



## JOY formation

A hands-on formation program grounded in Catholic social teaching will begin this September in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.  
— page 3

## Historic agreement

Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church and Christ the King Roman Catholic Church in Foam Lake have signed a historic agreement that will see the Holy Eucharist building co-owned by both parishes.  
— page 6

## Archdiocesan synod

Archbishop of Winnipeg Richard Gagnon has called a synod for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, the first in its history, to commence on Pentecost Sunday, May 15.  
— page 7



## Open and shut

Doors are entranceways and exits; they're openings, barriers and passages, writes Mary Marrocco. In this Year of Mercy, we discover that "becoming mercy" can be as simple as walking through a door.  
— page 10

## Catholic-Muslim dialogue

Deepening Interreligious Dialogue and Community Alliances was the focus of a Catholic-Muslim dialogue held recently in San Diego.  
— page 12

## Restorative justice

Peter Oliver describes a mediation process facilitated through the Restorative Opportunities program co-ordinated by Correction Services Canada which allows people who have been harmed by a criminal act to meet with the person who has done the harm.  
— page 13

# First Nations extend welcome to refugees

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — First Nations and indigenous representatives extended a warm welcome to refugees who have recently arrived in Saskatoon. The afternoon program Feb. 24 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family included messages of solidarity and welcome, a round dance, refreshments and information about treaties and the history of indigenous peoples.

"Just like your people, mine have faced many injustices throughout history," said speaker Janelle Pewapsonias, an entrepreneur, student and mother from Little Pine First Nation.

Speaking to the refugees from Syria, she added, "I don't understand your language, but I am looking forward to hearing your stories. You and I, and all of us, we are strong people. We have more in common than you know."

The Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISA),



K. Yaworski

**WELCOME TO REFUGEES — Translator Abeer Younis helped speaker Eugene Arcand share words of welcome with refugees from Syria at an event held Feb. 24 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.**

Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Saskatchewan

(AFCS), and partners from BRIDGES (Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and

Growing Engagement) joined together to organize the event to welcome refugees who have arrived in the community since November.

Master of ceremonies Brad Bird of AFCS introduced special guests, elders and elected representatives, including Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison, while Abeer Younis translated each speaker's words into Arabic.

Some 400 refugees who have fled war and persecution in Syria have arrived in Saskatoon so far, part of the Canadian commitment to respond to the international crisis, said Ali Abukar, executive director of the Saskatoon Open Door Society. Refugees from other countries have also arrived in Saskatchewan since November.

As part of the welcoming event Elder Maria Linklater offered prayers in her language. Traditional drummers and singers presented a victory song. Eugene Arcand of Muskeg Lake First

— REFUGEES, page 6

# Committee recommendations go far beyond Carter

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The special parliamentary committee on physician-assisted dying has recommended euthanasia for the

mentally ill and opened the way for euthanasia of consenting minors.

Its report tabled in the House of Commons Feb. 25 goes far beyond the Supreme Court's

Carter decision, which restricted physician-assisted death to consenting, competent adults with "a grievous and irremediable medical condition" that causes intolerable suffering.

The committee report recommends allowing physician-assisted death for those with psychiatric conditions; it opens the way for children under 18 to be euthanized; it allows for advanced directives so non-competent persons can be euthanized provided they made the directive when competent; and recommends forcing physicians to make an effective referral. It also recommends all health facilities that receive public funding provide physician-assisted death.

It does not recommend any further defining of the Carter decision's words "grievous and irremediable." It recommends minimum safeguards of two independent physicians determining the patient qualifies for a physician-assisted death. It also recommends requests for euthanasia must be made in writing, supported by two independent witnesses.

The report does recommend Health Canada establish a Secretariat on Palliative and End-of-Life care toward the end of establishing a national palliative care strategy. It also recommends national strategies for mental illness and dementia.

House Leader Dominic LeBlanc said a decision on whether to force MPs to support the legislation will be made after the bill is drafted. He told journalists the previous decision to whip the vote was changed

after consultations with colleagues.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould said the report will be considered, along with the report of the external panel.

"It's too early to say what is going to be in the legislation or what's not going to be in the legislation," said Wilson-Raybould.

Conservative MPs on the committee filed a dissenting report, arguing the recommendations go

# Two priests and nun bring mission of mercy

By Lou Baldwin

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — "Two Irishmen and a nun entered a bar. . . ." What's the punchline?

There isn't one because this is no joke, but rather a new Catholic outreach effort of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia that has taken firm root in a former bar in a tough section of the city.

The two Irishmen are Rev. Joseph Devlin, former pastor of St. Bridget Parish in Philadelphia, and Rev. William Murphy, former pastor of Assumption BVM Parish in West Grove, and the nun is Sister Ann Raymond Welte, an Immaculate Heart of Mary sister, who is former director of Temple University's Newman Centre.

The onetime bar is now Mother of Mercy House, which opened last July as a place of worship and social ministry. It's a haven of hope in a neighbourhood where hope has been in short supply for years, although there are slight hints of a comeback.

It all started when nearby Ascension of Our Lord Parish closed in 2012, and Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia asked his priests for ideas on what

could be done to keep a Catholic presence in the Kensington neighbourhood, and Devlin and Murphy both independently volunteered to be missioned there.

"It has met expectations," said Devlin, after a small community mass in late January. "I'm more and more convinced an obvious presence of the church is needed in the neighbourhood and the people are very happy and receptive. They say, 'Wow, the church is back.'"

"They know they can come and receive help. We offer mass and prayer to people who have not the ability to go to mass and they can seek spiritual help from a priest."

Although mass is celebrated most weekdays for a small knot of people, Mother of Mercy is not a parish, and both priests have weekend ministry in suburban parishes.

By doing this, they are not taking parishioners away from nearby parishes and they have the opportunity to increase awareness and involve others in their inner-city spiritual and social ministry.

"We are at the heart of the neighbourhood and we are work-

— SPIRITUAL, page 15



CCN/D. Gyapong

Jody Wilson-Raybould

far beyond the limits prescribed by the Supreme Court.

"Unfortunately, the regime recommended in the committee's main report falls far short of what is necessary to protect vulnerable Canadians and the Charter protection of conscience rights of health professionals," the dissenting report says.

— CARTER, page 4



# Use wealth, power for common good, says pope

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Wealth and power are meant to serve the poor and the well-being of everyone, not to selfishly exploit others, Pope Francis said.

When power loses that sense of service, it “turns into arrogance and becomes control and subjugation,” he said during his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square Feb. 24.

But God is greater than people’s wickedness and “sleazy games,” urging them to recognize their sins and repent, he said.

“How wonderful it would be if the powerful exploiters today did the same” and changed their ways, the pope said to applause.

During this Year of Mercy, the pope continued a series of talks dedicated to divine mercy, looking specifically at the correct use of wealth and power.

The Bible gives many accounts of kings and powerful people as well as “their arrogance

and abuse of power, too,” he said.

“Wealth and power are things that can be good and useful for the common good if they are put at the service of the poor and everyone with justice and charity,” he said.

“However, as often happens, when they are lived as a privilege, with selfishness and arrogance, they become instruments of corruption and death,” he said.

One example, he said, is seen in the story of King Ahab, whose pagan wife, Jezebel, cooks up a scheme to have Naboth unfairly accused of blasphemy and put to death so they can take possession of Naboth’s vineyard after he refused to sell it.

The pope said the Old Testament account “is not a story from another era. It’s about today, about the powerful who exploit the poor, the people, in order to have more money. It’s the story about human trafficking, slave labour, poor people paid under the table with the minimum in

order to enrich the powerful. It’s the story about corrupt politicians who want more and more and more,” he said.

He said God cautions people about where wielding power “without respect for life, without justice, without mercy” leads and what happens when the hunger for power becomes insatiable.

For example, the prophet Isaiah, who “wasn’t a communist,” the pope said, warns powerful landowners against always accumulating more property as it will lead to their dwelling all alone, in solitude.

Pope Francis said no matter how much evil people are capable of, God is always waiting and willing to let them turn their lives around.

“God saw this crime, but he knocks on Ahab’s heart” anyway. With the prophet Elijah’s help, Ahab recognizes his sin, mortifies himself and asks forgiveness — a story of enlightenment and conversion that would be wonderful

to see happen in the lives of powerful people today who exploit others, the pope said.

God shows how “mercy can heal wounds and can change history,” he said. “Divine mercy is stronger than human sin, it is stronger, and this is the lesson of Ahab.”

True power and kingship are found in Christ, whose “power is completely different. His throne is the cross. He isn’t a king who kills, but the opposite: he gives life.”

“His going to everyone, especially the weakest, conquers solitude and the fate of death, which is where sin leads,” the pope said.

With his tenderness and willingness to draw close to sinners, Jesus leads sinners to a place of grace and forgiveness, he said.



CNS/Paul Haring

**GENERAL AUDIENCE — A jersey is thrown at Pope Francis as he arrives to lead his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Feb. 24.**

## Investors push companies to do the right thing

By Dennis Sadowski

WASHINGTON (CNS) — If it’s spring, it must be corporate annual general meeting season.

For investors concerned about corporate accountability and transparency, it’s one of the busiest times of the year.

The annual general meetings give shareholders the chance to publicly engage corporate leadership on hot-button issues such as human rights, climate change, sustainability, lobbying expenditures and human trafficking.

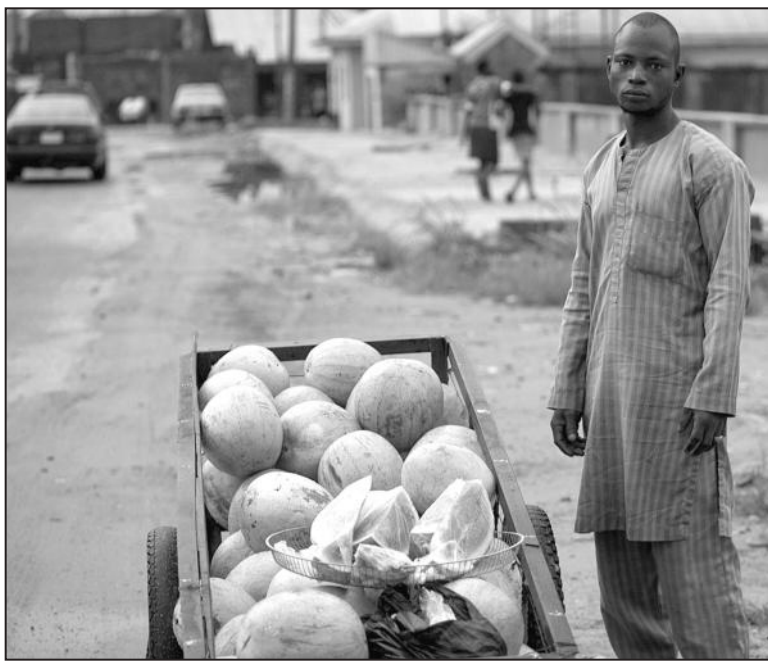
Faith-based investors — many of which are members of the Interfaith Centre on Corporate Responsibility — have led shareholder advocacy campaigns for more than four decades. Over the years, they have leveraged their financial clout as stockholders to air grievances about corporate activities and to pursue responsible corporate action.

“There’s a unique role for faith-based investors in pushing the world’s biggest companies to acting as responsible and accountable corporate citizens,” said Josh Zinner, ICCR’s new CEO. “Primarily this is about using the role of investor to push companies not to do the right thing purely for moral reasons . . . but to do the right thing for shareholders as well.”

Such engagement affects small investors as well through the pension funds and mutual funds in which their contributions are invested. Capuchin Father Michael H. Crosby, executive director of the Wisconsin/Iowa/Minnesota Coalition for Responsible Investment, an ICCR member, said each investor, whether small or large, should have a say in any company in which they hold shares.

“It’s their responsibility because stocks give you ownership,” Crosby told Catholic News Service. “Ownership makes you responsible for the acts (of a company) like any other ownership makes you responsible under law.”

He suggested that sharehold-



CNS/Tife Owolabi, EPA

**NIGERIA INVESTMENT POLICY CRITIQUED — In this 2015 file photo, a man sells watermelon slices on a roadside in Bayelsa, Nigeria. Nigeria’s Catholic bishops called on the government to become less dependent on crude oil as the driver of the country’s economy and to strengthen investments in grassroots businesses to reduce glaring financial inequality.**

ers, when they receive a proxy statement in the mail, examine it carefully and send in their vote.

Not all ICCR members are faith-based institutions. Among ICCR members sponsoring resolutions are the California State Teachers’ Retirement System, Calvert Investments and the United Steelworkers.

One ICCR member, Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment in Seattle, has used the leverage of its 15 members to press major companies on numerous interests throughout its 22-year history.

“We feel if we own the companies, we need to be responsible shareholders, which means they’re using our money for what they’re doing,” said Dominican Sister Judy Byron, the coalition’s co-ordinator. “I learned in owning these companies we have a responsibility for what they’re doing and to call them to be responsible.”

The coalition is supporting one of its member institutions, the Northwest Women Religious

Investment Trust, which this year has filed proxy resolutions with ExxonMobil on climate change, Phillips 66 on greenhouse gas emissions, Chevron on hydraulic fracturing and Google/Alphabet on human rights risk assessment.

Such shareholder activism comes down to integrating personal values with the investment world, Rev. David Schilling, a senior program director at ICCR, told Catholic News Service. “What’s at stake here is the lives of human beings. Publicly traded companies are given charters by the public to work for the common good, but it doesn’t always work out that way,” he said.

ICCR is tracking 257 resolutions filed by its members with 174 companies this annual meeting season. Included are 91 resolutions addressing climate change, which were filed on the heels of the historic COP21 agreement reached in Paris in December. Overall, the number of resolutions filed by ICCR members has increased by 60 per cent since 2011.

## Bishops seek ways to boost ‘encounter with Christ’

TAMPA, Fla. (CNS) — Fourteen bishops from the United States, Latin America and Canada explored ways to invite the faithful into what Pope Francis has called “an encounter with Jesus Christ” during three days of prayer and discussion.

The 38th meeting of bishops of America concluded Feb. 25 with the prelates saying they were returning home with a feeling of camaraderie and solidarity after sharing their experiences of service and a fuller understanding of the unity they share through the church.

Representatives of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Latin American bishops’ council, known as CELAM, attended the meeting, which opened Feb. 22.

Bishop Douglas Crosby of Hamilton, president of the Canadian bishops’ conference, said the meeting encouraged the bishops in their work. “We learn from one another,” he said in the statement. “we support one another; we encourage one another. We are united in our desire to follow Christ faithfully.”

“Looking across the table, I saw brothers in Christ,” Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, USCCB president, said in a statement. “My prayer is for all the People of God to see their neighbour, north to south, as their sister and brother in Christ.”

Cardinal Ruben Salazar Gomez of Bogota, Colombia, CELAM

president, said in the statement that the bishops seek to accompany the faithful as they search for “a more dignified life for families.”

