



## Grace and mercy

"Mercy is the offering of love to the broken, by the broken," says Leah Perrault. It's not a massive undertaking. "Often the person who offers mercy doesn't even know what it is they are doing."

— page 3



## Purim

It's often called the Jewish Mardi Gras, when people dress up and make noise and celebrate Esther, whose bravery saved the Jews from extermination in ancient Persia.

— page 3

## Politics of genocide

Widespread slaughter, expulsion, kidnapping and rape of Christians, Yezidis and other ethnic and religious minorities in territory controlled by the Islamic State may well constitute a genocide, but the Canadian government will not join a growing international movement and formally call it a genocide before there is a third-party investigation.

— page 3

## Think Indigenous

The third annual Think Indigenous Education conference was held March 15 - 18, beginning with the first annual Think Indigenous Youth Conference at Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon and continuing with workshops, speakers, tours, panels and a banquet.

— page 6

## Mercy masterpiece

If Pope Francis wanted a single image to illustrate the special Year of Mercy that is the current focus of his ministry and, indeed, the theme at the heart of his pontificate, he could do no better than choosing an under-appreciated masterpiece by the thrilling Italian artist known as Caravaggio.

— page 8



# Risen Jesus shares immortal life with us

By Cindy Wooden and Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Easter is a feast of hope, a celebration of God's mercy and a call to pray for and assist all who suffer, Pope Francis said before giving his solemn blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world).

The risen Jesus "makes us sharers of his immortal life and enables us to see with his eyes of love and compassion those who hunger and thirst, strangers and prisoners, the marginalized and the outcast, the victims of oppression and violence," the pope said March 27 after celebrating Easter morning mass.

Easter in Rome dawned bright and sunny; in St. Peter's Square, the steps leading up to the basilica were turned into an abundant garden with thousands of tulips, daffodils and flowering bushes.

On Easter morning, the pope does not give a homily. Instead, with hands clasped in prayer and head bowed, he led the tens of thousands of people in the square

in silent reflection.

After mass, before giving his solemn blessing, Pope Francis

said Easter should give people the courage to "blaze trails of reconciliation with God and with all

our brothers and sisters."

— EASTER, page 2



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

**POPE EASTER BLESSING** — Pope Francis greets the crowd during his Easter message and blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world) delivered from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican March 27.

# TRC calls churches to integrity and conversion

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Two documents released March 29 will not be the last of the Catholic Church's responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or the TRC Calls to Action, says Bishop Donald Bolen of Saskatoon.

"The bishops look at this as a long and ongoing process. I think we see the TRC Calls to Action as an invitation to engagement, so we are not simply checking things off a list; we are looking for ways to be engaged," said Bolen.

The two documents were published in response to TRC Calls to Action #46, #48 and #49. Leaders of four Canadian Catholic organizations representing bishops, institutes of consecrated life, indigenous people, and other laity signed the documents on the Feast of St. Joseph (patron saint of Canada). The texts were prepared after a rig-

orous process of drafting, discussion and consultation, led by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Commission for Justice and Peace, chaired by Bolen.

The Truth and Reconciliation process that has taken place around the legacy of residential schools has invited a "deep awakening" from Catholics and from all Canadians, Bolen said.

"Catholics have learned much more about our culpability in a very flawed Indian residential school system," he said, noting that some 60 per cent of the government-mandated schools were run by Catholic entities.

"Through the TRC process we have heard more clearly than ever before how indigenous children were taken from their homes, often far from their homes, sometimes forcibly. We have heard terrible accounts of sexual abuse and physical abuse, and also of spiri-

tual or cultural abuse. The way in which the whole residential school system was geared toward assimilation has been revealed. We also have a new understanding of how the legacy of the schools continues to have an impact on individuals, families and communities, and is connected to many of the challenges faced by indigenous people in our country today," Bolen said.

"I am grateful that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission does not write the churches off. Instead, they call us to integrity. They call us to own the sins and mistakes of our past and to conversion. They call us to action, to stand in solidarity with indigenous people, to address wrongs."

The first of the two texts "considers and repudiates illegitimate concepts and principles used by Europeans to justify the seizure of land previously held by indigenous

peoples and often identified by the terms 'Doctrine of Discovery' and 'terra nullius.'"

The document notes "that now is an appropriate time to issue a public statement in response to the errors and falsehoods perpetuated, often by Christians, during and following the so-called Age of Discovery," and rejects how these legal constructs have been used to disenfranchise indigenous peoples.

In the second document, the signatories express their support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They affirm that "its spirit can point a way forward to reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous people in Canada."

The Catholic response to TRC Call to Action #48 to support the

— DECLARATION, page 5

# Righting wrongs begins with 'truthful history'

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Canadian bishops are calling on Catholic institutions to tell "a truthful history" of the church's interaction with indigenous peoples.

