling that we have exhausted all of our chances, it’s then that hope can arrive and replace its counterfeits, wishful thinking and natural optimism. What is hope?

We generally confuse hope with either wishful thinking or with natural optimism, both of which have little to do with hope. Wishful thinking has no foundation. We can wish to win a lottery or to have the body of a world-class athlete, but that wish has no reality upon which to draw. It’s pure fantasy. Optimism, for its part, is based upon natural temperament and also has little to do with hope.

Terry Eagleton, in a recent book, *Hope without Optimism*, suggests rather cynically that optimism is simply a natural temperament and an enslaving one at that: “The optimist is chained to cheerfulness.” Moreover, he asserts that the optimist’s monochrome glaze over the world differs from pessimism only by being monochromatically rosy instead of monochromatically grey. Hope isn’t a wish or a mood; it is a perspective on life that needs to be grounded on a sufficient reality. What is that sufficient reality?

Jim Wallis, a salient figure of Christian hope in our time, says that our hope should not be grounded on what we see on the news of the world each night because that news constantly changes and, on any given night, can be so negative as to give us little ground for hope. He’s right. Whether the world seems better or worse on a given evening is hardly sufficient cause for us to trust that in the end all will be well. Things might change drastically

the next night.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who perennially protested that he was a man of hope rather than of optimism, in an answer to a question, once suggested that there are two sufficient reasons for hope. Asked what would happen if we blew up the world with an atomic bomb, he replied: That would set things back a few million years, but God’s plan for the earth would still come about. Why? Because Christ promised it and, in the resurrection, God shows that God has the power to deliver on that promise. Hope is based on God’s promise and God’s power.

But there is still another reason for our hope, something else that grounds our hope and gives us sufficient reason to live in trust that eventually all will be well, namely, God’s inexhaustibility. Underneath and beneath, beneath us and beneath our universe, there is *a well that nothing exhausts*.

And it is this which we so often forget or slim down to the limited size of our own hearts and imaginations: God is a prodigal God, almost unimaginable in the scope of physical creation, a God who has created and is still creating billions upon billions of universes. Moreover, this prodigal God, so beyond our imagination in creativity, is, as has been revealed to us by Jesus, equally unimaginable in patience and mercy. There is never an end to our number of chances. There is no limit to God’s patience. There is nothing that can ever exhaust the divine well.

It’s never too late! God’s creativity and mercy are inexhaustible.



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*A well that nothing exhausts.* Perhaps that is the real basis for hope.

For all of us there are times in life when we seem to lose hope, when we look at the world or at ourselves and, consciously or unconsciously, think: “It’s too late! This has gone too far! Nothing can redeem this! All the chances to change this have been used up! It’s hopeless!”

But is this natural, depressive feeling in fact a loss of hope? Not necessarily. Indeed it is precisely

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# Ecumenical peace coalition celebrates 40th anniversary

## Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



Are you afraid of the terrorists? If not afraid, according to the most recent polls, most of your neighbours believe that Canada should at least be doing more to fight ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

In response, this month the new Liberal government announced increased measures to combat Islamic State fighters: more humanitarian assistance has been promised, a larger number of Special Forces will be sent to the region on an enlarged training mission, while two reconnaissance aircraft and an aerial refueling plane will remain in theatre. (Six of Canada's CF-18 fighter

jets have been bombing ISIL targets in Iraq since October 2014, and into Syria since March 2015. They will be brought home in keeping with a Liberal election promise.)

But as Canada ramps up its military involvement, Canada's foremost ecumenical peace coalition is celebrating its 40th anniversary — and continuing to raise hard-nosed evidence which could help us to reappraise the efficacy of our overseas military engagements.

Back in 1976, a Mennonite by the name of Ernie Regehr teamed up with Quaker Murray Thompson to form Project Ploughshares. Taking their inspiration from the biblical passage in Isaiah ("they shall beat their swords into ploughshares . . .") Ploughshares became a project of the Canadian Council of Churches and has remained an important ecumenical witness with a long history of Catholic participation.

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



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**WAR AND PEACE** — As directed by the Government of Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces ceased airstrike operations as part of Operation IMPACT on Feb. 15. But Canada is ramping up military involvement in other ways just as this country's "foremost ecumenical peace coalition is celebrating its 40th anniversary — and continuing to raise hard-nosed evidence which could help us to reappraise the efficacy of our overseas military engagements," writes Joe Gunn.

Late last year, Regehr published his latest book, "Disarming Conflict: Why peace cannot be won on the battlefield." Here, Regehr moves beyond moral arguments for peace. He convinc-

ingly points out that "the record of warfare over the past quarter-century makes it abundantly clear that vital political objectives are these days rarely achieved through sheer military force." Using a database of wars across the planet, he is able to conclude that the overwhelming majority of wars (85 per cent in the last quarter-century after the end of the Cold War) cannot be settled on the battlefield. All current wars are civil wars, and of the 15 per cent that are won or lost on the battlefield, rebel forces "win" as many wars as do governments. (Of course, "winning" is often the wrong concept when loss of human lives, resources and livelihoods on all sides are calculated.)

The historical record can give policy-makers, and the public, cause to stop and think. If we become more acutely aware of the limits to the use of force, it will be easier to recognize when armed security forces can or cannot be constructively deployed, Regehr rightly concludes. Additionally, we might also question the over \$1.7 trillion that the world currently spends on military pursuits of stability and security. Regehr asks us to consider that while the UN is often criticized, the equivalent of the entire annual UN operating budget, plus peacekeeping, amounts to about \$13 billion. And military forces worldwide spend more than that in just three days.

Herein lies a specific challenge to Canada's new federal government. While NATO suggests an aspirational target of military spending at two per cent of a

member country's GDP, Ottawa already spends almost five times more on defence than on international assistance. If armed force is already a highly over-rated investment for conflict management, and thus we need to place more attention on conflict prevention and resolution while strengthening institutions of democratic development, war prevention rather than war winning needs to be advanced.

Project Ploughshares has made the news most recently for raising the contradictions evident in Canada's \$15 billion sale of light armed vehicles to the praetorian guards of Saudi Arabia's human rights-defying ruling family. As Cesar Jaramillo, executive director of Project Ploughshares said, "There are lines that Canada should not cross in the pursuit of profit — and sustaining one of the worst human-rights violators in the world should clearly be one of them."