The bishops discussed how Jesus’ love heals and unifies as they focused on several topics including immigration, evangelization of urban communities, native peoples’ rights, physician-assisted suicide, the danger of pornography, and the growing threat to religious freedom around the world.

Subsequent discussions looked at how the individual conferences were supporting the Year of Mercy called for by Pope Francis. The statement said the bishops looked in particular at how the topic of mercy is discussed in the Aparecida document, which was drafted in 2007 by Pope Francis when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and offers a pastoral vision and guidelines for the region’s church.

The bishops shared how resources related to the pontiff’s call are being distributed to parishioners under each conference’s jurisdiction.

The Canadian delegation, headed by Crosby, also included Rev. Lionel Gendron, Bishop of St-Jean-Longueuil and vice-president of the CCCB, and Rev. Luc Cyr, Archbishop of Sherbrooke and co-treasurer of the CCCB, together with CCCB General Secretary Msgr. Frank Leo, Jr., and Kyle Ferguson, CCCB adviser for ecclesial and interfaith relations. The meeting this year was organized by the CCCB.



# JOY formation program launched in Saskatoon diocese

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A hands-on formation program grounded in Catholic social teaching will begin this September in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Recruitment for the Justice and Outreach Year of Formation (JOY) was launched Feb. 20 at a diocesan Congress Day presented in Saskatoon with a simultaneous broadcast to Humboldt and Kindersley.

Held over 10 weekends once a month from September to June, JOY will cover a multitude of social justice themes, said JOY co-ordinator Kate O’Gorman.

Learning and prayer will be part of the JOY process, but there will be a strong emphasis on practical experience and hands-on service, practically linking Catholic social teaching with the real-life challenges experienced by people living on the margins.

A promotional video for the program began with Blake Sittler, director of pastoral services for

the diocese, asking, “Who is your social justice hero?”

Sittler suggested heroes such as Blessed Archbishop Oscar Romero, Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, as well as local examples Sister Calista Arnold, OSU, who pioneered work with AIDS patients in the 1980s, Rev. André Poihièvre, who started the STR8 UP outreach to men and women striving to leave behind gang life, and Dianne Anderson, who provides prison ministry in the diocese.

However, the call to live the Gospel among those most in need is not confined to a few exceptional people, but is the baptismal call of every Christian, Sittler stressed. Understanding that call, and being formed and equipped to answer it in an appropriate and transformational way is the goal of the JOY program.

In starting to co-ordinate the program and planning sessions, O’Gorman says she has already deepened her own understanding



K. Yaworski

**CONGRESS DAY — From left: Kate O’Gorman, co-ordinator of the new diocesan Justice and Outreach Year of Formation (JOY program), master of ceremonies Daniel Pettipas, parish life director at St. Augustine Parish in Saskatoon, and Sharon Powell, co-ordinator of the diocesan Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together program at a diocesan Congress Day Feb. 20 in Saskatoon, which was broadcast to satellite sites in Humboldt and Kindersley.**

of the struggles and issues being faced by so many who are suffering in different ways in our community. Helping participants authentically encounter those situations, hearing those stories,

reaching out to others, and then helping them “wrestle through” the experience is key to the JOY program, she explained, describing how there will always be an attempt to discern “where is Jesus

in those moments?”

As part of the commitment to the program, participants will be asked to undertake a field placement in an area of service or outreach that they feel called to — an estimated commitment of about two hours a week, in addition to the JOY program gatherings that will take place monthly on a Friday evening and all day Saturday.

The Friday evening will be a time to gather as a community, spend some time in reflection, talking about the experience of field placement, and “re-rooting ourselves in the Gospel and why we’re doing this program and why we are giving service,” said O’Gorman. The Saturday sessions will involve going out into the world to learn and to experience life and service at different locations in the community, related to each month’s social justice theme.

A range of themes will be addressed over the 10 weekends, with Saturday visits to various helping agencies and organizations to hear from those “on the ground” and the people they are serving, she explained. Planned themes for the JOY program include international development and peace, economic injustice, refugees, indigenous/Métis experience, poverty, human dignity, health and seniors’ care, hunger and food, care of the earth, and restorative justice.

“I anticipate a large part of this program is going to be about storytelling. Learning people’s narratives and experiences, and learning how we are a part of it, how we walk in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, and also wrestling with those issues that come up in us when we are hearing people’s stories,” O’Gorman said.

She described the JOY program as an introduction that will hopefully lead participants to discern where they are being called to explore justice teachings and issues more deeply, and to offer their service in response to those issues.

During the Congress Day presentation, two speakers came forward to give a sample of themes participants will explore in the JOY program. Armella Sonntag, provincial animator for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, spoke about international development and justice advocacy, and Lyndon Linklater of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner spoke about the meaning and the importance of treaties.

Representatives of parishes across the diocese, both in Saskatoon and at the satellite sites of Humboldt and Kindersley, discussed a range of topics related to the new JOY program, including how to involve rural participants and whether the weekend should include a Saturday celebration of the eucharist and wind-up meal each month with family members invited.

There were also questions about how the program will connect to the formation for permanent deacons.

Bishop Donald Bolen explained that the JOY program is

## Catholic aid agencies hope for big rise in donations

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Three Catholic charities who joined forces with Canada’s bishops last fall to raise urgently needed funds for Syrian refugees hope many Catholics will give generously now that the deadline has passed for matching government funds.

Feb. 29 was the deadline for up to \$100 million in matching government funds for the Canadian Syrian Relief Fund.

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace executive director David Leduc said he is grateful the international development minister extended the deadline to the end of February. So far, it has raised \$2.2 million.

“We definitely received an increase in our donations since the (deadline extension) announcement was made,” Leduc said.

Development and Peace, Aid to the Church in Need Canada and the Catholic Near East

Welfare Association (CNEWA) Canada combined forces with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops last fall to mount their first-ever joint campaign.

Leduc pointed out 13.5 million Syrians have required immediate humanitarian assistance. “That’s roughly a third of our own population here in Canada, to give you an idea, roughly, of the scale,” he said.

Humanitarian projects Development and Peace has helped fund have included medical supplies, distribution of winter supplies, basic household items, food vouchers, housing assistance and educational activities for children.

“The Syrian people have suffered so much over these past five years,” said Leduc. “As the nation becomes ever more mired in crisis, the civilian population is suffering horrendous violence on a daily basis.”

“Canadians’ acts of solidarity are needed more than ever, both to provide assistance and to call for a peaceful solution to the conflict,”

he said. “We hope that Canadians will continue to show their solidarity toward the approximately 4.3 million Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and the millions of others still in Syria,” said Leduc.

For both Aid to the Church in Need and CNEWA Canada, the big rush in donations came before Christmas.

“You always have a flow of generosity around Christmas,” Aid to the Church in Need Canada national director Marie-Claude Lalonde said. “Also, it was all over the media, every day. This helped all charities raise money for Syria. You still hear about Syria but it is less constant.”

Aid to the Church in Need has raised \$415,305 so far for projects that include helping displaced persons in Syria with housing, winter clothing and baby supplies. Through the local churches they have helped fund reconstruction projects in the Syrian cities Yabroud and Homs where some Christians have returned. Lalonde says her agency “stands by Christians who choose to reinvest in the land Christians have inhabited since the beginning of Christianity, despite the ongoing war.”

“We need everything,” she said. “All basic necessities have to be covered. This is going to be a struggle for a long period of time.”

They are hearing more and more reports of starvation being used as an act of war, she said.

“We’re currently providing clothes, shoes, food and toiletries for 250 orphans from the region of Homs; soap and sanitary products for more than 400 families; and now we’re trying to build or rebuild a

school for almost 1,000 pupils,” she said. They are also assisting in the basics of food, shelter, medicines, electricity for 5,000 people in Aleppo. They provided 5,000 pairs of pajamas for kids, all distributed by the churches in the area, mostly by some religious sisters, she said.

CNEWA Canada national director Carl Héту points out CNEWA has been in the Middle East for 90 years and the Syrian crisis is not the first the agency has witnessed. “Our role all along is to accompany the local church in whatever crisis they go through,” he said. “The Syrian one is a major one, so we’re there with the church and the people to help them survive this big mess.”

So far CNEWA Canada has received about \$890,715 in donations it has directed mainly to those in need inside Syria or in neighbouring Jordan and Lebanon.

“The funds raised will provide emergency supplies, such as necessities for babies, food, water, heaters, clothing and blankets,” said Héту. “The donations will also help with education as children have often missed up to three years of schooling; health care to assist with conditions such as depression, cancer, stroke, heart issues and diabetes; along with spiritual support such as catechetical programs for Christian families.”

Héту stressed the Feb. 29 deadline does not mean people should stop giving to Syria after that.

Both Lalonde and Leduc agree. In coming months, Leduc said the focus will be on trying to reach the Syrians who are blocked off in areas under siege.

Héту also appealed to Catholics to pray during Lent for an end to the war and for the success of ongoing peace talks in Geneva.

As the peace is being negotiated, old issues are coming to the fore and taking attention, such as the long-standing conflict between the Turkish and the Kurds, the Russians against the Turks, and “a lot of unfinished business,” Héту said.



CNEWA Canada

**URGENT NEED — A child is seen in a non-UNHCR refugee camp of Muslim Syrians in Lebanon. The camp is being supported by a Melkite Catholic community. Even though the deadline for matching grants has passed, Catholic charities hope people continue to be generous to the Syrian refugee relief fund.**



# Physicians' conscience rights should not have veto

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Physicians' conscience rights should not be able to veto or trump a patient's "right" to a medically assisted death, says Jocelyn Downie.

"They have an obligation to ensure access," the Dalhousie University professor on the faculties of law and medicine told MPs, civil servants, and staffers at a packed Parliamentary Restaurant Feb. 23.

Conscience rights have to be balanced with patients' rights, Downie said, referring to the "tragic history" of "lack of access" for a medically necessary procedure which is abortion.

One of the foremost proponents of physician-assisted death in Canada, Downie was responding to a question from Cardus think-tank co-founder Ray

Pennings who asked why she says assisted death should be part of a continuum of medical care. He suggested a separate regime for assisted death, so health care professionals would not have to be involved.

Pennings warned of the "broader social effect" of imposing assisted death on the health care system, because those with conscientious objections will "start leaving the medical system."

Downie rejected Penning's assertion having physician-assisted death as part of medical care would lead to a lack of trust in physicians. "The level of trust in the Netherlands is very strong," she said.

In her presentation, Downie outlined the societal transformation facing Canada as it moves from being a society that has prohibited euthanasia and assisted suicide to one that may have one

of the most permissive regimes in the world.

The debate is no longer of whether to allow assisted death, she said. "That ship has sailed."

Thinking must shift to how Canada does it, and she called for collaboration across party lines, and across federal and provincial jurisdictional lines. Finding this collaboration is the first challenge, she said.

The debate "should not be cast as assisted death or palliative care," she said, noting palliative care can be better in permissive jurisdictions than in non-permissive ones. Pennings also pointed out only about 40 per cent of Canadians have access to good palliative care, despite two decades of work on building the political will to change that. He raised concerns whether putting money into an assisted-death regime and training all personnel to participate is a

wise use of resources, when palliative care is not readily available.

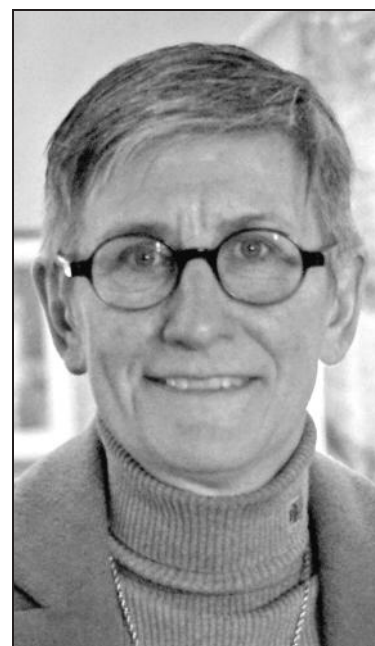
Downie said good palliative care is necessary, but the field is undergoing a transformation as those early palliative care physicians "who were heavily influenced by religion," give way to younger physicians who are not. More and more people who work in palliative care are coming to support assisted death as part of palliative care, she said, probably because "they no longer feel it is unsafe to do so."

The assisted-death advocate outlined some of the contentious issues she hopes will be reflected upon, debated in an effort toward consensus-building.

Among them: assisted death for competent minors; advanced directives for assisted death made after a diagnosis while competent that would be carried out after the patient is no longer competent; whether the review of an assisted-death request should occur before the death or after; and whether mental illness should be included among the grievous and irremediable conditions outlined by the Supreme Court in the Carter decision.

Downie said excluding minors and the mentally ill would not likely pass a Charter challenge on equality grounds. She also said there needs to be debate over whether only physicians will carry out assisted death, or whether other health professionals may do so under a doctor's supervision.

Canada has the opportunity to "develop the best regulatory framework" in the world for assisted death, she said. She cited polls over the years showing 70 to 80 per cent of Canadians support it. She also expressed her hope Canada could develop the



CCN/D. Gyapong

Jocelyn Downie

best system in the world for end-of-life care.

She urged Canadians to carefully assess the evidence, staying away from what she called anecdotal evidence of abuses in permissive regimes.

One questioner raised the spectre of Dr. Kevorkian, famous for his suicide machine that he used to illegally help many people to kill themselves. He said if the assessment of the suffering is subjective, what is to stop people from having assisted death on demand.

"This is not a free-for-all," Downie insisted. The process will be "constrained by criteria," such as grievous and irremediable. It is an "open question" how much determining what is grievous and irremediable will be an objective process, involving physicians, she said. Suffering, however, is subjective. "There will be an element of reasonableness," she said.

## Quebec abuse victims settle class action

By Francois Gloutnay

MONTREAL (CNS) — About 150 former pupils and boarders of the former Montreal Institute for the Deaf who were sexually abused between 1940 and 1982 will share \$30 million after their class action was settled.

The record amount includes \$14.4 million the Clerics of St. Viateur, whose members worked at the institute, agreed to pay in November.

A second settlement, totalling \$7.2 million, was reached Feb. 10 with the Raymond-Dewar Institute, the name for the Montreal Institute for the Deaf as of 1984.

Superior Court Judge Eva

Petras approved the settlements in mid-February and asked attorney Andre Forget, a former judge at Quebec's Court of Appeal, to review the victims' claims. Forget was the court's assessor during other class actions against the Brothers of the Holy Cross and the Redemptorists that were settled in recent years.

The settlement is "by far the most important sum ever paid in Quebec for sex abuse against minors," said a statement released by Kugler Kandestin, the law firm representing the victims.

Officials with the Clerics of St. Viateur, known as the Viatorians, declined comment on the settlements. The order also refused to disclose the canonical status of congregation members named in the lawsuit.

In November, Rev. Nestor Fils-Aime, the order's superior, said his congregation would "have to submit itself to stringent financial sacrifices to pay the agreed sums."

Meanwhile, the order released the 2014 update of its 28-page policy regarding sexual misconduct within the community.