On March 29, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council, the Canadian Religious Conference and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace released two

detailed documents responding to Calls to Action #48 and #49.

The Catholic response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action are "a couple of steps in a journey that's going to take a long time," says Vancouver Archbishop J. Michael Miller.

Miller was among 30 bishops, religious, and lay representatives of Catholic organizations at a March 14 meeting in Ottawa to reflect on a response to the TRC's Call to

Action #48 that asked faith communities to show how they plan to bring their policies in line with the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and Call to Action #49 that asked for a repudiation of the so-called Doctrine of Discovery, and *Terra Nullius*, that gave "first takers" or "discoverers" the right to seize land belonging to indigenous peoples.

"I just hope more of our church and Canadians in general

educate themselves about these issues," said Archbishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin-Le Pas, whose diocese is made up of 83 per cent First Nations and Métis peoples.

One place to start is by making sure Catholic institutions tell a truthful history of the encounter with indigenous peoples, such as the effects of the residential school system, and the impact of

— CHATLAIN, page 4

# Actions speak louder than words, pope tells refugees

By Junno Arocho Esteves

ROME (CNS) — In a moving gesture of brotherhood and peace, Pope Francis washed the feet of several refugees, including Muslims, Hindus and Copts.

Gestures, like Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, “speak louder than words,” he said during the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper March 24.

Coming together, he added, is another gesture meant to show a desire to live in peace as brothers and sisters despite people’s different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Hundreds of refugees were outside hoping to catch a glimpse of the pope as he made his way into the courtyard of the Centre for Asylum Seekers at *Castelnuovo di Porto*, about 25 kilometres north of Rome.

Prior to his arrival, the pope sent some Easter presents for the centre’s guests: 200 chocolate Easter eggs, a wooden chess board, and several autographed soccer balls and baseballs.

After getting out of a blue four-door vehicle, the pope was greeted by Archbishop Rino

Fisichella, the main organizer of the Vatican’s Year of Mercy initiatives, as well as the directors of the refugee centre.

He was also introduced to three residents who would serve as his interpreters: Ibrahim from Afghanistan, Boro from Mali and Segen from Eritrea. One of the refugees handed the pope a marker, which the pontiff used to sign a banner depicting the flags of 26 nations, representing the countries of origin of the centre’s guests.

In his brief, off-the-cuff homily, the pope said there were two distinct gestures in the day’s Gospel: Jesus serving and washing the feet of his disciples and Judas receiving money by Jesus’ enemies to betray him.

“Today as well, there are two gestures. All of us here, (coming) together — Muslims, Hindus, Catholics, Copts, Evangelicals — but (being) brothers, children of the same God who want to live in peace,” he said.

However, recalling the recent terrorist attack in Brussels, the pope said there was a second gesture made by those who want war. Like Judas, he said, behind those who committed the attacks

there are “arms traffickers who want blood, not peace.”

“In this moment, when I do Jesus’ same gesture — to wash the feet of you 12 — all of us are making this gesture of brotherhood. And all of us can say: We are diverse, we are different, we have different religions and cultures, but we are brothers and we want to live in peace,” he said.

Acknowledging the suffering endured by the refugees, Pope Francis asked them to pray in “their own religious language” so that there may “always be brotherhood and goodness.”

After his homily, the pope removed his vestments and put on a large white garment tied over his alb. He knelt before each of the 12 people, washed each person’s foot slowly and dried it.

The refugees barely contained their emotions, tears streaming down their faces as the pope bent low and kissed their feet. A young mother wiped her tears as the pope gazed at her and reached out to touch her baby.

The evening mass was the second of two Holy Thursday liturgies for Pope Francis; the first was a morning chrism mass



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

**POPE WASHES FEET OF REFUGEES — Pope Francis washes the foot of a refugee during Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper at the Centre for Asylum Seekers in Castelnuovo di Porto, about 25 kilometres north of Rome March 24. The pope washed and kissed the feet of refugees, including Muslims, Hindus and Copts.**

in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Before going around and greeting each of the centre’s residents individually, Pope Francis asked them to remember the beauty of

living together as brothers and sisters despite their different cultures, religions and traditions.

This beauty, he said, “has a name: peace and love.”

## Easter is the celebration of hope, pope says; soften hardened hearts

Continued from page 1

Speaking about Christ’s power over death and sin, the pope prayed that the Lord would touch places in the globe scarred by war, terrorism, poverty and environmental destruction.

“The risen Christ points out paths of hope to beloved Syria, a country torn by a lengthy conflict, with its sad wake of destruction, death, contempt for humanitarian law and the breakdown of civil concord,” the pope said. “To the power of the risen Lord we entrust the talks now in course.”

He prayed that the power of the Resurrection would “overcome hardened hearts and promote a fruitful encounter of peoples and cultures,” particularly in Iraq, Yemen, Libya and the Holy Land.