It is unfortunate that the Catholic community's support for Project Ploughshares has waned. The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace — Caritas — has become an absentee member, thus disappointing our ecumenical colleagues. No representative has been sent to Ploughshares meetings for at least five years, in spite of repeated formal overtures to the Montreal headquarters and representations to National Council members. A fine way to get peace back into meaningful Catholic action would be for CCODP to re-join and strengthen Project Ploughshares this year of its 40th anniversary.

## Mercy an antidote to hardness of heart

## Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



*"The words 'I will forgive you, but I'll never forget what you've done' never explain the real nature of forgiveness. Certainly one can never forget, if that means totally erasing it from (one's) mind. But when we forgive, we forget in the sense that the evil deed is no longer a mental block impeding a new relationship."*

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"It is like the sky: we look at the sky when it is full of stars, but when the sun comes out in the morning, with all its light, we don't see the stars any more. That is what God's mercy is like: a great light of love and tenderness . . ."*

— Pope Francis

We are in the midst of what Pope Francis has proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy for 2016. On the individual level that brings us right up against the bars of our soul cage, the self-entrapment which happens when we are not free to forgive, hearts

hardened instead of merciful; instead stuck in what the psychologist John Welwood calls "the mood of grievance." It's a state of emotional contraction, characterized by bitterness, resentment, and righteous indignation. And the crazy glue that holds it all together? Blame and shame . . . flip sides of the universal human need for belonging and self-worth, which give us a sense of human dignity, our very birthright.

No wonder being "done wrong" is so threatening that the open-hearted grief of it solidifies into a grievance based on what's drastically wrong with the other. Yet at the core of the pain we hold and hold others accountable for, there is a loss of connection with our own hearts. That disconnect is associated with primal fears of rejection and abandonment (the loss of belonging and self-worth).

So forgiveness is not a choice we naturally would make on an emotional level. Nor is it an intellectual conclusion, since it makes more sense to teach someone a lesson about how to treat us better (not the same as limit-setting).

Human logic defines (and often demands) justice as a matter of balancing the scales with the "bad other" who has made us suffer. It involves contracting and hardening our hearts. God's mercy offers an antidote: "Make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord" (Ps 4). That's God's prescription for the chain reaction of pain. It's the choice of a heart that trusts God's redemptive love enough to revisit the empty tomb of our unmet needs and uninhabited heart.

We have all had the experience of witnessing how our transgressions of the past, seemingly warranting only condemnation, are somehow redeemed by unforeseen circumstances that eventually come to pass. God's mercy restores our fractured wholeness in this way. In turn, the mercy we "pay forward" continues to heal the world's wounds. It begins with cleansing one's own system of the poisons of hurt and hatred, instead of holding others responsible for the pain they have not been able to contain themselves.

In our own hearts, we can purify instead of further contaminating relationships. Mercy is the remedy we all need. Advanced course: visualize the blamed other surrounded by the merciful light of their true worth in God's sight. Picture yourself stepping into that same light, bathing you both in its cleansing presence.

*Speyer is a Benedictine Oblate as well as clinical supervisor of e-counselling for a major employee and family assistance program, and creative director, InnerView Guidance International (IGI). He holds master's degrees in creative writing, counselling psychology, and education. As a pioneer of e-counselling in Canada, he developed and implemented a short-term counselling model for online practitioners, edited a textbook on the subject, and does related freelance writing.*

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# Zika virus will soon lead to church discussions

By Travis Knoll  
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The discovery of a sexually transmitted case of the Zika virus is already reverberating in Latin America. In Brazil, at ground zero of the Zika virus outbreak, the health ministry issued new guidelines for pregnant Brazilians, including cautions to use condoms and abstain from sex or even kissing.

Activists are also weighing in, calling for legalizing abortion of deformed fetuses. But an important voice with the potential to influence the debate has said relatively little on the topic thus far: the Catholic Church.

The Zika virus is particularly terrifying to pregnant women. Some women exposed to the virus during pregnancy have given birth to babies with abnormally small brains. As a result, some activists have called for expanding legal abortions in Brazil to include deformed fetuses. The Brazilian Catholic Church has roundly rejected that proposal.

Meanwhile, contraception has received far less attention thus far. Yet in this arena, there may be room for compromise.

Brazil's population is 65 per cent Catholic, and the church is still a culturally relevant force in Brazilian politics. Catholic teachings and the growing role of evangelicals may help explain Brazilians' extremely strong views on abortion: 79 per cent oppose it, according to a 2014 Ibope Institute poll.

The Brazilian Catholic Church opposed a 2012 Supreme Court decision to allow abortions of fetuses with anencephaly, in which the fetus has a fatal congenital brain disorder. In 2015, Brazil's lower house judicial committee approved a law restricting abortions in cases of rape.

Abortion rights proponents hope the Zika crisis will highlight what they see as Brazil's economically unjust reproductive regime. As Brazilian law professor Debora Diniz writes in *The New York Times*, "Low-paid women and domestic workers are the true face of the Zika virus."

Diniz's institute, ANIS, which is pushing the country's Supreme Court to allow women infected with the Zika virus access to abortion, has a tough fight ahead with

religious authorities.

While the Brazilian Catholic Church is known for strong support of health care initiatives and for helping Brazil's poor, it sees no connection between poverty and abortion rights. Just two weeks ago, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops released a statement condemning ANIS' efforts as "an utter disrespect for the gift of life."

But contraception is another matter, and on this count, the church might surprise its critics (see related story, page 2).

Cardinal Odilo Scherer of São Paulo recently called the use of condoms a "personal choice" and distinguished their use from abortion because it "does not involve a formed life."

While Scherer's comments may surprise some observers, other regional bishops have taken similar approaches.

The Mexican bishops in 1972 recognized that Catholics' consciences might call for "responsible parenthood," or sensitivity to the impact of having children on an existing family. The bishops also acknowledged "a very real and excruciating emergency for most Mexican families — the population explosion" that held back women from equal rights. In the context of the Mexican government's population control measures, this letter amounted to a limited endorsement of contraception.