The lawsuit first filed in 2012 included the names of 27 priests and brothers of the congregation. A seven-page table inserted into the court record associated the initials of the victims with the names of the 24 brothers and three priests accused of sexually abusing the minors. One of the priests named was identified by 24 victims.

*Gloutnay is on the staff of the Montreal-based Presence info.*

## Carter decision goes beyond Quebec's bill

Continued from page 1

The dissenting report notes Quebec's euthanasia law does not allow physician-assisted death for the mentally ill or those under 18. It also does not allow for advanced directives. The Quebec law does not demand referral to another physician who will carry out the euthanasia, but has physicians making the referral to an independent body that will find a physician.

The Carter decision broadened the criteria beyond what Quebec's euthanasia bill allowed and the special committee report broadens them even further. Asked if Quebec might be forced to have its law changed to conform to a more expansive law, Wilson-Raybould said the government recognizes the work Quebec has done in crafting its legislation. She promised collaboration with the provinces and territories in crafting the legislation, which she hopes will be passed by the Supreme Court's June 6 deadline. She said it is "too early to predict where we are mov-

ing on a federal framework."

The NDP members of the committee said they were glad the report picked up their recommendations for a national palliative care strategy and the reinstatement of a national palliative care secretariat.

NDP MP Murray Rankin said he supported the recommendations on the mentally ill and on minors. He noted the recommendations call for preliminary legislation making only adults eligible, with three years of study before those under 18 might be added.

Rankin insisted good palliative care and physician-assisted death go together. "We think it's essential that it be part of the response," he said. Though he would not go so far as to say the NDP would not support a bill if there was not a robust commitment to improved palliative care, he did say the NDP would "govern ourselves accordingly."

The committee was made up of 20 MPs and six senators. The Conservative senators supported the report.

## Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen: the great friendship

Special Guest Lecturer: Michael W. Higgins

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2016  
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RECEPTION TO FOLLOW



Guest Lecturer Michael W. Higgins, is a native Torontonian, an author, Vatican affairs specialist for the *Globe and Mail* and CTV Network, Catholic educator, CBC radio documentarian, scholar and administrator.

"The friendship of Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen is one of the key spiritual friendships of the last century. The philosopher and the psychologist had much in common; they shared a ministry of tenderness with the disabled; they advocated relentlessly for the curative and transformative power of genuine community; they stood for the perduring witness of Christian Humanism. We will explore this friendship—both fecund and fraught—and discover in it an enlightening path to holiness."

Michael W. Higgins



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# Trump represents corruption of conservatism: Gerson

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — When hundreds of conservatives gathered for the annual Manning Centre Conference 2016 Feb. 25 - 27 on the theme Recharging the Right, it was impossible to ignore Donald Trump.

The real estate magnate and reality-show creator and star has dominated headlines south of the border for months and seems to be on his way to becoming the Republican presidential nominee. He has inspired record turnouts in various state primaries.

But for author and columnist Michael Gerson, who worked as a policy adviser to U.S. President George W. Bush, especially on his policies fighting AIDS and malaria in Africa, Trump’s populism does not represent the kind of revitalization conservatives need. Instead, he argued for reform-conservatism, a movement that focuses on the common good along with conservative principles and ideals.

“Donald Trump represents the hostile takeover of a political party,” said Gerson in a talk at the Manning Conference sponsored by the social policy think-tank Cardus Feb. 26.

“(Trumpism) is not the natural outworking of conservatism, it is the corruption of conservatism,” he said. It is similar to the “right-wing anti-immigrant populism we

see rising in Europe.”

Donald Trump introduced himself to America by saying undocumented workers are disproportionately rapists and criminals, Gerson said. He called for a complete ban on Muslim immigrants when there was no demand for it.

“You do not fight the war on terror by alienating Muslims around the world,” Gerson said. “It’s insane!”

“I don’t find anything in conservatism to justify that,” he said. Conservatism is humane, “not a nativist vision of exclusivism.”

Trump is someone who cannot reliably tell the difference between our allies and our enemies, Gerson said. He noted America has often been accused of being too involved in world affairs and exercising too much power.

“Wait until they see America unconstrained by its ideals,” Gerson said.

Economic populism and nativism stem from the loss of the old economic certainties, leaving people “certain opportunity has been stolen from them.”

The political consequences of the feeling opportunity has been stolen are the politics of anger, or retribution, he said.

There are many problems, but they have been misdiagnosed, he said. The whole world is undergoing “vast economic changes.”

Workers in America have

come into increasing competition with workers from around the world, and that competition is driving wages down, Gerson said.

At the same time economic factors are hitting people hard, family structures and other humanizing institutions are also deteriorating, he said. He noted political scientist Robert Putnam has written extensively on the decline of the blue collar economy, the atomization of community, and the decline of the family structure in working class settings.

It would be unexpected for Republicans to strongly identify with the concerns of blue-collar workers in a practical way, Gerson said. But a reform-conservative

instead of a populist view could examine whether you can “shape policies that give people the skills and human capital to succeed in a modern economy” during a time of great “moral and social transition.”

“There has to be a limited role for government in helping give people the skills to succeed,” he said.

Gerson suggested distinctly conservative programs that could help people improve their skills so as to be able to compete in the new economy; and conservative programs to help support families and children.

“Economic liberty is only achieved through healthy institutions that have a vision of the

good beyond getting and keeping,” he said. A mature, conservative appeal “can’t just skip to GDP” but has to be rooted in civil society and in ideals.

People are inspired to stay together in families because “they believe it is good and true,” he said. The message has to be not just utilitarian, but anchored in a belief in “universal human rights.”

“We need a conservatism of the common good,” Gerson said. A conservative vision of the common good would include strengthened families and communities, religious liberty and “should be known for making a passionate case for human dignity.”

While leftist ideologies often treat human beings as “malleable” and often subordinate to leftist causes, Gerson said human beings are “not insignificant.”

“They matter more than any cause,” he said. “They are the cause.”

Where others can offer “anger and envy,” this vision would offer “common purpose, civic pride and inclusivity,” he said.

Gerson reached back to conservative leaders such as William Wilberforce and Abraham Lincoln who played major roles in the abolition of slavery. He also pointed to U.S. President George W. Bush’s policies combating AIDS and malaria in Africa that have saved millions of lives.



CCN/D. Gyapong

**MANNING CENTRE CONFERENCE — Author and columnist Michael Gerson (left) in conversation with Cardus co-founder Ray Pennings at the Manning Centre Conference.**

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## Faith-based health care threatened

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Should the federal government accept the recommendations of its special committee on assisted death, it will threaten the existence of Canada’s faith-based health care institutions, says the Coalition for HealthCARE (see related story, page one).

“This is a grave threat to a large number of faith-based health care institutions across the country, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, nursing homes and hospices,” said Larry Worthen, coalition member and executive director of the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada, in a release. “Forcing these members, and leaders of these facilities, to act in this way would be trampling on their constitutional right to freedom of conscience and religion guaranteed under the Charter.

“In our view, effective referral and participating in assisted death are morally and ethically the same thing. This would force people of conscience and faith to act against their moral convictions and threaten the very core of why they became physicians, which is to help to heal people. This is discrimination. It is unnecessary. No other jurisdiction in the world requires physicians to refer for assisted death.”

Canada’s Catholic bishops have also condemned the recommendations.

“Killing the mentally and physically ill, whether young or aged, is contrary to caring for and loving one’s brother and sister,” said a pastoral letter from Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) president Hamil-

ton Bishop Douglas Crosby, who wrote that the committee report is an example of what Pope Francis has called “throw-away culture.”

He urged Catholics to let their elected representatives know the recommendations of the special joint Parliamentary Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying are “completely unacceptable.”

Catholic Organization for Life and Family director Michele Boulva said, “I have no words to describe how sad and alarming this report is. If the Trudeau government develops a bill following these lines, it will be the worst legislation in the world — a huge societal failure.

“Apart from allowing some citizens to kill others — even children and people living with mental illness — this report shows absolutely no respect for the moral convictions and the Charter-protected rights of conscience of physicians and other health care workers,” she said. “It forces them to refer to another physician if they refuse to kill a patient themselves.

“The same thing goes for all health care institutions who get public funding, including Catholic facilities: the report says that they must offer ‘medical aid in dying.’ This is called discrimination. Where is our freedom? And why should we pay for this abomination with our tax dollars?”

Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, added that religious institutions cannot take part in “killing their patients,” something that is “always morally unacceptable.”

“There are many dangerous recommendations in this report,”

said Schadenberg. Of special concern are the recommendations on oversight, he said. The only oversight happens after the two doctors who have approved the assisted death send in their reports.

“It’s an after-death reporting system,” he said. “The doctor who kills you will send in a report after you’re dead. You have to trust the doctor who kills you.”

Schadenberg pointed to the lack of objective criteria in assessing “intolerable suffering.”

“It means it’s pretty wide open,” he said, and will lead to more instances where assisted death will be permitted.

“Once euthanasia for minors is allowed, as well as for those with dementia based on an advanced directive, there will be arguments for the euthanasia of children and for incompetent adults, Schadenberg warned.

Schadenberg said if the recommendations concerning referrals becomes part of the legislation, “many good doctors will leave Canada.”

“It’s about time our religious leaders make it clear we will not be complicit in such a law,” Schadenberg said.

The Catholic Health Association, however, was more conciliatory.

“It is too soon to know which of the 21 recommendations may be part of any final legislation,” said a statement from association president Michael Shea. “As the federal government carefully considers the report and begins to draft legislation, we will continue to work in humility and openness with all stakeholders to navigate this issue.”



# Foam Lake churches enter into historic agreement

By Nevin Halyk

FOAM LAKE, Sask. — Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church and Christ the King Roman Catholic Church have signed a historic agreement that will see the Holy Eucharist building on Cameron Street in Foam

Lake co-owned by both parishes. As of Jan. 1 the two churches have shared the same building.

The co-ownership agreement is the result of several years of discernment and planning. The process to explore the possibility of co-ownership was spoken of informally for years, but gained

momentum in 2009 when committees from each parish met to explore the possibilities. The process gained momentum when the bishops of each parish added their encouragement for the process to proceed in 2014.

The reasons for co-owning the same worship space are com-

PELLING, and these reasons helped stimulate further discussion between parishes.

Bernie Schultz, parish council chair for Christ the King, stated that the growth of the Roman Catholic parish and the aging condition of the church on Broadway Street were strong reasons to explore a partnership with Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church.

“Our church has been renovated several times, but remained too small to host large events that would occur several times each year. In addition, the original church building is over 70 years old and required significant capital expenditure to maintain. Our parish has experienced steady growth in the past several years, and we were feeling the pressure to act.”

In addition, Schultz cited the cost of building a new structure as an obstacle. “In 2014 the cost per square foot for new construction seemed prohibitive, so we began looking at all sorts of options as a parish for affordable and appropriate worship space.” Approaching the Ukrainian Catholic parish seemed to be a natural next step. “We know that the sharing of churches is getting more common, and our closest possible fit is another Catholic church.”

Ideologically, the churches are identical in belief; the differences between them are in the type of liturgy used by each, and regional church hierarchy. “We have different bishops, but the same pope and the same beliefs, so it seemed natural for us to approach Holy Eucharist with the idea of co-owning the church.”

The two churches have been partners at different times in their history together. Many joint activities have taken place, including sacrament preparation, catechism classes, and interactions between the parishes through membership in the Knights of Columbus and other groups. This pre-established relationship, which worked well, was extended to include discussions regarding

church sharing.

Bohdan Popowych, chair of Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church, indicated that a desire to use resources and space efficiently factored into the co-ownership negotiations. “We have two Catholic parishes in town, both spending on infrastructure, maintenance and utilities. The opportunity to use our resources more effectively is an important factor. As Christian communities, it makes sense to use our financial resources for evangelization and growth rather than wasteful double management. This agreement is also about proper stewardship of our gifts.”

During the exploration phase, each parish had processes in place where parishioners could voice concerns and ask questions. Each parish had a series of meetings when options were explored.

Schultz spoke of Christ the King’s discussion: “We costed out different possibilities — building new, renovating, co-ownership — we presented each scenario to our parishioners and had open discussions. Once everyone had a chance to be heard, we had a parish vote.” Each parish had a vote by membership, and in each case a clear majority was in favour of co-ownership.

Once these processes were complete, the Roman Catholic diocese and the Ukrainian Catholic eparchy got involved to help construct a legal agreement for sale and management. This agreement was completed and put in place by Jan. 1.

Schultz has been impressed with the process: “Both parishes have worked hard to be accommodating and sensitive. This is a significant disruption for both parishes, and for the most part the move is going very well.”

Says Popowych: “Compromise and co-operation describe the way that we have been operating. There are going to be some bumps in the road, but in the end we are two Christian communities work-

— PARTNERSHIP, page 7

## System has to change: Sinclair

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Justice Murray Sinclair re-told the now familiar story associated with Indian residential schools at the Woodrow Lloyd Lecture held Feb. 24 at the University of Regina, but he offered some suggestions for healing. Sinclair was the chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that recently released its report on residential schools.

“Every child needs to know the answers to four questions: where do I come from, where am I going, why am I here, and who am I? The answers to those questions were impaired by the residential schools.”

Later in the lecture he said public schools, where children were sent after residential schools were closed, didn’t answer those questions either because the end goal was the same: to assimilate children into mainstream society.

With a brief introduction he showed a video with Manitoba singer Aaron Peters who sings about what he called “the perfect crime” about the treatment of indigenous children in residential schools and foster care. The opening words are: “From unmarked graves their bones cry out,” and he goes on to show and sing about mistreatment. The video had

scenes of nuns and priests in classrooms of Indian children and some quick scenes of a rapping on knuckles with a pointer and someone being strapped but no identification of who was applying the pointer or strap and who was on the receiving end.



F. Flegel

Murray Sinclair

Sinclair did note that fewer than 50 per cent of children in residential schools suffered physical or sexual abuse, but all suffered psychologically, being torn from their families. Sinclair said if what took place in residential schools were to happen today it would be subject to prosecution as cultural genocide.

He was also critical of the child welfare system. “It is built on the wrong funding model. The more children you take into care the more funding you receive. It was designed by people who created the problem.” He referred to what is now called “the big scoop” in the 1960s when children were taken and placed for adoption or in foster homes with the intention of not returning them to their families.

Sinclair referred to the high numbers of Aboriginals in jails and suggested that’s one of the legacies of residential schools and the child welfare system. “The system has to change. Children need to be with their families. There is a long-term need to change how we talk to each other, and the education system needs to change.”

In response to a question, Sinclair said to read the report or the summaries and especially the calls for action. “Pick one and work to make it happen.”

Elder Noel Starblanket was asked to open the session with a prayer and in a symbolic gesture, he said, “I call my good friend Father John Meehan to come and pray together with me,” and asked all in the audience to join in a silent prayer of their own. Meehan is president of Campion College, a federated college of the University of Regina.

## Refugees urged to learn about treaties

Continued from page 1

Nation told refugees that it was “a victory song for you, for getting here safe.”

Arcand welcomed the refugees to Treaty 6 territory. “There are 10 numbered treaties which are very sacred to the First Nations and the indigenous peoples of this land. I encourage you while you are here to learn more about Treaty 6 and the other treaties, which you are going to be a part of, because we are all treaty people.”

He told newcomers that they will observe poverty among First Nations people, and urged them to learn more about the history and issues behind that reality. “There are reasons for that poverty, and for some of the bad things that are happening to indigenous people in this city and in this province and in this country,” he said. “We ask you to find out what those reasons are — including the residential school era.”

Arcand added: “I ask you all not to adopt the stereotype that exists out there about First Nations and indigenous peoples. With you, we are a caring and sharing people.”

He encouraged the newcomers in their struggle with learning a new language, advising them to also work to maintain their original languages for their children and grandchildren. “We have lost many of our languages on our own lands.”

Pewapscionias echoed Arcand’s emphasis on the importance of language and culture. “My reconnection to my culture and to my identity has been the greatest gift to my life,” she said. “I’ve come to learn this through the stories, which is the way of my people.”

She also described the “sad story” of policies over the past 130 years that have created situations of injustice and suffering for First Nations and indigenous people. “It is incredible to think about my people’s strength and resilience: what it took to be here today, and how much it took to survive, to be able to laugh again, to be able to love again, and to feel connection,” Pewapscionias said, encouraging the newcomers in their struggles.

“I see your survival and it gives me hope. You are now part of this land’s history. I welcome you to share it with us,” she said.

“You have the opportunity to help this nation become a greater place. You have the opportunity to shape a place that honours its roots, and eliminates oppression across the world.”

Raed Aljamous, who has been in Canada for just over a month, expressed thanks on behalf of Syrian refugees. “Once we landed in Canada we found the hospitality — we found the warm welcoming as the Open Door Society says it: welcoming, belonging and connecting.”

Aljamous noted the similarities between cultures, pointing to the common experience of drums, song and dance shared that afternoon. “I think the things that are common among us and the First Nations and Canadians are bigger than the differences between us,” he said.

“We believe in the idea that from adversity we can also reach victory and we can reach prosperity. So we are getting to Canada to secure — for my family and my kids — to secure for them education and health. So from the bottom of my heart, I thank the Canadian and First Nations and indigenous people.”



K. Yaworski

**RITE OF ELECTION** — Catechumens came forward to sign their name in the diocesan Book of the Elect as part of the Rite of Election held Feb. 14 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. Twenty-seven catechumens from 12 parishes across the diocese are journeying toward baptism, confirmation and first eucharist at this year’s Easter Vigil. Those in attendance heard the Word of God, signed their names in the Book of the Elect, and received affirmation and a blessing from the bishop and the diocesan faith community, as part of the RCIA process (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).



# Archdiocesan synod to commence in Winnipeg

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — Archbishop of Winnipeg Richard Gagnon has called a synod for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, the first in its history, to commence on Pentecost Sunday, May 15.



J. Buchok  
Archbishop Richard Gagnon

In his pastoral letter announcing the synod, Gagnon writes that with the archdiocese having celebrated its centennial in 2015, “There is a vital need to plan for the future together and determine new pastoral directions for our faith community.”

## Partnership working well

Continued from page 6

ing it out. It has gone much better than anyone has expected, and the partnership is working very well.” A committee made of parish-ioners from each parish meet frequently to manage concerns regarding joint use, expenditures and the like. Otherwise, each parish operates as a separate entity within the building. “Our two parishes together make for a busy building,” says Popowych. “This is what a church should be — very much alive! It will mean creative solutions for each parish to avoid conflicts, but we can already see that the ‘new normal’ is pretty exciting.” Plans are in the works for a joint celebration in the next few months. Parishes are hoping for a “large and joyful” celebration in the summer that would see both bishops and large numbers of people affirming this historic agree-ment.

The archbishop explains that according to canon law the purpose of a diocesan synod is “to foster the good of the entire diocesan community by calling together the clergy, religious and laity of the local church to deliberate on the pastoral needs of the diocese.” “Of all the institutions found in the church to provide better governance, the diocesan synod is foremost. In a diocesan synod, which lasts several years, the bishop exercises his office of governing the church entrusted to his care. Through a consultative process, he determines the themes, questions and priorities to be discussed.

“In canon law we further learn that all those who participate in the synod, assist the bishop by freely and sincerely expressing their opinions relative to the questions under consideration. At the end of the process, the bishop determines which of the recom-mendations made by the synod will be accepted and promulgated in the diocese.”

The archbishop writes that Pope Francis describes a diocesan synod as “a truly wonderful experience where people walk and journey through history together with Our Lord who walks among us. We do not walk alone.”

“At its core, a diocesan synod is an exercise of the bishop’s ministry of governance of the local church and an exercise of communion among the People of God,” writes Gagnon. “Let us remember that the People of God are not just a collec-tion of disciples, but rather they are a priestly community established by Christ and led by the bishop who is the foundation of unity within the local church. Pope Francis has said that the church must become a more synodal church where we not only walk together but we talk together. He poses questions such as: ‘How does our diocese walk? Does it walk together? And what am I doing so that it may truly walk in unity?’”

According to the archbishop, the synod will consist of several phases. The preparatory phase will commence on Pentecost Sunday, May 15, and consist of a variety of opportunities for the voice of the local church to be heard over a one-year period. This will be fol-lowed by the formal synod ses-sions from May 2017 to November 2017. Finally, there will be an implementation stage ending with the formal closing of the synod on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 2018. Further details on

the synod process will be released in an upcoming pastoral letter. At the end of the synod, a Synod Declaration will be pub-lished, an episcopal letter sum-ming up the synod process including what has been learned and a listing of recommendations and pastoral priorities for the archdiocese and parishes. “It is hoped that the synod will also assist in the framing of arch-diocesan statutes where neces-sary. In addition, the synod pro-duces guidelines and resources

for the effective implementation of the synod at all levels,” writes the archbishop. Gagnon says Pope Francis “reminds us that we must walk in unity, without running ahead and without nostalgia for the past. Our synod, and the sessions lead-ing up to it during the preparatory stage, will be wonderful and spir-it-filled events which will help us to plan our course as we walk into our second century as an archdiocese. “We begin our synod during

this Holy Year of Mercy,” Gagnon writes. “The Holy Father is invit-ing us to open our hearts so as to experience the closeness of the Father of mercy and to practice mercy toward others. This same generous openness to the prompt-ings of the Holy Spirit will be required of all of us as we launch our synod! I ask for your prayers as we prepare for the opening of our archdiocesan synod. I look forward to a full and active partici-pation in this first synod for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.”

## Year of Mercy event ‘wonderful first step’

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — “I heard a clear call for the church to open wide her doors and invite every-one to experience the Father’s mercy,” said Christine Taylor, diocesan director of catechetics and one of the organizers for the Year of Mercy events in the Diocese of Prince Albert. On Feb. 19, inspired by the writings of Pope Francis in the Bull of Indiction of the Extra-ordinary Jubilee of Mercy, dioce-san organizers created a relaxing “come and go” at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Prince Albert.

It was a chance to sit back in prayer, share burdens, talk about faith, church or life struggles, and receive the sacrament of reconcilia-tion in a relaxing environment. Priests and lay pastoral workers were available to talk with visitors. The afternoon began with community prayer. Meditational music played as a continuous stream of people came and went, often stopping for coffee and a visit with those available at the entrance. The Stations of the Cross were held at 7 p.m. and the Year of Mercy prayer ended the evening. Taylor said Pope Francis is making a difference with his open invitation to everyone to experi-ence the Father’s mercy. “The hope for this day is that



P. Fournier

**YEAR OF MERCY —** For those who entered Prince Albert’s Sacred Heart Cathedral Feb. 19 for the open invitation to come and be reconciled, there was an opportunity to ask for prayer intentions and light a candle.

the invitation will be heard by those who feel disenfranchised from God, and the church will take this opportunity to come and speak with people to share their burdens, pray and, when desiring, go to the sacrament of reconcilia-tion. I really think that opportuni-ties like this, for those who are seeking God to come and en-counter the merciful Father, are what the whole year is about.” “People were able to choose a pastor to go to if they wanted to; they didn’t feel pressured to have

to go quickly,” said Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr. “There was time to talk and share about deeper issues. My hope is that this becomes something that happens on a regular basis. People felt relaxed coming in here, and prayerful. People were spread out, giving privacy and quiet time. Many people stopped for coffee in the back and a chat as they came in and as they left. It showed there were people there to just be together, to chat. It’s a wonderful first step.”

## Program resonates with pope’s ministry

Continued from page 3

open to everyone, but that in the Diocese of Saskatoon it will also serve as a “propaedeutic” year of preparation and discernment for men who are experiencing a call to the permanent diaconate. “We are setting up a model of diaconate formation that builds on the JOY formation,” he ex-plaind. The bishop reviewed the history of the diocesan discern-ment about ordaining permanent deacons, and the decision to focus strongly on a model of the dia-conate as a ministry of service and outreach to those in need. “The deacon would be a per-son who would not only engage in that ministry, but would facili-tate others to engage in that min-istry, and speak to that ministry in liturgical contexts,” Bolen said. “That is the emphasis that our committee and our discernment process led to.” He stressed that the diocese is working to avoid two tiers of the

JOY program with a separate group of potential deacons. “They are just going to launch into it with everybody else.” In February 2017, those men journeying through the JOY pro-gram who are interested in dis-cerning the permanent diaconate would then begin to meet with a director to discuss possible future steps, suggested the bishop, de-scribing how formation for dea-cons in the diocese will be under-taken on an individual basis, tai-lored to the education and experi-ence of each candidate. Bolen reflected on the richness and the integrity of the JOY pro-gram, which is being distilled from a large number of possibilities and options for exploring themes relat-ed to Catholic social teaching. “We really have a luxury of speakers and locations that we can go to, and really draw on the very best,” Bolen said. “I think it is going to be exciting. It very much resonates with Pope Francis’ min-istry, his focus on outreach to the

peripheries, his sense that the church needs to get messy and needs to learn to walk with people in their actual struggles and diffi-culties.” Bolen noted that there is also an ongoing effort to connect the JOY program to Catholic faith and evangelization. “How does it involve an aspect of speaking our faith into those situations?” he queried. “How do I speak the Gospel into that situation? Some-times that’s with words, and often it is not with words, but we want to ask that question.” For more information about the JOY program, visit [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/joy](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/joy) or contact O’Gorman at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Saskatoon. The diocesan Congress Day also included a discussion about strategic planning, including plans for updating a diocesan adminis-trative manual, and the possibility of conducting parish audits on a range of policies, procedures and activities.

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# Faith is based on premise that God is one of us

## Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



“What if God was one of us?” Joan Osborne sang in a popular song some 20 years ago, “just a slob like one of us, just a stranger on the bus trying to make his way home?”

Of course, the whole of Christian faith is based on the premise that God was one of us: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).

He was likely a slob from time to time as well, for he was subject to the same bodily functions as the rest of us while he dwelt among us on earth. We don’t like to think of Jesus in those terms, but to accept the Incarnation is to accept that Jesus belched occasionally after a good meal, and like everyone else he was, as

Shakespeare wrote centuries later, subject to “the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.” Jesus, too, “grunted and sweated under this weary life.”

“If God had a name,” the song continues, “what would it be, and would you call it to his face if you were faced with him in all his glory? What would you ask if you had just one question?”

Moses had a question, to which God answered, “I am Who I Am” (Ex 3:14): *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*. It is one of the seven names of God, according to Rabbinic Judaism — seven names so holy that, once written, should not be erased. YHWH, or Yahweh, is the one most familiar to Christians.

The philosopher Bertrand Russell, a vocal atheist, was once asked what he would say if, when

he died, he was, against all his expectations, confronted by God in all his glory. Russell replied: “ ‘Sir,’ I would say, ‘why did you not make yourself more apparent?’ ”

Only Bertrand Russell has the answer to what he really did say on that occasion, but I suspect that he was so overcome with awe that he forgot to say anything at all. For God is apparent everywhere, even in pop songs from the 1990s.

“If God had a face,” the song continues, “what would it look like, and would you want to see, if seeing meant that you would have to believe in things like heaven and in Jesus and the saints and all the prophets?”

I would suspect that, once seeing God’s face, the saints and the prophets would be a foregone conclusion. The angels in heaven look continually upon the face of God, Jesus tells his disciples (Mt 18:10), but “my face shall not be seen,” God says to Moses on Mt. Sinai (Ex 33:23). Some say that only the dead in glory can see the face of God. Yet the Gospel tells us that God is indeed “a slob like one of us.” He is the stranger on the

bus. He is the priest celebrating mass. He is the prisoner, the homeless, the mentally ill. He is the neighbour and the friend. He

is everywhere and he is always. “We do not walk alone,” says Pope Francis. His face is your face.



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**SPOTLIGHT NAMED BEST PICTURE — Josh Singer and Tom McCarthy accept the Oscar for Original screenplay, for work on Spotlight at the 88th Annual Academy Awards Feb. 28. The film was also the best picture winner and in his acceptance speech, producer Michael Sugar said the movie “gave a voice to survivors, and this Oscar amplifies this voice.” He then expressed hopes this voice would “become a choir that will resonate all the way to the Vatican.” “Pope Francis, it’s time to protect the children and restore the faith,” he said.**

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## Notion of laughing through difficulty not always easy to articulate

By Caitlin Ward

People talk about the practical difficulties and spiritual fruits of illness, so when my mom got sick, those were things that I expected. One thing that went unmentioned, though, is the hilarity that ensued. Things that were sad, hard, frustrating or scary became funny, because, well . . . I’m not quite sure. The commonly held wisdom is that you laugh because otherwise you’ll cry: crying is too close to the heart of the matter and laughter is a way of distancing yourself from it. In the case of my family, I don’t think that’s true. We laughed *as well as*, not *instead of*.

There’s no point at which we weren’t wholly aware of what was going on; it just made us feel different at different times.

**Empire Kasabian**

It may look strange from the outside. It’s very possible that some would construe the conversations my mom and I have as insensitive. My mother has aphasia that can get quite severe when she’s tired. Her personality and intelligence are intact, and she’s fully aware of what’s going on,

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but she has a stroke-induced communication disorder that means she has trouble retrieving words and forming sentences. Much of the time, there is a patient exchange of words among us until she is understood. That is what’s expected, I’m sure.

At other times, though, conversations with my mother devolve into madness. At my father’s birthday dinner, for example, we had a completely inarticulate argument that ended with my sister, my mom, and me singing the Bugs Bunny overture at the top of our lungs. By the end we were laughing so hard we couldn’t breathe. My father looked on with a mix of resignation and patience, as he is wont to do.

We had got there because I mentioned the English band Kasabian. My mother swore she liked their music, and I swore she didn’t. She liked one of their music videos a lot, but had never gone out of her way to listen to the band or even let me play them in the car when I was younger.