Remarkably, the Mexican bishops' letter came just four years after *Humanae Vitae*, a letter from Pope Paul VI reaffirming the church's traditional teaching on birth control.

*Humanae Vitae* sheds some light on the subtleties of the Vatican's position on birth control. An ostensibly traditional document, it nevertheless recommends "responsible" birth regulation "for serious reasons (economic and personal, and medical reasons)."

A Catholic theologian respected by conservatives has also acknowledged the moral value of using condoms to prevent spread of disease. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said in a book-length interview that the use of condoms by prostitutes to prevent AIDS infection constitutes "a first step in a movement toward a different way, a more human way, of living sexuality."

He warned, though, that condom use could not solve health problems without a deeper reckoning with a promiscuous culture.

Brazilian Catholics seem to understand this distinction. Despite their opposition to abortion, 71 per



RNS/REUTERS/Ueslei Marcelino

**CONCERNS ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS —** Eritania Maria, who is six months pregnant, is seen in front of her house at a slum in Recife, Brazil, on Feb. 2, 2016. The Zika outbreak has revived the debate about easing abortion laws but Maria's case highlights a gap between campaigners and UN officials calling for change and Brazil's poor, who are worst affected by the mosquito-borne virus yet tend to be anti-abortion.

cent of Catholics support contraception generally, according to a 2005 IBOPE study. Ninety-four per cent support condoms as a way to prevent disease.

Reproductive rights advocates are unlikely to win fervent Protestants and Catholics over on the issue of abortion. But as history shows, local churches, and even thoughtful traditional theologians, can see areas of grey.

The church might be more flexible on the issue of contraception if it sees it less as a cultural poison pill leading down the slope to abortion and more as a viable public health alternative. Likewise, reproductive rights groups might focus on contraception, protection and possibly even abstinence — all of which might make abortion less necessary.

Scherer's statements and the

Brazilian consensus for contraception suggest there is room for dialogue and compromise. As the epidemic continues to spread, putting the health of future generations at risk, the stakes are high indeed.

Church leaders and public health advocates should use this crisis as an opportunity to move beyond polarization about reproductive rights and search for common ground on birth control.

## Demand a Plan a winner in 2015 election



### Pulpit & Politics

Dennis Gruending

I belong to Ottawa's Parliamentary Press Gallery and had access to a rich variety of information circulated during the 2015 federal election campaign. The most impressive advocacy that I saw was the Demand A Plan campaign, which was launched by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and several supporting groups. Now, that campaign has been short-listed for an international prize in the annual Reed Awards, which took place in Charleston, S.C. on Feb. 18.

The Demand A Plan alliance last year waged a multimedia advocacy campaign, calling for a national seniors' strategy. According to the CMA, more than 30,000 Canadians used the campaign's website and sent roughly 25,000 letters to candidates across the

country, asking where they stand on seniors' issues. The campaign website also provided a "promise tracker" tool, which allowed visitors to compare the policy statements of different political parties.

Although it was created more than 50 years ago, when the average age was much younger, medicare has not adapted well to serve the growing number of elderly Canadians. By 2036, people aged 65 and over will make up a quarter of the population and account for 62 per cent of health costs.

The alliance says that it supports universal public health care but fears the system won't survive unless seniors' care is redesigned. For example, the group says that it takes nine months to get a hip replacement in Canada because hospital beds are crowded with seniors — many of them suffering from dementia and other chronic diseases without long-term care and home-care support. Interestingly, the group says that caring for someone in a hospital costs \$1,000 a day, compared to \$130 a day in long-term care and \$55 a day at home.

"We cannot lose momentum as

we continue to push for federal leadership in the development of a national seniors' strategy," CMA President Dr. Cindy Forbes says, adding that the alliance has documented the Liberal party's election promises as they relate to seniors' care (those, too, are published on the website). They include negotiating a new Health Accord with the provinces and territories; investing \$3 billion over the next four years to deliver more and better home-care services for all Canadians, including access to high-quality, in-home caregivers, financial support for family care, and, when necessary, palliative care; and investing in affordable housing and seniors' facilities.


This spring, the CMA and its alliance partners want the Trudeau government to convene a meeting of provincial and territorial premiers to discuss seniors' care. They also want to see a national seniors' strategy in place by 2019.

Unfortunately, there is no mention in either Demand A Plan or in the Liberal government's promises, of a national pharmacare plan. Pharmaceuticals are the fastest growing component in health care costs and the need for such a plan is urgent.

Still, there is no doubt that Canada's doctors have come a long way since the CMA strenuously opposed the introduction of medicare in Saskatchewan in 1962, and just as adamantly opposed recommendations for a similar national program by the Hall Commission in 1964.

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# Questions on Jesus require more than memorization

## Big Picture, Small Steps

Ryan LeBlanc



Such a pleasant, beaming face. Such an earnest smile. From the back of the classroom, on the first day of school, in the first minute of class, an eager student had a question. Actually, when I called on her, it was more of a comment than a question. No, it was more

*LeBlanc teaches with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and helps educators across Saskatchewan direct their efforts to improve learning. He can be found at BigPictureSmallSteps.com*

of a maxim. “My brother told me this is the easiest class to pass. You just have to put ‘Jesus loves you’ as the answer to every question and they can’t mark you wrong.” Twenty-nine heads swivelled to gauge the first-year teacher’s response to this observation. Ultimately I’d find out that wisdom like this was not an uncommon approach to religious education. Depending on your assumptions, it seems a fair conclusion. But maybe you can imagine me at the beginning of my

career as a religious educator, not wanting to concede on this. From one perspective, the kid has a point. What is the point of Catholic education, after all, and religious instruction especially, if not to bring students into a personal experience of Christ’s love? If giving academic credit for such simple formulae as “Jesus loves you” sounds trite and artificial, this thinking goes, then perhaps we should re-examine the practice of assigning grades and credits for religious education. But in fact there are things that we can know and understand about the Catholic faith — and our tradition has some of the most highly developed and nuanced religious language, concepts and scholarship. From Scripture and tradition are myriad ways of describing and explaining Christ’s love; it would seem valid to instruct students in some of these