Their music is loud, violent-sounding and rather invasive; it’s not the sort of music she’s ever liked. My sister asked if she could remember any of the songs she liked. We’re not sure if she could, because she couldn’t say the names, and an attempt to hum one of them led to the aforementioned belting of one of the Merrie Melodies themes and hysterical laughter. And thus, the conversation about Kasabian ended unresolved. We did work out that the song my mom was talking about was Empire off the band’s second album, but that

was more because my sister and I remembered her liking that music video.

It’s appropriate that we were talking about Kasabian, as the band’s lyrics are far more opaque than any sentence my mom has uttered since her stroke. I’m sure they mean something, but the vast majority of the lyrics off their first three albums are close to unintelligible. They give an impression,

Too much information  
Well I said you’re good for nothing  
Come on to the back  
I said your needles count for something  
Guess I’d better sell you now  
Guess I’d better be around

Singing for your questions  
But you’ve stolen all of answers  
Too much entertainment drove  
And that’s not all the colour  
Tell me that you’ve seen a ghost  
I’ll tell you what to fear the most

CHORUS  
Stop  
I said it’s happening again  
We’re all wasting away (x2)

Too much information  
Well I said you’re good for nothing  
Stitch your part of counterfeit  
I said you are far out here  
Taking at the roads  
Where you’re taken for the simple codes

Swimming with the fishes  
While the serpent waves his tongue  
With a belly full of splinters  
Now you see that I’m the one  
Tell me that you’ve seen a ghost  
I’ll tell you what to fear the most

but they’re not demonstrably about anything. In the case of a song like Empire, you get meaning from the context the band has built around it. The music video for it is a short film with surprisingly high production values, in which the band plays a disillusioned group of soldiers during the Peninsular War. After witnessing the death of a messenger boy by sniper, they walk back from the front to refuse their orders. It ends with their lead singer, Tom Meighan, saluting as he’s executed by firing squad, and a line from Horace and Wilfred Owen flashing on the screen: *Dulce et Decorum Est Pro Patriae Mori*. It’s a bloody, and sad, and violent sort of music video that matches the driving nature of the song and suggests it may be about . . . neo-imperialism?

Yeah, I’m still not sure. It’s all very dramatic, and in keeping with their music video for Club Foot, an equally intense song that makes about as much sense as Empire and has an equally dramatic music video, in which the band play dissidents in East Germany before the fall of the Soviet Union. And in that one, there are tanks.

So that’s pretty fun.

The interesting thing about all this, though, is that in interviews, members of Kasabian swear they are hilarious. It’s not unheard-of for a band with serious music to be funny and laid back in real life, but the difference here is that Kasabian (who, for the record, named their band after the Manson family’s getaway driver) think their music is funny. Despite the intensity of their music, the seriousness of their videos, and the sincerity of many of their lyrics, they are sure that people are missing just how funny it is.

I’m not sure I can agree with the band entirely on that point, but I can see where, in places, we’ve taken the band more seriously than the band has taken itself. The video for Fire, for example, features a bank heist where the guns are guitars and the loot is sheet music. It’s funny *because* the band plays it straight, but I think that means it’s easy to miss, as well. It’s all in how we approach it.

In some sense, I wonder if Kasabian and my family suffer from the same misunderstanding. Because this idea of laughing through difficulty — it’s hard to articulate to people who haven’t had some sort of disaster in their lives. What I think I learned from my mom’s stroke is that the act of laughing does not mean you are not taking something seriously, or that you don’t understand. You can understand the seriousness of something perfectly well, and still think it’s funny. In some ways, I think it means you understand it better.



# Dramatic titles to watch for from Sundance 2016

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



In addition to *The Birth of a Nation*, from the many world premieres I saw at Sundance here, are the 10 that most impressed. A number have been picked up by distributors like Sony Pictures Classics so one can look forward to significant theatrical releases.

### Manchester by the Sea (U.S.)

It's been 16 years since writer-director Kenneth Lonergan earned the Sundance grand jury award for *You Can Count On Me*. His return counts as an unalloyed triumph since this sensitive small-town drama, presented out of competition, was the best-reviewed new film of the festival. Mostly shot on location in the Massachusetts coastal community of the title, the central character is Lee Chandler (superbly played by Casey Affleck), a sullen loner nursing a tragic past, glimpsed in flashbacks, that has estranged him from his wife Randi (Michelle Williams) and children. Lee's self-imposed solitary world is upended when his brother Joe (Kyle Chandler) dies of a heart attack and entrusts the guardian-

the elements come together of musical rebellion and escape. The result is both poignant and hugely entertaining. The premiere audience in the vast Eccles Theatre was even treated to several songs played by Walsh-Peelo and a bandmate from the film.

### Agnus Dei (France/Poland)

This masterwork by director and co-writer Anne Fontaine tells the true story of the trauma suffered by a group of Catholic nuns in a Polish convent in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. It's the winter of 1945 and the "liberated" area is under Soviet Red Army occupation when a desperate nun seeks assistance from the French Red Cross that is treating survivors of the Nazi camps. The convent had been invaded by soldiers and a number of nuns raped. A young doctor's assistant, Mathilde Beaulieu (Lou de Laâge), takes increasing risks in clandestine visits to provide medical attention and act as a midwife. She must also contend with the afflicted Mother Superior (Agata Kulesza) who fears moral scandal more than death. It is too late for her but somehow from this terrible casualty of war there emerges a touch of grace.

### Sand Storm (Israel)

More proof that the Israeli cinema continues



ship of his teenage son Patrick (Lucas Hedges) to Lee. The young man, a talented hockey player with no shortage of girlfriends, proves to be a handful. The turn of events forces Lee to confront his demons and, as if returning from exile, find a way to reconnect and move forward. This is a beautifully realized story with layers of depth and the ring of emotional truth.

### Sing Street (Ireland/U.K.)

Writer-director John Carney scored a previous musical-drama hit with *Once*, which soared after taking a 2007 Sundance audience award. This semi-autobiographical effort had people enthusiastically applauding while dancing in the aisles. Set in mid-1980s Dublin, a schoolboy, Conor (Ferdia Walsh-Peelo), being taught by strict Christian Brothers on Synge St., meets soulmate Raphina (Lucy Boynton) who lives in a home for girls. She calls him "Cosmo." With several other non-conformist mates they form a band, and urged on by older brother Brendan (Jack Reynor),

to produce top-quality films of searching realism and honesty. Writer-director Elite Zexer received the world cinema grand jury award for this gritty portrayal of a troubled mother-daughter relationship set in a conservative Bedouin Arab community in southern Israel. While Jalila (Ruba Blal) must endure her husband's acquisition of another much younger wife, her daughter Layla (Lamis Ammar) pursues a forbidden love affair with Anwar. When the liaison brings scandal and Jalila is blamed and banished, Layla must decide whether to submit to an arranged marriage.

### Between Sea and Land (Colombia)

Winner of the world cinema audience award, this heartfelt mother-son love story from debut director Carlos Castillo portrays the daily struggle of 28-year-old Alberto (Manolo Cruz who is also the film's writer and producer), bedridden with a neurological disorder and hooked up to a machine to survive. His house is



G. Schmitz

SING STREET — Director John Carney with the principal cast of *Sing Street* at Sundance on Jan. 25, 2016.

beside the Caribbean Sea yet he is trapped in this bodily prison. Although tenderly cared for by his mother Rosa (Vicky Hernández) and neighbour Giselle, Alberto's greatest desire is to reach and feel the sea, a desire stronger than life itself. Cruz and Hernández were also honoured with a special acting award by the Sundance jury.

### Belgica (Belgium/France/Netherlands)

Felix van Groeningen, whose previous feature *The Broken Circle Breakdown* was Oscar-nominated, received the jury directing award for this uproarious Flemish-language melodrama about two mismatched brothers, the savvy one-eyed Jo (Stef Aerts), and stormily married Frank (Tom Vermeir), who decide to open a brash Brussels nightclub for better or worse. Again the music scene plays a central role. Having missed the opening-day press screening I ended up watching the movie after midnight. Not only did the pounding soundtrack keep me awake, but beyond the surface theatrics of sex, drugs and techno-pop dance beats, the visceral maelstrom of fraternal and family relationships under fire held me enthralled.

### A Good Wife (Serbia/Bosnia/Croatia)

Similar to Nate Parker's *The Birth of a Nation*, this is a considerable triumph for Mirjana Karanovic as the director, co-writer and principal actor in a drama that recalls a brutal period of history with wrenching personal and social results. She plays the "good wife" Milena of the gruff Vlada (Boris Isakovic), a seemingly contented middle-aged mother of successful daughters whose comfortable life is shattered by twin discoveries. A malignant tumour in her breast requires a mastectomy. Worse, while cleaning out a shed she finds a tape with evidence of Vlada's war crimes during the Bosnian genocide. Facing a crisis of family, friends and faith,

she must decide how to cope with these equally challenging cancers.

### Equity (U.S.)

This Wall Street morality tale made waves for being produced, directed (by Meera Menon) and written (by Amy Fox) by women with women in the principal roles. To its credit the corporate intrigue belies any comfortingly virtuous notions of empowerment or ethical superiority. The central character, Naomi Bishop (Anna Gunn), is a high-powered investment-banking executive having an affair with another high roller (James Purefoy) in the firm who's being investigated for insider trading by a former classmate of Naomi's, a lawyer with the Securities and Exchange Commission. While Naomi aggressively heads the stock-market debut of an upstart tech company, her pregnant right-hand woman plays a double game. There's a "big short" involved from which no one comes away looking good. Explains Menon: "With *Equity*, we were seeking to tell a story about the strength and drive of female ambition in male-dominated work environments like Wall Street. . . . in the edit, we discovered the story underneath the story, how sometimes that fight for recognition can meet impossible circumstances, resistance at every level, and land in a place where ambition turns into something a bit more unsettling — ruthlessness."

### Certain Women (U.S.)

Writer-director Kelly Reichardt has carved out an impressive niche in American cinema with films like *Wendy and Lucy*, *Meek's Cutoff*, and *Night Moves*. (Her debut feature *River of Grass* was screened as a Sundance retrospective.) Based on Maile Meloy's loosely intersecting short stories set in Montana, the narrative begins with a Livingstone lawyer, Laura Wells (Laura Dern), being called in to defuse a hostage crisis involving a distraught middle-aged male client.

Laura is having an affair with Ryan (James Le Gros) who has troubles of his own with wife Gina (Michelle Williams) and daughter Guthrie (Sara Rodier). Meanwhile a struggling law student, Beth (Kristen Stewart), makes long drives from the town to teach a course she is ill-equipped for, attracting more than educational female interest from solitary ranch hand Jamie (Lily Gladstone). Intimate and acutely observed, these seemingly small slices of life in a sparse rural landscape bear eloquent witness to the human longing for connection.

### The Fundamentals of Caring (U.S.)

Selected as the closing-night premiere, this crowd-pleasing dramedy directed by Rob Burnett ticked off some critics but I found myself won over by the relationship that develops between Ben (Paul Rudd), who has lost a child before becoming caregiver to 18-year-old Trevor (Craig Roberts). Wheelchair bound with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, the acerbic young man chafes against an over-protective mother and challenges Ben's earnest ALOHA principles (ask, listen, observe, help, and ask again). When they go on a bizarre road trip to the "world's deepest pit," with a detour to Salt Lake City to see Trevor's uncaring estranged father, a bonding happens that offers no cures but gives Ben the inspirational push he needs. As much as encounters along the way seem contrived to milk sympathetic audience response, what both gain from "caring" is the picture's saving grace.

There isn't space for honourable mentions but let me offer praise for a number of female performances: Molly Shannon in *Other People*; Lilith Stangenberg in *Wild*; Rachel Griffiths in *Mammal*; Canadians Sarah Gadon in *Indignation* and Ellen Page in *Tallulah*; Rachel Weisz in *Complete Unknown*; Imogen Poots in *Frank & Lola*.



# An open and shut reflection on the doors of mercy



## Questioning Faith

Mary Marrocco

In our city, and throughout the world during this Year of Mercy, several churches have Holy Doors. They're pilgrimage sites, just like the one at St Peter's in Rome, only much closer.

Big cities can be places of alienation, fear and rejection. I've frequently had a door shut in my face, scurrying behind fellow city-dwellers, and I've likely done the same to others. We prefer our doors bolted, barred and guarded. Only the proper people are allowed in. So, seeing our urban landscape dotted with mercy is an exciting and compelling event. Mercy doors have no entrance fee or interview, no elite list or order. Anyone can walk through.

Doors are entranceways and exits; they're openings, barriers and passages. Our lives are full of them. Unexpectedly closed or unexpectedly open, they can change things.

Scripture is strewn with doors, too. There are doors for life, like the doors marked with blood to invite Death to pass-over (Exodus 12:13). For faithfulness, like the doorposts marked with the great commandment to love God alone

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(Deuteronomy 6:9). For shame, like the garden door Susannah's would-be rapists used to hide their sin (Daniel 13:20). The gateway to Paradise is guarded, requiring shameful humans to find God in the world instead (Genesis 3:25). But doors open themselves, so the King of Glory might enter (Psalm 24). It's said Jesus entered on Palm Sunday through the Golden Gate, Jerusalem's eastern gate, known as the Gate of Mercy (John 12:12). The sealed door of Death is opened by Christ's resurrection from the tomb (Mark 16:4), and so the door to heaven is open (Revelations 4:1).

We humans have doors, too, and we like to use them. When we close ours, God respects it, but won't go away: "Listen! I am standing and knocking at your door" (Rev 3:20). We're not surprised by his persuasiveness, recalling the bride in Song of Songs (5:2): she's asleep alone, but her beloved makes his love so compelling through the locked door that she gets up and opens it. Jesus invites us to imitate God's persistence (Matthew 7:7), but though allowing us to close our doors, promises his will be opened (Luke 11:10).

Entering church through mercy doors isn't an exception. It's a jubilee. "So much mercy!" announces the Jubilee Year. Are there a few, hard-to-find ways to mercy? No, mercy flows wide

and deep everywhere (Ezekiel 47). Why not walk in?

It isn't always easy. We keep ourselves out through shame, like Adam and Eve, or hurt, like the sleeping bride.

Sometimes even the church (in this fallen world) finds it hard to keep the door open. One church with a Holy Door felt obliged to lock its gates and add security guards. A reasonable precaution, in earthly terms, but a pilgrim who walked her loneliness and pain over to that church one day couldn't face the barriers, and left. "The world isn't safe; we need to beware" — that's the message of airports, tourist sites and government buildings. The message of the church is bigger, too big for us to believe.

We humans can't make mercy. We can't open doors, especially the door to the other. Even when sincerely trying to open them, we lock them. We snap at our spouses instead of saying loving words. We accuse the stranger instead of welcoming him.

We could become cynical and despairing, give up on ourselves and the church. We could, if our faith were different. Our faith doesn't tell us we can open the door. It tells us that when we reject the open door, or lock doors we'd wanted to open, somehow God can pass through all that, too. It becomes an opening for God to get in among us, and rework things from within. He's drawn to us, in our feeble attempts to love and grow.