ways, and then to expect them to demonstrate their understanding. The phrase “Canada is a country” is not wrong, but neither is it considered everything a graduating student needs to know about our society. As I put it to my students later on, “Jesus is not the answer . . . to No. 39 on the exam.” Whether or not Jesus is the answer, the pressing concern for a religious educator is what, exactly, is the question? For that student in my very first religious education class, then, I could have set a few different kinds of questions. I could have asked, “If Jesus loves you, then, who is Jesus?” Who does the creed say he is? Who does St. Paul say he is? Who does St. Peter say he is? I could have asked, “If Jesus loves you, then, how does he show it?” How does the death and resurrection of Jesus show his love for you? How does the eucharist show Jesus’ love? How does creation show Jesus’ love? I could have asked, “If Jesus loves you, then, what does it mean about who you are?” What does it mean about your place in the world? What does it mean for your understanding of yourself? What does it mean for your future? Finally, I could have asked, “If Jesus loves you, then what ought you do about it?” What ought you do in your relationships? What should your participation in society look like? What should you think about, aspire to, and grow toward? These last questions require more than memorization. They require understanding, analysis, and the application of knowledge — thinking skills which are essential components of building religious literacy in students and in society. Religious literacy means the ability to understand critically and

engage positively with religious expression in language, culture and society, especially, but not exclusively, the expression of one’s own religious tradition. Certainly from the perspective of the Catholic Church — and also from the perspective of secularism — this ability is very important for all people (and so for all school graduates) to have in a globalized world which experiences unprecedented ubiquitous interaction between people of different faiths and no faith. Religious literacy is, when fully considered, a fascinating concept that in some ways is emergent in our generation. The literacy that allowed for the practice of religion and its involvement in all forms of personal and social life was engrained in homogenous cultures for as much as 10,000 years of human civilization. Today, in the blurring of geographic, generational and ideological boundaries that globalization has wrought, we see a need for a new capacity — that of learning our own religious tradition for ourselves (possibly as a religious minority in our local cultures) and interacting purposefully and positively with those of other traditions. We have to be conscious of this learning in new ways than we did before; we need not just knowledge but habits of openness, interpretation and application of that knowledge to deal with a different global religious reality. For the Catholic tradition, the good news is that the teachings of Vatican II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church offer a religious tradition that has respect and critical acceptance of those who hold other worldviews. Our challenge is to wisely invest our energies and our students’ attention so as to bring this tradition fully and honestly to our students.



Design Pics

**PRETZELS FOR LENT** — “During Lent this year, let us resurrect this ancient tradition and serve pretzels — not as snack food — but *with* the main meal, instead of bread. Let the ingredients remind us of who we are and Whose we are,” writes Jeanette Martino Land.

## Pretzels in keeping with lenten themes


By Jeanette Martino Land

Pretzels are a popular snack, especially for anyone who is counting calories. They come in different sizes and shapes — sticks and nuggets, thick and thin, as well as the customary twisted loose knot configuration. In many European countries, pretzels are considered a food proper to Lent. How can this be, since we think of Lent as a time of fasting and prayer? Consider the pretzel’s history. The pretzel can be traced back to the ancient Romans. Its name comes from the Latin word, *pretiola*, meaning “a small reward.” It is said that pretzels were first made by monks in southern Europe and given as a reward to children who learned their prayers properly. The Germans coined the term *brezel*

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

(or prezel, the name by which we know it today — pretzel. Pretzels are traditionally made from three ingredients: a mixture of flour, water and salt. Since the early Christians were very strict in observing the lenten fast set by Pope Saint Gregory the Great in the sixth century, meat and “all things that came from the flesh” — cheese, cream, milk, butter, and eggs — were forbidden food. Pretzels, then, were a natural replacement for regular bread that called for dairy products. In those times, people crossed their arms over their chests when they prayed. Hence, these early Christians twisted the unleavened dough into a loose knot shape that resembled crossed arms. This was to remind them that Lent is a time of prayer and devotion. During Lent this year, let us resurrect this ancient tradition and serve pretzels — not as snack food — but *with* the main meal, instead of bread. Let the ingredients remind us of who we are and

Whose we are. Flour and water are the basic ingredients used to make pretzels. These are the same ingredients that make up the unleavened Bread of Life (John 6:48) of which we partake at the eucharist. Jesus, our Saviour, is our “gift of finest wheat,” our “life-giving water” (Jn 4:14). These ingredients are the sign of God’s life in us. Salt is sprinkled on pretzels as an additive used to season the food and give it zest. It reminds us that “we are the salt of the earth” (Mt 5:13), the sprinkling of people called to be models of excellence, by witnessing to and zealously proclaiming the kingdom of God in our midst. In doing so, we will give savour to the rest of humankind who are in need of a Saviour. We are the yeast called to modify and permeate and eventually change those in our midst. We are the leaven for the world. Ponder these thoughts during Lent. And pass the pretzels!





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Memories and dreams of a prairie blizzard

Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



Last night my dead father came driving a monstrous snow plow, huge beyond imagining, to open a road where not even SaskPower trucks running on their own tracks could go. He drove so fast that I feared operating this goliath would add stress to his already-weakened heart.

Ratzlaff is the author of three books of literary non-fiction published by ThistleDown Press: *The Crow Who Tampered With Time* (2002), *Backwater Mystic Blues* (2006), and *Bindy's Moon* (2015); and editor of *Seeing it Through*, an anthology of seniors' writings published by READ Saskatoon. Formerly a minister, counsellor and university instructor, he now makes his living as a writer in Saskatoon.

And this morning, what can I do but admire him? I don't say the dream was my father-in-himself "contacting" his son-in-himself. Yet there I was, and there he was plowing a way forward.

\*\*\*

A prairie blizzard began overnight, "a honkin' big dump," as one radio caller says this morning. Amid the still-falling snow a shoveller across the way pauses, leans against the building, lights a cigarette. He demonstrates how feeble our patiently built medical and scientific knowledge remains — we know this about lungs, understand that about hearts, predict such-and-such probabilities with a certain degree of confidence.



Design Pics

PRAIRIE BLIZZARD — Let it storm — the wrath is past, I will take refuge in the warm.

The guy outside leans on his shovel, takes one last drag, butts his smoke, looks around and up at the snow coming down, and resumes work when he's good and ready.

\*\*\*

Wind and snow whirl about the village at the dusk of a bleak and boreal day. Dark is quickly coming on. He with his 10 young years fares through the street toward his grandfather's house, thinking how Grandpa will have made his kitchen warm.

The villagers have backed in from the tempest, paths and sidewalks covered over by the furious winter wind. The tracks of his own size-five bootsteps scarcely reach a few feet back toward the schoolhouse when he turns to peer behind. Ahead of him, at the west horizon, stretch the whitened winter fields, visible sometimes between the howlings of the storm. The streetlamps stand beswirled with flying snow, are burning dimly in this moaning wind, but Grandpa will have laid a fire and his kitchen will be warm.

Day is nearly done, the schoolroom might be closed tomorrow. The 10-year-old turns through the gate between the hedges. Even Grandpa's footprints leading to his door are drifting over. And now the boy can vaunt himself, remonstrate with the flying storm, and laugh to stand beyond the edges of such great distemper — Grandpa will have tended to his fire long before the light is gone.

Then leaving at his parka's back this great spectral immensity, he goes content and uncontested through the path, thinking with a 10-year-old's correct regardlessness: *Let it storm — the wrath is past, I will take refuge in the warm.*

And Grandpa shovels one more scoop of coal into the fire, settles


fourscore years into a creaking rocking chair. Thinks of one more story from the fatherland to tell the boy, and of the moments in which time can still be held at bay — but for how long?

\*\*\*

The snowy owl of childhood appeared along the grid road leading to my mother's house in Laird. The hugeness and whiteness were what made it so. The bird sat on a low pole near Pat Hardy's farm (ah, childhood love-that-never-was), and I pulled over and took a bird guide from the glove compartment. This owl had no dark spots or bars, which the book said meant he was an old male — they're the only ones who turn pure white.

He turned his head in a full circle, and after a while turned it back again. He could see more clearly than I the house at the edge of the village where my mother waited with our lunch, could see my father's workshop where it still stood at the edge of the yard, and the slightest motion of a rodent in the fields between here and there. I regretted not having binoculars with me to study him more closely, but for those minutes he suffered my gaze, then eventually flew off toward the north and out of sight.

I drove on, grateful to have seen such a visitant again after these 50-odd adult years. As I neared the village, there was the old snowy owl again, this time sitting on a snowdrift beside a SaskPower pole, his second coming nearly as startling as the first.



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## Abolish death penalty: pope

Pope Francis made a strong plea Feb. 21 for countries to abolish the death penalty. Initiated by previous popes, it's a change he has advocated since the beginning of his pontificate.

In this Sunday address, Pope Francis linked the abolition of the death penalty to the Year of Mercy. He appealed to Catholic leaders around the world to work to stop executions during this year. He emphasized that the death penalty should be abolished permanently. "The commandment 'You shall not kill' has absolute value, and covers both the innocent and the guilty," he said. "Even the criminal keeps the inviolable right to life, a gift from God."

His address came on the eve of an international conference organized by the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome. The conference was titled, A World without the Death Penalty.

The pope said he hoped the event would give renewed impetus to the momentum to abolish capital punishment. He added that everyone deserves the chance for redemption.

The Saint'Egidio Community followed up the papal plea with a statement saying that in a world where terrorism and violence are widespread, governments want to respond to violence with more violence, but in 2000, Pope John Paul II stated emphatically that there's no justification for capital punishment. He said "the death penalty, an unworthy punishment still used in some countries," should be "abolished throughout the world" during a visit to Rome's *Regina Coeli* prison. Earlier, in his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life, 56), he had said that cases calling for the death penalty "are very rare, if not practically non-existent."

When Pope Francis spoke at a joint session of the U.S. Congress last September, he also called for the global abolition of the death penalty.

According to Death Penalty Information Center, the United States is one of 37 countries where the death penalty is legal and has been used in the past 10 years. Other countries include China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Syria, Iran, and Pakistan.

In Canada, the death penalty was abolished in 1976. The last hanging occurred on Dec. 11, 1962, at Toronto's Don Jail.

Opinion about the death penalty has remained divided, however. On June 30, 1987, a bill to restore the death penalty was introduced and defeated in the House of Commons by a 148 - 127 vote. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Minister of Justice Ray Hnatyshyn and Minister of External Affairs Joe Clark were among those who opposed the bill.

Polls show that 48 per cent of Canadians favoured the death penalty for murderers in 2004; this climbed to 62 per cent in 2010. A 2011 poll found that 66 per cent of Canadians favoured capital punishment, but only 41 per cent would actually support its reintroduction in Canada.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2267) notes that traditional church teaching does not exclude recourse to the death penalty in extreme cases. But, it argues, "If, instead, bloodless means are sufficient to defend against the aggressor and to protect the safety of persons, public authority should limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity to the dignity of the human person."

Hopefully this teaching will strengthen Canadians' resolve to keep the death penalty off the books. — PWN

## When politicians are friends

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scali died Feb. 13 at a Texas lodge while on a hunting trip. It

was a sudden and unexpected death.

Many comments are being made about him, the longest serving judge in the Supreme Court. He is lauded as a dedicated public servant, a great jurist and a faithful Catholic. He was the face of a conservative legal movement that confronted dominant liberal legal attitudes and movements in America.

One of his traits that should not be overlooked was his capacity for friendship. He has been called one of the few major Washington figures who cultivated private friendships with people he routinely opposed in public.

His storied friendship with the liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg actually inspired an opera that debuted last spring. "We were best buddies," she wrote in a tribute to him. "We disagreed now and then, but when I wrote for the Court and received a Scalia dissent, the opinion ultimately released was notably better than my initial circulation."

Scalia himself once remarked: "Call us the odd couple. She likes opera, and she's a very nice person. What's not to like? Except her views on the law."

Michael Sean Winters, in his National Catholic Reporter blog, wrote that Fred Rotondaro, chair of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, told him, "I had the good fortune to know and be a friend of Justice Scalia for some 30 years. We agreed on virtually nothing politically but had fun lunches, almost always over Italian food and wine, talking often about Catholic thinkers like Chesterton. On the occasions we would move into political issues, he would needle me without mercy on my left-wing politics."