Even our failures, locks and barriers, can become doors for the King of Glory to enter. No need to pretend them away. It's God who opens the Mercy Door. He is the door (John 10:9).

And God dreams big: he asks us to *become* the door we can't

open without him.

This grand dream of God's for us was shown me one Sunday. Each person was given a little bottle of holy water, and invited to make a home Mercy Door. Every time we or a guest pass through, we're opened to mercy. My own kitchen door, a divine opening! Come to think of it, I've been in many homes strewn with holy doors, just like the city. They're the domestic church.

Is that how we become mercy? Is it as simple as walking through a door — the kitchen door, a neighbour's door, the church door?

As Lent begins, we turn and see that we ourselves become the door. We enter Lent marked by the sign of repentance and death — ashes — trans-



Anne Wicks

**OPEN DOORS — "Doors are entranceways and exits; they're openings, barriers and passages. Our lives are full of them," writes Mary Marrocco. "Unexpectedly closed or unexpectedly open, they can change things."**

formed into a sign of renewal. Together, we discover that we, too, flow with mercy. So much mercy!

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# Jesus’ mercy is greater than all of our shame



## Liturgy and Life

Deacon Bob Williston

Today’s Gospel is all about shame and mercy. It is easy to see how religion has been used over the course of human history as an instrument of shaming. This encounter of the Pharisees with Jesus is a study of “contrasts.” They bring to him a woman who has been caught in the act of adultery. (As an aside, it always bugs me that the charges are made against the woman only. Where is the man in all of this?) They think they have Jesus caught, for he either has to observe the law by allowing her to be stoned to death, or if he forgives her, he is superseding the Mosaic law which calls for her death.

His actions are louder than his words. He does not confront the Pharisees or even shame them. He does not enter into debate with them. Rather, he invites the one without sin to throw the first stone. The contrast is even physical. The Pharisees throw this woman into a circle of condemnation. All eyes are on her with judgement and shaming. Jesus, on the other hand, does not look at them or at her. Instead, he begins to write on the ground, with his face down. He does not heap shame on them, but they leave the place because he has put them in a publicly difficult situation. When they all leave,

*Williston is a retired Parish Life Director for the Diocese of Saskatoon and a former missionary with the Redemptorists. He is also a song writer and recording artist.*

finally he looks at the woman. “Is there no one here to condemn you? Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.”

We all carry with us the scars of shame. How many voices still echo in our hearts with the words: “Shame on you.” Or “You should be ashamed of yourself.” Parents, teachers, priests, even the flight attendant who thinks the bag we are carrying on the plane is too big! They could all be well-meaning, and want to help us with the formation of our conscience. (I wouldn’t include the flight attendant in this!) Significant people in whom we have placed our trust have used shame as an instrument of instruction, motivation and formation. All of us carry a “shame-history” deep in our hearts. We also carry our own personal “sin-history.” Both of these can make it difficult to believe in the mercy of God.

You see, the ultimate fear is that when God sees all about me, I will have let God down. God will be disappointed in me or even ashamed of me. It becomes very difficult to receive mercy when we are filled with paralyzing shame. We want to hide and we are in danger of such self-deception that we become even strangers to ourselves.

As a teenager, I once went to talk to a priest. We weren’t in a confessional, or even an office. We were sitting in his living room, and I recall pouring out my heart with the sins that I thought God would want me to confess. It turned out to be a rather lengthy story to tell, and after I finished, I was exhausted, self-conscious and quite vulnerable. The priest stood up and said, “OK, let me go and get my stole, and I want you to confess this all over again.” This was not an act of mercy, but for a sensitive teenager it compounded the

grief, the fear, and the shame! Needless to say, it was a long time before I could muster the courage to go to confession again!

If you recall the “original sin” of the Adam and Eve story, you will remember that after eating the forbidden fruit, they hid from God and from each other. The clothing they had put on was a clothing of shame. This is why God asked: “Who told you you were naked?” Their disobedience and loss of innocence came with a profound and deep shame.

Some might argue this is healthy, as it might prevent shameful acts on the part of anyone contemplating them. However, public shaming, though it has been often used, has never been understood as a healthy formation of conscience that we need to steer our moral ship.

In his book on “prayer,” Rev. Ron Rolheiser suggests that shame is not something we experience at the failure of an unfulfilled duty, rather, we are shamed in our “enthusiasm.” “We are made to feel guilty, naive, and humiliated about our very pulse for life and about our very trust of each other.”

How can the mercy of Jesus reach us and heal the deeper wounds of our shame?

Since this is the last Sunday of Lent, we would do well to unite our vulnerabilities, our shame and sin history with Jesus who became vulnerable for us. We can do this through prayer, through our own acts of mercy, and possibly through telling someone who has the gift of compassion about those areas of shame that we need healed. The mercy of Jesus flows from the cross, remembering his words to Dismas, the thief: “This day you will be with me in paradise.” That mercy is greater than all shame, all sin. Pope Francis has invited us to contemplate the deep mystery of God’s mercy this year. Let us remember the scene of this woman judged so harshly by the world around her, yet she meets the mercy of God in the loving eyes of Jesus. This is ultimately what gives her a new beginning. In God’s loving mercy, we can have a new beginning as well.

<b>Fifth Sunday in Lent March 13, 2016</b>	<b>Isaiah 43:16-21 Psalm 126 Philippians 3:8-14 John 8:1-11</b>
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# Barrenness describes a universal human condition of ‘insufficiency’

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Several years ago, while teaching a summer course at Seattle University, I had as one of my students a woman who, while happily married, was unable to conceive a child. She had no illusions about what this meant for her. It bothered her a great deal. She found Mother’s Day very difficult. Among other things, she wrote a well-researched thesis on the concept of barrenness in Scripture and developed a retreat on that same theme which she offered at various renewal centres.

Being a celibate whose vows also conscript a certain biological barrenness, I went on one of her weekend retreats, the only male there. It was a powerful group experience, but it took most of the weekend for that to happen. Initially most everyone on the

retreat was tentative and shy, not wanting to admit to themselves or others the kind of pain the loss of biological parenthood was creating in their lives. But things broke open on the Saturday night, after the group watched a video of a 1990s British film, *Secrets and Lies*, a subtle but powerful drama about the pain of not having children. The tears in the movie catalyzed tears within our group and the floodgates opened. Tears began to flow freely and one by one the women began to tell their stories. Then, after the tears and stories had stopped, the atmosphere changed, as if a fog had lifted and a weight had been removed. Lightness set in. Each person in the group had mourned her loss and now each felt a lightness in knowing that one might never have a child and still be a happy person, without denying the pain in that.

Barrenness is not just a term that describes a biological incapacity to have children or a life-choice to not have them. It’s wider. Barrenness describes the

universal human condition in its incapacity to be generative in the way it would like and the vacuum and frustration that leaves inside lives.

Karl Rahner summarizes that in these words: *In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we ultimately learn that here, in this life, all symphonies must remain unfinished.* No matter if we have biological children of our own or not, we still all find ourselves barren in that for none of us is there a finished symphony here on earth. There’s always some barrenness left in our lives and biological barrenness is simply one analogue of that, though arguably the prime one. None of us die having given birth to all we wanted to in this world.

What do we do in the face of this? Is there an answer? Is there a response that can take us beyond simply gritting our teeth and stoically getting on with it? There is. The answer is tears. In mid-life and beyond, we need, as Alice Miller normatively suggests in her classic essay, *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, to mourn so that our very foundations are shaken. Many of our wounds are irreversible and many of our shortcomings are permanent. We will go to our deaths with this incompleteness. Our loss cannot be reversed. But it can be mourned, both what we lost and what we failed to achieve. In that mourning there is freedom.

I have always been struck by the powerful metaphor inside the story of Jephthah’s daughter in the biblical story in the Book of Judges, chapter 11. It captures in

an archetypal image the only answer there is, this side of eternity, to barrenness. Condemned to death in the prime of her youth by a foolish vow her father made, she tells her father that she is willing to die on the altar of sacrifice, but only on one condition. She will now die without experiencing either the consummation of marriage or the birthing of children. So she asks her father to give her two months before her death to “mourn her virginity.” Properly mourned, an incomplete life can be both lived in peace and left in peace.

Tears are the answer to barrenness, to all loss and inadequacy. Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, in her book *A Faithful Farewell*, has this to say about tears: “Tears release me into honest sorrow. They release me from the strenuous business of finding words. They release me into a childlike place where I need to be held and find comfort in embrace — in the arms of others and in the arms of God. Tears release me from the treadmill of anxious thoughts, and even from fear. They release me from the strain of holding them back. Tears are a consent to what is. They wash away, at least for a time, denial and resistance. They allow me to relinquish the self-deceptive notion that I’m in control. Tears dilute resentment and wash away the flotsam left by waves of anger.”

Not insignificantly, tears are salt water. Human life originated in the oceans. Tears connect us to the source of all life on this earth, within which prodigal fecundity trumps all barrenness.

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# Catholics and Muslims expand their dialogue

## Ecumenism & Interfaith Relations

Thomas Ryan, CSP



Over the past 20 years there have been three regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues in the U.S.: West Coast, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic, co-sponsored by the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Islamic Society of North America, the Islamic Circle of North America, the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California, and the Islamic Educational

Center of Orange County.

These dialogues have undertaken a variety of topics, sharing the fruits of their exchanges whenever possible through published papers on, for example, Catholic and Muslim Perspectives on Revelation; on Marriage; and on Religion in the Public Square.

In the past year a decision was taken to advance the work of the regional dialogues so as to embrace a wider national audience. Leaders from the dialogues discerned that a level of maturity had been reached that would allow for a national focus consistent with the overall vision and mission of the Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Muslim organizations.

The first meeting of the national dialogue took place Feb. 17 - 18 at the St. Francis Center on the University of San Diego campus. As one of the goals of the dialogues is to encourage Catholics and Muslims to get to know one another better and to create networks of social contact, an evening event open to the public was held featuring two of the dialogue's leaders, Rev. Robert McElroy, Bishop of San Diego, and Dr. Sayyid Syeed, director of the Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances for the Islamic Society of North America. Their topic was Deepening Inter-religious Dialogue and Community Alliances.

Bishop McElroy spoke about how the Catholic community in the U.S. ought to respond to the rising tide of Islamophobia in the public square in a way that resonates with the church's teaching.

"We must recognize and confront the ugly tide of Islamic bigotry that emerged in 2001 with the 9/11 twin towers attack," he said. "We must confront the lie that Muslims want to replace con-

stitutional law in U.S. with Shariah law. We are witnessing in the U.S. a new nativism. We must reject it and label it for the religious bigotry that it is."

McElroy expressed that "Catholics in the U.S. must recognize that extremists have hijacked Islam. And we only accentuate that evil by giving credence to those in the U.S. who also hijack Islam."

Consistent with Pope Francis' repeated emphasis on the importance of a "dialogue of friendships," the bishop remarked that our challenge is to come to know in greater depth the Muslim community here. "Most Americans have no significant, in-depth friendship with Muslims," he observed, noting that, "religious bigotry thrives in an environment of social isolation."

McElroy reflected that the same universal hopes and dreams around issues of health, economics and raising children occupy Muslims as well as Catholics. "Personal encounter which leads to friendship and deeper understanding is the best antidote to bigotry," he said.

The bishop identified three important ways that Catholics could draw inspiration from Muslims and deepen their own faith. First, by a more daily commitment to prayer in a world that erects so many barriers to a life of integrated, regular prayer. Second, by cultivating a sense of asceticism as a

sign of the sovereignty of God. And third, to know and witness more fully to the immensity and richness of the mercy of God. The bishop noted how all the chapters but one in the Quran begin by addressing God as "the compassionate, the merciful."

"A challenge for Catholics today," said McElroy, "is to walk with the Muslim community in contemporary America to maximize religious freedom, and to work with Muslims in the Middle East for religious liberty among Jews, Christians, and Muslims."

Dr. Syeed reflected on how the long period of the Crusades, a series of intermittent military campaigns in the years from 1096 to 1487 and sanctioned by various popes, deepened the chasm of division between Christians and Muslims, leaving a trail of conflict, mistrust and hate that is reflected in both art and literature down through the centuries.

"*Nostra Aetate* brought an end to this," he said, referring to the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. "Vatican II made some radical changes vis à vis the Roman Catholic Church's relations with Jews and Muslims. This new approach coincided with a growing community of Muslims in the West. The western world was becoming more diverse in terms of race, colour, creed. *Nostra Aetate* was a new beginning."

However, Syeed noted, the emergence of ISIS has brought back the language of the Crusades. "Every time they refer to their Christian victims, they call them 'crusaders.' What we have achieved in this country in the past 50 years is being endangered by ISIS which would have everyone believe that Christianity is still guided by a 'Crusades mentality.' But it is the ISIS/jihadists who are now the new crusaders."

"*Nostra Aetate* was a response to our centuries of prayers," said Syeed. "We need to create an action plan to get all churches, mosques, and synagogues to work extensively to promote the new agenda for the new millennium."

Syeed shared how the Islamic Society of North America has been working in this respect to help some countries like Tunisia and Morocco to grant religious freedom and equal citizenship to people of all faiths.



courtesy of T. Ryan

**EXPANDED DIALOGUE** — This is the full group of dialogue participants from a Feb. 17 - 18 meeting at the St. Francis Center on the University of San Diego campus.

## Follow Jesus and extend hospitality to the margins



### Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. — Hebrews 13:2*

I read a fascinating report recently that pointed out how driverless cars have accumulated more than twice the number of accidents as human-operated vehicles. But here's the interesting statistic: in 100 per cent of those cases, the driverless car was not at fault. The reason for the higher accident rate? These cars always follow the rules.

Now it doesn't take a philosopher to analyze the interesting ethical conundrum this provides (though it would help). The dilemma facing programmers is how to make the cars safer if the only way of doing so is factoring in lawless-

ness. You can imagine the discussion during a board meeting at, say, Volkswagen? "Do we put a regulator on the car that will allow it to exceed the speed limit when merging, even if it breaks the law?" Of course they'd say no!

One of the other difficult questions engineers and programmers have asked is what they should do if a car is in danger of running over school children. Is it ethically acceptable to program the car, in this situation, to swerve off a cliff and sacrifice the passenger of the driverless vehicle? Frankly I wouldn't want to be the person making that decision, and certainly not by building in a universal program.

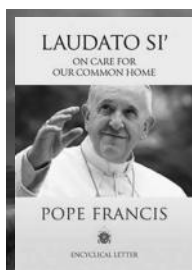
In reality all of us make complex ethical decisions throughout our lives, some with more at stake than others. We also always analyze the rules to see how binding they are, because not every one of these has the same value in differ-

ent contexts. How many of us have told our children not to lie, but then urged them not to blurt out how much they hate a person's clothes? Or what about the answer to: "Do I look fat in this?" Context matters.

I thought of all this recently when reading a recent interview with Pope Francis. Once again, the pontiff reiterates the value of flexibility when interpreting God's laws.

He stresses the importance of mercy and inclusion, even to the point of overlooking obscure teachings, urging us to "be surprised by reality, by a greater love or a higher standard."

Jesus broke Mosaic law and reached out to the lepers, who were forbidden human contact. Not surprisingly, the pope asks us to follow Jesus, and to extend our hospitality, to the margins. "Jesus goes and heals and integrates the marginalized, the ones who are outside the city, the ones outside the encampment. In so doing, he shows us the way." Sometimes the way is not only difficult to find, but it's also difficult to navigate. But only God's grace and an open, merciful heart can help us to follow the path he would choose.



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



# Restorative justice brings light, vision and healing

**By Peter Oliver**

Restorative justice has brought new light and vision to the way justice processes unfold. Central to this vision are the needs of people who have been harmed by criminal acts. Working toward a more holistic approach to justice is an arduous endeavour and at this point we can only glimpse the first few dawning rays of that healthier reality.

The emphasis of our current justice system focuses on criminal acts as a violation of the law, an offence against the state. To be fair to this system, the focus on objectivity that it intends is an improvement over the impulsive and vengeful justice of the mob that still prevails in some quarters. Still, for every two steps forward, it seems there must be a step backward. The emphasis on objectivity (i.e. facts, not feelings) has also created a process where the person who has been harmed become little more than a spectator in a courtroom drama, a production that has little connection with the heartache experienced by the persons who have been harmed.

This ends up being a lose-lose

*Oliver works in chaplaincy and development for The Micah Mission in Saskatoon.*

situation because the persons who have been harmed leave the justice process feeling confused, ignored and betrayed. Meanwhile, the person who has done the harm is sheltered from experiencing the implications of his or her actions and this becomes a barrier to growth. Instead of paying attention to the harm, the accused person spends precious time trying to negotiate a settlement that will minimize the amount of punishment doled out. However, efforts are being made to correct these imbalances and those efforts are quite fruitful.

Recently my family initiated a mediation process that is facilitated through the Restorative Opportunities program co-ordinated by Correction Services Canada. This service allows people who have been harmed by a criminal act to meet with the person who has done the harm. The process is completely voluntary for both the person who has done the harm and the persons who have been harmed. Prisoners cannot use any aspect of the process to reduce their sentence or increase the probability of parole.

The process unfolds through a series of steps. The facilitator meets with each party separately a number of times and then, when both parties are ready, a face-to-face meeting is organized. The

process takes a good deal of commitment and goodwill on all sides but I have been quite encouraged by the results so far.

In our case the offence involved two men breaking into my mother's home and attacking her. My mother was seriously harmed as one of the men struck her with an axe, severing her ear and causing a concussion. Both men were arrested immediately after the event and one of them was sentenced as a dangerous offender. (The implications of this sentence are that he will likely never leave prison.) The trauma of the break-in was, perhaps, more extreme than my mother's physical injuries. She had just moved into Saskatoon from a small town, following the death of my



P. Oliver

**PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION —** Jo Oliver and her family are involved in a mediation process that allows people who have been harmed by a criminal act to meet with the person who has done the harm. “Unlike the proceedings that take place in our courts, the emphasis here is on how we feel and on communicating the harm that has been done. This is essential to healing and transformation,” writes Peter Oliver.

father, and this experience left her with a permanent sense of insecur-

rity about her safety in her new home.

As the mediation process unfolds, the facilitator who is working with us related the content of his first visit with the person who committed the offence — I'll call him M.

He shared that M confessed to a deep sense of shame and embarrassment about the offence and that he immediately agreed to engage in a process that would result in meeting face to face.

Unlike the proceedings that take place in our courts, the emphasis here is on how we feel and on communicating the harm that has been done. This is essential to healing and transformation. M can never turn the clock back and remove the offence, but encountering him in his humanity helps us to see that the attack was not the work of a cruel, indifferent person. There is some peace in knowing that he cares about the harm he has done.

I also believe that being able to express this to the people he has harmed can lead to transformation in his life. Even though he may spend the rest of his life in prison, an inner transformation may lead to a degree of freedom that would be inaccessible without this encounter and that also brings me a sense of peace.

# Pope Francis is not easy on those who pay lip service to the Gospel



# Everyday Theology

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Louise McEwan

The international media was recently abuzz with “a feud” between Pope Francis and Donald Trump. Of the media’s making, the attention-grabbing headlines made for some entertainment while at the same time shining a spotlight on Christianity and politics in the

United States.

On board the papal plane flying home from his trip to Mexico, reporters asked Francis about Trump's plans to deport illegal immigrants and build a wall along the American-Mexican border. Francis' reply drew the ire of Trump and his supporters: "A

person who thinks only about building walls — wherever they may be — and not building bridges, is not Christian. This is not the Gospel.” Francis went onto give Trump the benefit of the doubt.

Trump fired back describing himself as a “good Christian,” and calling the pope’s comments “disgraceful.” He carried on, rather like a petulant child threatening retribution after his parents have scolded him. When ISIS attacks the Vatican, the pope will be sorry; the pope will wish he had listened to Donald Trump and prayed for him to become president. Trump must have forgotten that the Vatican doesn’t need a saviour; it already has one.

Online comment boards lit up with the usual amount of outrage and ignorance. When the ignorance wasn't alarming, it was hilarious, such as this comment that compared the theological knowledge of the two men. "The pope didn't mean to offend. He is just not as eloquent as Trump when discussing religion."

Unlike in Canada, religion continues to play a significant role in American elections. Trump and other presidential

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hopefuls are courting the religious vote. To win the pope's endorsement would be a *coup d'état*. Unfortunately for the candidates, Francis has no intention of telling American Catholics how to mark their ballots. However, he has no problem talking about socio-political issues that affect the common good and do harm.

This annoys the Trump camp for which walls are more desirable than bridges. It wants a Christianity that advances protectionism and makes no demands. It is much less keen on a Gospel that “comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable.”

While the pope's comment about what it means to be a Christian clearly hit a nerve, it was not surprising. Francis has never been easy on Christians, particularly clerics, who pay lip service to the Gospel but fail to walk the talk.

And his comment on building walls instead of bridges is in keeping with his consistent and unequivocal support for migrants and refugees.

In 2013, just after his election as pontiff, Francis visited the island of Lampedusa to commemorate the thousands of migrants who died crossing the sea from North Africa to Europe. During his visit to Mexico, he celebrated mass in the border town of Ciudad Juárez. These symbolic actions underscore his clarion call for compassion for migrants, who are not merely numbers and statistics of a global phenomenon but individuals with names, sto-

ries and families. Governments are not to treat migrants as “pawns on the chessboard of humanity.”

The pope is not making up stuff about being Christian to irritate the Trump camp.

The Christian obligation to support the underdog is a biblical imperative that goes back to the ancient Israelites, who were to exercise compassion for the widow, the orphan and the alien. It weaves its way into the tradition of "the corporal works of mercy" based on the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the imprisoned.

Francis is reminding all of us that building walls, “wherever they may be,” reinforces unjust economic and social structures. These things imprison millions of people around the globe. Building bridges, on the other hand, helps individuals live with dignity.

So while some in the Trump camp want the pope to shut up and butt out, there is an inherently political element to the Gospel. Despite the confident assertion of evangelical Jerry Falwell Jr. (a Trump supporter) that “Jesus never intended to give instruction to political leaders on how to run a country,” the Gospel does challenge the attitudes and policies of “good Christian” leaders.

Religion is not a tool for garnering votes to secure personal power or stroke one's ego. Nor is faith a matter of expediency, but of discipleship. Sometimes, the demands of discipleship are inconvenient and irritating.



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Churches off kilter

A host of things can irk us about our church community. Some are trivial; some are major.

A recent Religion News Service report will put some of our concerns into another perspective. The story was entitled, “African countries clamp down on churches tied to ‘miracle cures.’”

In order to attract followers, some charismatic preachers and self-proclaimed prophets in Africa make promises of miracle healings and wonders. Governments are being forced to step in to stop obvious abuses. They are dealing with tales of clergy fleecing and abusing their followers. They want to protect unsuspecting church members from corrupt or immoral schemes.

Kenyan preacher Victor Kanyari, for example, concocted a scheme asking followers to pay him in return for his cleansing them of their sins. As proof their sins were forgiven, the pastor said the water in a “miracle basin” would turn red after he prayed over

it. Later, church leaders admitted adding chemicals to the water.

In a bizarre event, a Nairobi pastor banned women from wearing undergarments to church. Rev. Njohi argued that the women should be free in body and spirit to receive Jesus.

In South Africa last year, a pastor in Pretoria made members of his congregation strip naked and he rode on their backs as he prayed for them. Another Pretoria pastor, Daniel Lesego, made his congregation drink petrol and eat grass. Pastor Penuel Mnguni, based in northern Pretoria, took the cake with this message: he declared a live snake a chocolate bar and commanded the congregation to eat it.

Tolbert Thomas Jallah Jr., a Liberian cleric who heads the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa, said some African ministers are preaching doctrines that are without any biblical and theological basis. “They are doing strange interpretations of Scriptures to exploit poor people, using prosperity messages, calling for miracle ser-

vices and purchase of healing,” he said.

“They are requesting money before praying for the sick, and people will have to pay money to get appointments and to register before getting to see the apostle,” he added.

In Cameroon, President Paul Biya recently ordered the closure of 100 churches over alleged criminal activities by Pentecostal church pastors linked to miracles. In January, Kenya passed some corrective regulations, including requiring all clergy to hold theological degrees. The regulations were withdrawn after bitter protests by church leaders. But government officials plan to continue their program to regulate the “evil men and women” who use the name of God “to take advantage of the citizens and fleece them,” an official said.

About 63 per cent of Africans identify as Christian, and Christian denominations have founded and still run schools and hospitals. That has been the long tradition for the Catholic Church. Whatever “miracles” are worked in these fields are accomplished by dedication, prayer and hard work. — PWN

Are there rules for publishing articles on religious matters?



Canon Law For Today

Rev. Frank Morrissey

One major section of Book III of the Code of Canon Law is entitled “The means of social communication and books in particular” (canons 822 - 832). After explaining that the church is to

use the means of social communication to promote the good news of the Gospel, canon 822 asks pastors to teach the faithful how to work together so as to imbue the media with a human and

Situation goes from bad to worse for truck owner

By Derek James From Calgary, Troy Media

The Criminal Code makes it illegal to do anything with the intention of alarming the Queen. I’m not sure our courts have ever found someone guilty of violating this law but, regardless, Canadians are expected to treat Her Majesty with a certain minimum standard of decency.

The same is true for our governments’ treatment of Canadians. Section 12 of the Charter prohibits our governments from treating us in ways that are shocking or alarming. In fact, no government in Canada can treat anyone in ways that outrage Canadians’ standards of decency. And this is a very good thing. None of us want to live in a country where the authorities can impose grossly disproportionate and brutal penalties for relatively minor infractions.

And talk about brutal. On Jan. 13, the City of Calgary sold Lukas Pesut’s truck after impounding it 36 days prior. The regulations of Alberta’s Traffic Safety Act permit the city to deem a vehicle abandoned after 72 hours and then sell it 15 days later after giving notice by ordinary mail to the owner’s last known address.

Lukas’ truck — worth approximately \$100,000 — was heavily modified for his work in the Northern Alberta oil patch. It con-

tained an estimated \$35,000 worth of tools in locked boxes, a hydraulic hoist worth over \$10,000, and a bed valued at more than \$40,000, not to mention other customizations for work in the pipe industry.

This highly valuable truck was necessary for Lukas’ job and yet it was sold at auction by the city for a mere \$18,500.60. And if Lukas wants any of the money from the sale — minus the city’s costs for towing, impounding, and selling, of course — he needs to fill out a form and allow 90 days for the claim to be processed.

How did this happen? It started when Lukas drove his truck from Grand Prairie and parked it in front of a friend’s house in South West Calgary. Lukas was in a rush to catch a flight to Germany so that he could spend the holiday season with his mother who had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. As it turns out, the truck was in a two-hour residential parking zone and Lukas failed to request a free permit from the city. A neighbour complained and the truck was impounded.

Lukas’ friend contacted the city to try to resolve the matter after the truck was impounded. She was told by parking officials that they couldn’t help her since she didn’t know the vehicle’s plate number. She was also unable to reach Lukas to get the plate number since he had lost his phone en route to Germany. And since only registered owners may remove items

Christian spirit.

When the code was promulgated in 1983, the term “social media” hardly existed. Nor did the various means we use today to share messages. The Internet did not exist at the time, nor did the other forms of communication we now take for granted. So, not surprisingly, there is no reference to them in the church’s legislation.

This development raises serious problems for the church. Although there are appropriate controls in place before books and articles are published on behalf of the church, there is nothing established to let the faithful know whether or not the contents of a given website or an email communication truly correspond to the thinking and teachings of the church.

Unfortunately, there are so many self-proclaimed “Catholic” websites and news services that

are not in any way accountable to church authorities in relation to the truth of the statements found therein. The faithful would have a right to expect that what is presented as “Catholic” would indeed correspond to catholic teaching and thought.

Until some means is found to identify appropriate sites and give them some form of recognition, we are still living in a free-for-all situation.

However, when it comes to published works (in the traditional sense of the term), the matter is much clearer. Canon 823 insists that these writings be submitted beforehand to competent church authorities to make certain that they contain nothing against faith and morals.

For this reason, special norms are in effect when it comes to publishing the Sacred Scriptures and liturgical books; the same applies to books of prayers destined either for public or for private use. There are also detailed provisions for the publication of catechisms.

Likewise, when it comes to more general works, such as commentaries on the Scriptures, theology, canon law, church history,

and other religious or moral subjects, there are canonical provisions in place (see canon 827.3). In these cases, it is the local Ordinary, usually of the place where the book is published, who is to give his authorization, generally called an *imprimatur* (“let it be printed”).

However, before he grants such authorization, the work is to be examined by one or more censors. These censors can be chosen at the national level and be available for consultation by individual dioceses. A diocesan bishop is not bound by the opinion of the censors, and may refuse to grant permission to publish, even though their report was favorable (*nihil obstat* — “no objections”).

The conference of bishops in each country has the right to issue more detailed norms determining the requirements for priests and members of religious institutes to take part in radio and television programs which concern Catholic doctrine or morals. In Canada, the bishops decided that permission of a person’s bishop or major superior was required, particularly in the case of an ongoing collaboration.

— CHURCH, page 15

*Morrissey is a professor emeritus of canon law at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, and has been very active over the years in the field of canon law, especially as it applies to dioceses and religious institutes. This is his 44th, and last, article in a series.*



CNS/Barbara Fraser

**PERU OIL SPILL** — Awajun children in the community of Nazareth, at the confluence of the Chiriaco and Maranon rivers in northern Peru, show the clothes they wore — with no protective equipment — to scoop oil out of water near their community after a pipeline break that spilled at least 2,000 barrels of oil. Bishop Alfredo Vizcarra Mori of Jaen, Peru, has called for a thorough cleanup and remediation of the area affected by the oil spill and payment of damages to communities.