Washington has too few friendships like that anymore, Winters comments. And Canadian politicians would do well to also take note of this. — PWN

# World's culture of death will change when 'justice flows like a river'

## Soul Mending

Yvonne A. Zarowny



"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the lord said: Whatever you did for the least of my brothers and sisters you did for me."

— Mt 25:37-40

I have been very confused by my reactions to both my parish

and community's reaction to sponsoring refugees. Our parish priest

actually had to instruct people to stop raising money!

I am pretty sure that is a first.

At least three different groups within my relatively small community are sponsoring refugees.

Why am I so angry, frustrated and despondent? Is this not a sign of people's good hearts?

Why is my heart heavy? My sense of hope shattered?

I had to summon every ounce of willpower (while eating my way through my pantry) to force myself to move forward with this year's Development and Peace Share Lent Campaign.

All the way I was fighting my soul's sense of "what's the use?"

Don't get me wrong — I like

the campaign.

It is based on *Laudato Si'* and our need for an integral ecology.

It opens the door for our reflecting on the inter-connections of all things including how our dominant mode of development is generating environmental devastation, poverty, war, terrorism and the most refugees ever in the world.

We passed the number generated by the Second World War.

The sense that kept and keeps

overwhelming me is that . . . yes, people care . . . but so few are inclined or able to take the time to do the work to unpack why we are in the midst of the most serious existential threat — ever!

The environmental devastation, wars, human-generated climate chaos and refugees are but a few indicators our dominant mode of development is killing us — in

— MESS, page 19

# Web of relations profoundly shapes us

By Milton Friesen, Hamilton, Troy Media

A complex, invisible but powerful web of relations profoundly shapes us from individual to city levels. But how do we foster these relations?

Organizations like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) are helping to answer the question, to the betterment of us all.

My exposure to the FCM began in 2001 as a newly elected

municipal councillor in Vegreville, Alta. The physical infrastructure advocacy that FCM has built a solid reputation on was quickly apparent. Fast forward to today and the FCM's Sustainable Communities Conference, where I was a workshop moderator.

What was remarkable was that the capacity-plus workshop audience wasn't there to talk about physical infrastructure or ways to generate new revenues — they were there to talk about the role that human connections in our communities play in solving some of our most pressing problems.

The session was called Turning Social Capital into Sustainability Success. It featured panelists who are leaders in attending to the relations that shape us.

Although urban planners Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber gave us a good look at the concept of "wicked problems" in their treatise in 1975, we've been slow to catch on. Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna reminded us during her address that "no one on their own can address climate change" and a quick perusal of her mandate letter as a member of the federal cabinet reflects a deeply relational dynamic that is sobering in its challenges and imaginative in its feasibility. Without a robust social infrastructure, Canada's goals will not be met, however well-meaning we may be.

That's what made this workshop linking social capital and sustain-

— CLARITY, page 19



CNS/Ron Wu, Catholic Extension

**U.S. CROWD AT PAPAL BORDER MASS** — Catholics gathered at the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas, watch Pope Francis celebrate mass in nearby Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Feb. 17. It was simulcast on the stadium's big screen.

Friesen is the program director of Social Cities at Cardus, a think tank dedicated to the renewal of North American social architecture. [www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)



# Mercy is a way to win over opponents

Continued from page 1

and injustice.” He also said mercy was a way to win over opponents. He also preached urgency. “We cannot deny the humanitarian crisis which in recent years has meant the migration of thousands of people, whether by train or highway or on foot, crossing hundreds of kilometres through mountains, deserts and inhospitable areas,” Pope Francis said Feb. 17 to hundreds of thousands of people from both sides of the border. “The human tragedy that is forced migration is a global phenomenon today. This crisis, which can be measured in numbers and statistics, we want to measure

instead with names, stories and families.” The mass capped a six-day trip to Mexico in which Pope Francis travelled to the northern and southern borders and denounced the indignities of discrimination, corruption and violence. During the trip he also asked oppressed indigenous peoples for their forgiveness and chastised the privileged political and business classes — saying their exclusionary actions were creating “fertile ground” for children to fall into organized crime and drug cartels. Pope Francis delivered his homily a stone’s throw from the Rio Grande, which has swallowed so many migrants over the years

as they vainly tried to enter the United States in search of bettering their lot in life and, more recently, escaping violence enveloping Central America. The mass was celebrated as a binational event with thousands watching across the Rio Grande in El Paso and in a college football stadium. Pope Francis saluted the crowds watching at the Sun Bowl stadium and Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso for providing technological connections that allowed them to “pray, sing and celebrate together” and “make us feel like a single family and the same Christian community.” The pope focused on migration, along with the dangers migrants encounter en route to their destinations and the difficulties of surviving on the margins of society without protections. “Being faced with so many legal vacuums, they get caught up in a web that ensnares and always destroys the poorest,” Pope Francis said.

# Mess we are in is the result of human decisions

Continued from page 18

so many ways, on so many levels, including spiritually. Talk about a culture of death! All cultures are social constructs or ways of making sense of ourselves and our worlds. “Social” means “human created.” This is not the doing of the Divine as some would have us believe. The mess we are in is the result of human decisions — whether consciously made with all outcomes intended or not. Unlike some of our Christian brothers and sisters, Catholic teaching is that no one, and definitely not the Divine, is coming to save us. Pope Benedict XVI was clear on that. Catholic teaching is that:

- our Divine Beloved gave us free will;
- Jesus came to “save us” and show us “the Way” is one of love and compassion; and
- Spirit is always available to inspire and guide us if we just open to her while doing the work to unpack how we got ourselves into such a mess.

While nursing my bruised ego from totally messing up a mass announcement about Share Lent and trying to avoid going out in the rain, I happened upon a Dec. 27, 2015, CBC Sunday Edition interview with American Evangelical theologian and writer Jim Wallis. He and Enright were discussing Wallis’ 2014 book *The (Un) Common Good: How the Gospel Brings Hope to A Divided World*.