*From is a lawyer with the Canadian Constitution Foundation.*

— PUNISHMENT, page 15



# Spiritual hunger comes first

Continued from page 1

ing with the neighbours,” Murphy told CatholicPhilly.com, the news website of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. “It is very exciting.” His former parish had a coat drive that enabled him to distribute 200 coats to people in Kensington. Also, Mother of Mercy distributes donated foods to people who come often before or after mass. Because substance abuse is endemic in the neighbourhood, an Alcoholics Anonymous program is up and running with a Narcotics Anonymous program ready to start.

“We welcome anyone who is addicted to come to the meetings that are held right here,” Murphy said, adding they also work to get people with addictions into available treatment programs. An evening prayer group has already been started, but another outreach, the offering of masses in private homes, had to be dropped because in the psychology of the neighbourhood people are unwilling to welcome others they do not know well into their homes. Welte, who knew both Devlin and Murphy well, was invited to join the team, which she did with the hearty approval of her

congregation. For her the first theme is to help the people spiritually because they have a spiritual hunger and secondly to assist them with their other needs. As a woman, she feels she complements what Devlin and Murphy can do. “God made me a female, he wouldn’t make me a female if he didn’t have a reason,” she said. “I think each (male and female) has its own presence and personality. I think the male presence is necessary and the female presence is necessary too, it brings something different.”

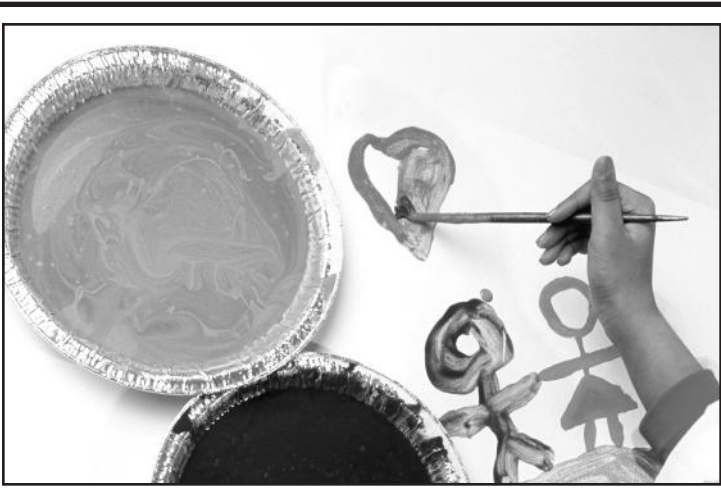
# Church guards the deposit of faith

Continued from page 14

While these norms might be considered by some to constitute censorship and an impediment to free speech, we have to keep in mind that the deposit of faith is something that the church guards jealously. It does not want doctrinal issues to be subject to the ebbs and flows of any opinion whatsoever, as if this or that opinion were the final and official word on the matter. Of course, the church has no say over what is written in the secular press or in other forms of

the media. Some writers have determined what they consider to be the only “catholic” issues, and all church statements are measured against their standards. They generally overlook the church’s teachings on matters relating to issues of justice, peace, the integrity of creation and other social questions. This is unfortunate because there is a wealth of great insights to be found in these teachings but, for a great part, they are mostly unknown. Beyond a doubt, we have fantastic sources at our disposal to make the gospel message known.

Pope Francis’ regular use of Twitter messages is a great example of this. Many bishops have their own blogs and diocesan websites. We can rely on the truth found in these sites, keeping in mind that, at times, we are dealing with matters of opinion and not formal church teachings. No matter which procedures are used, the overall purpose of the norms found in Book III of the Code is to ensure the integrity of doctrine, so that the rights of the faithful to receive Christ’s message with integrity and clarity are duly respected.



Design Pics

## Autistic Vision

Cat hairs in the paint, you know what I mean  
But why you don’t look at me I can’t explain  
The doctors who tell me you’re here when you’re not  
The way I see you is so many years, candles, clothes  
You grow out the way you do in different directions  
At odds with the paint you pick out the hairs to perfect  
And I can’t


By Dayna Mazzuca

# Punishment does not fit crime

Continued from page 14

from an impounded vehicle, she could not even retrieve the truck’s contents for Lukas. Like a Rube Goldberg machine, the neighbour’s complaint triggered a series of events that led inexorably to the sale of the truck. Did none of those involved think in a moment of self-doubt that what they were doing to Lukas might be unethical, immoral, or illegal? Apparently not, since the entire process continued on until an unknown buyer purchased the truck at far below market value. Here’s the problem: proportionality. No one — not even Lukas — thinks that parking in a two-hour zone without a permit should go unpunished. That is a parking offence. But similarly, no one with a moral compass thinks that losing

a \$100,000 property for a mere parking offence is appropriate either. What should have happened? Parking tickets? Yes. Impounding the vehicle? Sure. Selling it at a fraction of its market value and only relinquishing the proceeds upon request? That’s beyond the pale. Section 12 of the Charter protects us from two categories of government treatment: those that are inherently abhorrent and those that are grossly disproportionate. No Canadian government — including Calgary — can treat us in a fashion that is far out of proportion with what is appropriate considering the circumstances. So ask yourself this: is it appropriate for Calgary to take \$100,000 in property and undermine Lukas’ ability to earn a living for failing to get a free permit?



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# Pell admits ‘indefensible’ errors in abuse crisis

By Rosie Scammell

ROME (RNS) — Australian Cardinal George Pell, now a top adviser to Pope Francis, testified in a landmark clergy sex abuse inquiry that the Catholic Church made “enormous mistakes” in trying to deal with the scandal.

Speaking to an Australian commission investigating the church’s response to abuse, Pell — who had previously been archbishop in Sydney — also said that during the 1970s he was “very strongly inclined to accept the denial” of a priest accused of abuse.

The 74-year-old Pell, who

serves as the Vatican’s finance chief, appeared before the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Feb. 28 via video link from a Rome hotel because he said a heart condition prevented him from travelling.

Australian survivors of abuse, their supporters and media from Australia were permitted to be in the room while the cardinal testified, and the Verdi room at Hotel Quirinale was filled to capacity.

Pell’s testimony, the third time he has spoken to the commission, is part of a broader Australian investigation into child abuse over past decades and even centuries.

But various circumstances have combined to make the event headline news: Not only is Pell the highest-ranking Vatican official ever to testify on the scandal, and in Rome, but his testimony came just before the movie *Spotlight*, about The Boston Globe’s explosive investigation of clergy abuse more than a decade ago, won the Academy Award for best picture of the year.

“This film gave a voice to survivors, and this Oscar amplifies that voice, which we hope will become a choir that will resonate all the way to the Vatican,” producer Michael Sugar said in his acceptance speech.

Pope Francis has taken major steps in continuing to clear the ranks of the clergy of predators and to hold the hierarchy accountable, but critics say he has still not gone far enough, especially in disciplining bishops and cardinals.

As Pell rose through the ranks of the Australian church, he recalled in his testimony that numerous allegations “certainly were dismissed and sometimes they were dismissed in absolutely scandalous circumstances.”

“They were very, very plausible allegations made by responsible people that were not followed up sufficiently,” he added during the four hours of testimony that largely centred on his role in the church in Australia in the 1970s.

Pell met with Francis on Monday, the day after his opening testimony, which is expected to continue over the next few days.

Francis brought Pell to Rome two years ago to help clean up the scandal-plagued Vatican finances; the Australian turns 75 in June,

the standard age at which church officials retire.

Pell conceded again in the latest session that the church had made grave errors in its handling of abuse.

“The church has made enormous mistakes and is working to remedy those, but the church in many places, certainly in Australia, has mucked things up, has made — let people down. I’m not here to defend the indefensible,” he said.

Overall, Pell said such failures were personal rather than institutional mistakes.

During the questioning of Pell, he was also asked about specific cases, including the case of Gerald Ridsdale, a former priest who was convicted on multiple counts of abusing children as young as four.

Pell told the commission he was unaware that Bishop Ronald Mulkearns, the bishop overseeing Ridsdale in the Diocese of Ballarat, had sent the priest away for treatment over his sexual crimes. Ridsdale was also moved between dioceses and continued

abusing children.

Pell was ordained a priest in Ballarat in 1966 and was a consultant to Mulkearns.

“The way he was dealt with was a catastrophe, a catastrophe for the victims and a catastrophe for the church. If effective action had been taken earlier, an enormous amount of suffering would have been avoided,” said Pell.

Gerald Ridsdale is in prison after being convicted of 138 offences against 53 victims.

Ridsdale’s nephew, David Ridsdale, is in Rome for the testimony and told media that long-time abuse in his predominantly Catholic hometown of Ballarat in Australia’s Victoria state has left a legacy of trauma and tragedy.

“We’re here to seek the truth. We’re here to heal our city,” David Ridsdale said, according to The Associated Press. “We have the highest suicide rate among men in Australia. We have some of the worst drinking and violence problems. And it all stems from that abuse.”

## Love means giving witness, not proselytizing: cardinal

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians are called not to proselytize to migrants nor simply offer material aid, but rather give witness to Jesus Christ through love of one’s neighbour, said the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Cardinal Gerhard Muller said that proselytism “is practically a manipulation of the conscience” and that the church’s mission is to help humankind relate to and love those escaping war and persecution.

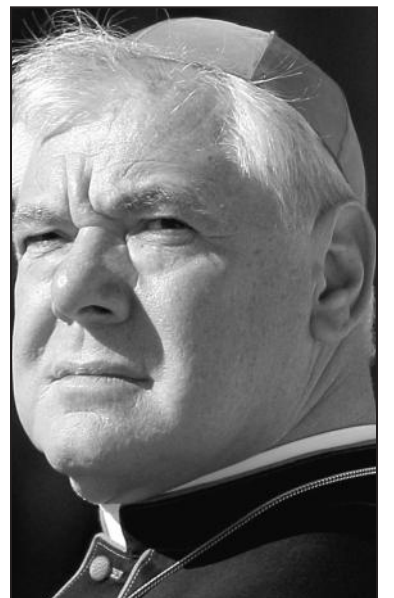
“The mission of the church is to give witness to Jesus Christ. It would be a way of despising someone if I said: ‘You only have material needs,’ ” Muller said Feb. 25 at an international conference held at the Vatican.

The two-day conference reflected on Pope Benedict XVI’s first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* on charity (God Is Love) and the relevance of the Christian perspective of love in today’s world.

Jesus’ commandment to love one’s neighbour, he said, is a call for Christians to manifest God’s love to others, particularly through works of charity. However, in addressing the needs of migrants, Christians are called to help “without hidden intentions.”

“We must not use the charity we practice and transform it into an instrument of proselytism,” he said. “An expert Christian knows when it is time to speak about God and when it is best to keep quiet. Sometimes a silent witness is the best witness of the love of God.”

The cardinal noted that in his native Germany, where thousands of migrants from Muslim-majority countries have been received, the authentic witness of love



CNS/Paul Haring

Cardinal Gerhard Muller

through charity has caused migrants to inquire about the Christian faith without imposing one’s beliefs on them.

“There are among these migrants, the majority of whom are Muslim, who ask, ‘Why are Christians — and not our fellow Muslims — helping us?’ The love of neighbour is a starting point to the love of God because God, through Jesus Christ, is the cause and essence of our love toward our neighbour,” the cardinal said.

The commitment of charity and love toward one’s neighbour, he said, must be sustained by prayer or risks becoming “blind activism and a fanatical desire to reform the world.”

Using religious differences as a pretext to exclude others is contrary to faith because “God does not exclude anyone,” he added. Excluding others “builds a wall that separates us from God; this is the original sin.”

We either make ourselves happy or miserable. The amount of work is the same.

— Carlos Castaneda



CNS/Maurizio Degl'Innocenti, EPA

**CIVIL UNIONS IN ITALY** — People gather to demonstrate in favour of the law on civil unions in Florence, Italy, Jan. 23. After months of public debate and protests, the Italian Senate passed a controversial bill that grants legal recognition to non-married heterosexual and homosexual couples. The legislation, known in Italy as the Cirinna bill, passed Feb. 25 after the bill’s sponsors removed a proposed clause that would allow for a non-biological parent in a homosexual union to adopt the biological children of his or her partner.

## Pope calls for re-integration of divorced

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Those who hope Pope Francis will give divorced and civilly remarried Catholics a blanket welcome back to communion and those who fear he will open the doors to such a possibility are both likely to be disappointed by his decision.

Pope Francis told reporters travelling with him from Mexico to Italy Feb. 17 that his document reflecting on the 2014 and 2015 synods of bishops on the family should be published by Easter. There is widespread expectation that the document will be dated March 19, the feast of St. Joseph.

On the specific issue of communion for those who are civilly remarried without having obtained an annulment of their sacramental marriage, Pope Francis said it was a possibility, but only after a process of re-integration into the life of the church.

Reception of the eucharist, he said, would be “the point of arrival.”

However, he insisted, “integration into the church does not mean ‘receiving communion’ ” as if it were automatic. “I know remarried Catholics who go to church once or twice a year” and say, “ ‘I want to receive communion’ as if it were some prize.”

It is not, the pope said. An eventual return to the sacraments

would be the result of “a work of integration.”

“All doors are open, but one cannot say, ‘from this moment on they can receive communion,’ ” Pope Francis said.

Without a declaration that their sacramental marriage was null, “such a situation contradicts the Christian sacrament,” which is meant to be an indissoluble bond, Pope Francis had explained last August during one of his weekly general audience talks about the family.

Speaking to reporters on his plane in mid-February, he said a blanket invitation to return to communion without looking at individual circumstances, helping them take responsibility for a failed marriage and encouraging repentance “would harm the spouses, the couple, because it would mean not having them follow that path of integration.”

Pope Francis pointed to the testimony of Humberto and Claudia Gomez, a couple who spoke at his meeting with families Feb. 15 in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico. Claudia was divorced before they married 16 years ago and while Humberto said their relationship always has been one of “love and understanding,” three years ago “the Lord spoke to us,” calling them to join a local parish group for divorced and remarried Catholics.

“We cannot receive commu-

nion,” Humberto said, “but we can communicate through those who are needy, sick or deprived of their freedom,” whom the couple serves through their parish outreach programs.

“These two are happy,” the pope told reporters. “And they used a very beautiful expression: ‘We do not receive eucharistic communion, but we make communion in visiting the hospital.’ ”

“Their integration has remained there,” the pope said. “If there is something more, the Lord will tell them, but it is a journey, a path.”

The “integration” of families in the life of the church was a key point at the synods on the family, the pope said, and is a concept that will feature in his post-synodal document, particularly when speaking about families experiencing difficulties and those formed by new unions.

Pope Francis’ focus on the process — and not on the possible end result — means it is an incremental change from what St. John Paul II had written in his 1981 exhortation on the family, *Familiaris Consortio*, which called on pastors to accompany such couples in a process of discernment regarding their share of responsibility for the breakdown of a marriage, their behaviour toward their spouse and children since the divorce and their conduct in their new relationship.