*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.*

I highly recommend it if your soul is hurting. Wallis kept returning to Matthew 25. And I got to thinking . . . what if Matthew 25:37-40 were put together with Amos 5:24, where justice/righteousness flows like a river? What if — while feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and sponsoring refugees — we were also engaging to transform the root causes generating the hunger, naked, homeless and refugees? American theologian and writer Marcus Borg states all references to justice/righteousness in our scriptures refer to social/economic — and now, ecological — justice for all. Wallis states there are over 2,000 such references. What if Christians were once again a threat to the established social order as they were in the first few centuries of their existence — before it was institutionalized as the religion of empire? What if the bishops and official “church-dom” actually prioritized training our priests and giving us the resources so we, through participating with the Divine, could engage our culture of death to transform it to a variety of cultures of life . . . where all Creation has life with dignity? What if we got away from “magical thinking” and once again understood “liturgy” to mean participation of the faithful in “sacred work”; in the work of the Divine to ensure “justice flows like a river” from our social structures . . . rather than refugees, climate chaos, fear and hatred? How will Easter, the birthing anew of cultures of life, ever happen without such a prioritizing?

Migration has marked Mexico for generations, though the number of Mexicans leaving the country is now surpassed by those returning — involuntarily or otherwise — as poor job prospects, an increasingly fortified border and anti-immigration initiatives prompt most to stay put. Ironically, Mexico has assumed an unlikely role over the past several years: enforcer as it detains and deports record numbers of Central Americans trying to transit the country — while many more of those migrants are preyed upon by criminals and corrupt public officials and suffer crimes such as kidnap, robbery and rape. The Mexican crackdown came after thousands of Central American children streamed through Mexico in 2014, seeking to escape forced enlistment in gangs and hoping to reunite with parents living in the shadows of American society, working minimum-wage jobs to support children left with relatives they hadn’t seen in years. “Each step, a journey laden with grave injustices. . . . They are brothers and sisters of those excluded as a result of poverty and violence, drug trafficking and criminal organizations,” Pope Francis said, while lauding the priests, religious and lay Catholics who accompany and protect migrants as they move through Mexico — acts of compassion not always popular with the authorities. The pope’s visit was promoted by civic officials as a rebirth for Ciudad Juarez, though priests say the city still suffers vices such as exclusion and violence — in lower numbers than before — and jobs with low salaries and long hours in the booming factory for export economy, all of which strain family life.



D. Gamache

## Longing for Spring

As winter winds  
and still-short days  
drag me down;  
as snow piles higher  
and frost-bitten cheeks  
become the norm;  
I dream instead  
of friends and family  
’round my picnic table.

By Donna Gamache

# Greater clarity is needed

Continued from page 18

ability unique. It was clear from presenters and participants alike that it is very difficult to bring about change when the social fabric is thin or doesn’t exist. When we don’t have sufficient trust or connection as individuals or organizations, we become preoccupied with who (other than us) is responsible for our various messes. If you are a municipality, it’s the province or the federal government. If you’re a business owner, it’s all of government. If you’re a citizen, it’s business and government, and so on. We need greater clarity on responsibility and with it, more effective ways of identifying if we have the resources to deliver what we’ve been asked to shoulder. Without that, frustration will increase as the dreams of the future get bigger. Elected municipal officials and administrators identified how critical community groups of all kinds are in facilitating democratic process. In many cases, strong community groups are more trusted than local officials, given their service to people at immediate, neighbourhood levels. Every municipality has a local, street-level dynamic. What happens at those levels is vital, even for global issues, because democratic governments at all levels need a civil society that can enable their governing. One participant asked: what happens if the social capital isn’t present or is very thinned out? A local government can’t just “increase social fabric by 5.9 per cent

this year” in the same way that a water main project can be undertaken to shore up physical infrastructure. We need to spend more time and energy in answering that insightful question and its flipside: how do we protect, nurture and grow the social fabric of our communities where it already exists? The workshop presenters provided some answers:

- we need spaces designed for more than one mode of transportation
- we need spaces designed for human-scale interaction that includes investment in programming and social use
- we need to identify barriers to social connectivity and remove them (e.g. filling out a stack of paperwork to host a simple block party)
- we need faith communities that are generators of public good in our neighbourhoods.

Closing keynote speaker Charles Montgomery (Happy City) makes it clear that sociable spaces, strategies and our happiness are clearly related. Is there a role for happiness (as a kind of proxy for well-being) in approaching our collective challenges? Could it be more effective than grim determination? It must surely be better than unaring resignation. While these are clearly valuable conversations to have at a conference dedicated to communities and sustainability, the deeper gains will be found in expanding these conversations where they are already well underway and carrying them to other places in government, business and our communities, where they are desperately needed.





# Palestinian situation ‘inhuman’: church commission

By Judith Sudilovsky

JERUSALEM (CNS) — The Commission for Justice and Peace of the Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land called on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to work for a change in the current violent situation, but it chastised Israel as responsible for its creation.

“The present situation for the Palestinians is inhuman,” it said in its statement released to the press

Feb. 18. “It is settlers who occupy, day by day, Palestinian land. It is the siege of Gaza for years already. . . . It is also a siege for the rest of Palestine and diverse hardships, political, economical and social.”

Calling the situation in the Holy Land “stagnant and lifeless” with no “light of hope” either for the Israelis or Palestinians, it said Israelis need “security and tranquility” while Palestinians are waiting for an end to occupation and for an independent state.



CNS/Paul Haring

**LOMBARDI DOWNSIZES—** In this Sept. 11, 2014, file photo, Pope Francis checks his watch as he talks with Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesperson. Lombardi retired as head of Vatican Radio, but has stayed on as Vatican spokesperson.

## Bishops must watch film Spotlight: expert

By Carol Glatz

ROME (CNS) — Every bishop and cardinal must watch the film *Spotlight*, so they realize reporting abuse — not silence — will save the church, said the Vatican’s former chief prosecutor of clerical sex abuse cases.



CNS/Paul Haring

**Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna**

The film underlines the key problem of *omerta* or a code of silence, said Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna of Malta, according to the Italian daily *La Repubblica* Feb. 17.

“The movie shows how the instinct — that unfortunately was present in the church — to protect a reputation was completely wrong,” he said after a showing of the film in Valletta, Malta.

“All bishops and cardinals must see this film,” he said, “because they must understand that it is reporting that will save the church, not *omerta*.”

The archbishop, 56, is the head of a board within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that deals with appeals filed by clergy accused of abuse. Before he was named an auxiliary bishop in Malta in 2012, Scicluna spent 10 years as promoter of justice at the doctrinal congregation, handling accusations of clerical sex abuse.

He told *La Repubblica* that an important moment in the film, which looks at the Boston Globe’s investigation into church leaders covering up abuse allegations, was a line spoken by the lawyer, who said, “If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to abuse one.”

The archbishop said this shows how complicity was a major part of the problem: While an individual was responsible for an act of abuse, “also guilty are the others — those who know and don’t say anything,” he told the newspaper.

When the Globe’s investigative series started to be published in January 2002, Scicluna said that was the same month the head of the Vatican’s doctrinal congregation, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, called him to help their office handle cases. St. John Paul II had put the doctrinal congregation in charge of overseeing cases of clerical sex abuse against minors in 2001.

St. John Paul II also had U.S. cardinals come to the Vatican just a few months after the Globe began publishing its expose, telling

But the situation has become one of an *intifada*, it said. Palestinians who carry out stabbings and other violent acts against Israelis “plunge to their death out of despair caused by a life full of frustration, humiliation and insecurity, with no hope at all,” it added.

“Is Israeli society satisfied with this situation? Is it satisfied with this life in the shadow of continuing hostility with the Palestinian people?” it asked.

Enumerating a list of hardships and humiliations — including home demolitions, military checkpoints, the “Judaization” of Jerusalem by “sending away” its Palestinian residents, and accusations of terrorism against all Palestinians and the collective punishments that includes — it called on Israeli leaders to “enlarge your vision and hearts.”

“Change the situation. Shake it out of its mobility. There is enough space in the land for all of us,” it said. “Let all have the same dignity and equality. No occupation and no discrimination. Two peoples living together and loving each other according to the way they choose.”

Such an inhuman situation cannot be one which either the Israelis or Palestinians would choose, it said. It urged Israelis to see Palestinians not as terrorists but as people who want to live normal lives but find themselves “oppressed, frustrated and

the cardinals that there was no place in the church for priests or religious who abused minors.

“It was the beginning of a new era for the church,” Scicluna said.

The fact that even today a member of the church who is guilty of abuse may go unreported “is a very serious error. It was Ratzinger who told us that it was necessary not to look at the problem simply as a sin but as both a violation and a crime.”

The archbishop denied as “unfounded and unjust” past criticisms by some media that the future-Pope Benedict XVI had covered up abuse when he was head of the doctrinal congregation.

Abuse cases were being handled “on the level of the local dioceses,” the archbishop said.

“In the 1960s and 1970s, many bishops were basing their decisions on the woefully inadequate theory that these crimes were caused by surrounding conditions. And that’s why, instead of reporting the guilty, they moved them from parish to parish. But they remained predators wherever” they were.

Ratzinger would hold a special meeting every Friday with his staff, he said, to study the cases before them and to launch a trial. “We all saw his suffering,” which often left him absolutely speechless during the meetings, the archbishop said.

He said the future pope was “indignant as well as deeply affected” by the abuse scandal, condemning it in his well-known Way of the Cross meditation in 2005 when he said, “How much filth there is in the church.”

deprived of the freedom God has given them.”

The commission called on the Palestinian leadership to speak out in a voice for “peace and justice for two peoples.”

“Redeem the land again and begin a new history. Redeem Jerusalem again, and begin a new history that conforms with its holiness and universality. Stop every self-interested vision and all corruption,” it said.

Once again it emphasized the important role education plays and called for the re-education of the younger generation, which has grown up in an atmosphere where Palestinians are viewed as terrorists and Israelis as the enemy.

“Let us begin, all of us, a new history,” it said. “Our land is holy, and the place of our daily living together. Let the two peoples live in peace.”

## Synods should get more input from lay faithful

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — An assembly of bishops at the Vatican should have more input from the lay faithful, said church experts attending a seminar hosted by the head of the synod of bishops.

A renewed understanding of the role of the people of God and their bishops “warrants considering not just the bishop of Rome (the pope) and the episcopate in the synodal process, but also the lay faithful,” said a communiqué issued by the synod’s secretary general, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri.

The communiqué, released by the Vatican press office Feb. 17, provided a brief summary of the conclusions reached by a seminar held Feb. 6 - 9 at the Vatican. Sponsored by the synod’s secretary general, the gathering looked at the synod of bishops as being at the service of a “synodal church.”

Participants, who included professors and experts in ecclesiology and canon law from all over the world, reflected on Pope Francis’ call “to overcome self-referentiality in the ordained ministries in order to go back to seeing bishops as those” who each represent their local diocese and together represent the entire church, the statement said.

This rediscovery of the bishop’s relationship to the local and universal church and the role of the lay

faithful requires rethinking ways lay Catholics can play a bigger part in the entire synodal process — in preparing for a synod, in the actual gathering and in implementing final decisions, it said.

Based on the past two synod gatherings on the family, which consulted with the lay faithful beforehand through questionnaires and other methods of input, this kind of consultation with “the people of God” must become a permanent feature in preparing for a synod, it said.

A number of participants at the seminar said they hoped there would be “greater listening to and involvement of the faithful who take part in a synodal assembly,” specifically by taking greater advantage of the presence and input of lay experts and observers, it said.

“Even though they cannot vote, they can carry out a role that is important, in any case, in the discernment and decision-making process,” it said.

The communiqué repeated Pope Francis’ call for a more “listening church.”

Listening involves more than just hearing, it said, in that the process recognizes “each one has something to learn — the faithful, the episcopal college, the bishop of Rome. Each one listening to the other and everyone listening to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the truth.”



CNS/Diego Azubel, EPA

**POPE CALLS FOR END TO DEATH PENALTY —** The shackled feet of a bombing suspect in Bangkok, Thailand, are seen as he is escorted by officers and prison personnel to Military Court Feb. 16. Pope Francis, in his Sunday Angelus talk Feb. 21, asked world leaders for a Jubilee Year moratorium on the death penalty.

The love of one’s country is a natural thing. But why should love stop at the border?

— Pablo Casais