“May the Lord of life also accompany efforts to attain a definitive solution to the war in Ukraine, inspiring and sustaining initiatives of humanitarian aid, including the liberation of those who are detained,” he prayed.

On Easter and throughout the Holy Week liturgies that preceded it, Pope Francis showed special concern for the fate of refugees and migrants fleeing violence and poverty and for Christians facing persecution in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

At Rome’s Colosseum Good Friday, after presiding over the Stations of the Cross, the pope offered a long meditation on how Christ continues to be scorned, tortured and crucified in suffering people around the world.

“O Cross of Christ,” he said March 25, “today too we see you raised up in our sisters and brothers killed, burned alive, throats slit and decapitated by barbarous blades amid cowardly silence.”



CNS/Paul Haring

**GOOD FRIDAY AT THE COLOSSEUM — A woman holds a cross during the Way of the Cross presided at by Pope Francis outside the ancient Colosseum in Rome March 25.**

“O Cross of Christ, today too we see you in the faces of children, of women and people, worn out and fearful, who flee from war and violence and who often only find death and many Pilates who wash their hands,” he said.

Two days later, celebrating the Resurrection, Pope Francis said the Easter message “invites us not to forget those men and women seeking a better future, an ever more numerous throng of migrants and refugees — including many children — fleeing from war, hunger, poverty and social injustice. All too often, these brothers and sisters of ours meet along the way death or, in any event, rejection by those who could offer them welcome and assistance.”

Celebrating the Easter vigil March 26, Pope Francis said Easter is a celebration of hope, one that must begin within the hearts of each Christian.

“Christ wants to come and

take us by the hand to bring us out of our anguish,” he said in his homily. “This is the first stone to be moved aside this night: the lack of hope which imprisons us within ourselves. May the Lord free us from this trap, from being Christians without hope, who live as if the Lord were not risen, as if our problems were the centre of our lives.

“Today is the celebration of our hope, the celebration of this truth: nothing and no one will ever be able to separate us from his love,” the pope said.

“The Lord is alive and wants to be sought among the living,” Pope Francis said. “After having found him, each person is sent out by him to announce the Easter message, to awaken and resurrect hope in hearts burdened by sadness, in those who struggle to find meaning in life. This is so necessary today.”

During the Easter vigil, Pope Francis baptized eight women and four men, including Yong-joon

Lee, the South Korean ambassador to Italy, who took the baptismal name, Stephen. The ambassador’s wife, taking the name Stella, was also baptized. The other catechumens came from Italy, Albania, Cameroon, India and China.

One by one, the catechumens approached the pope who asked them if they wished to receive baptism. After responding, “Yes, I do,” they lowered their heads as the pope, using a silver shell, poured water over their foreheads.

Confirming the 12 during the vigil, the pope asked the cardinals, bishops and priests present to join him in raising their hands and praying over the newly baptized so that God would send forth the Holy Spirit upon them.

At the beginning of the vigil, after blessing the Easter fire, Pope Francis entered a darkened basilica, gently illuminated by the light of the Easter candle.

In his homily, reflecting on the Easter account from the Gospel of St. Luke, the pope noted how the disciples doubted the testimony of the women returning from the empty tomb.

Peter, he said, was the first of the men to rise and run to the tomb, choosing not to “succumb to the somber atmosphere of those days, nor was he overwhelmed by his doubts.”

“This marked the beginning of Peter’s resurrection, the resurrection of his heart. Without giving in to sadness or darkness, he made room for hope; he allowed the light of God to enter into his heart, without smothering it,” the pope said.

Like Peter and the women, he added, Christians cannot discover life by being “bereft of hope” and “imprisoned within ourselves” but, instead, must allow Christ to bring life and break open their tombs, sealed by “the stones of

our rancor and the boulders of our past.”

While problems will always remain, he said, Jesus’ resurrection is a sure foundation of Christian hope and not “mere optimism, nor a psychological attitude or desire to be courageous.”

The Holy Spirit “does not remove evil with a magic wand. But he pours into us the vitality of life, which is not the absence of problems, but the certainty of being loved and always forgiven by Christ, who for us has conquered sin, death and fear,” he said.

Christians are called to awaken the same hope in the hearts of others, Pope Francis said. Without such witness the church risks becoming “an international organization full of followers and good rules, yet incapable of offering the hope for which the world longs.”



CNS/Ammar Awad, Reuters

**GOOD FRIDAY IN JERUSALEM — Worshippers carry a cross into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher during the Good Friday procession in Jerusalem’s Old City March 25.**

# Call for genocide getting tangled up in politics

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Widespread slaughter, expulsion, kidnapping and rape of Christians, Yazidis and other ethnic and religious minorities in territory controlled by the Islamic State may well constitute a genocide, but the Canadian government will not join a growing international movement and formally call it a genocide before there is a proper, third-party investigation.

“Canada is appalled by the atrocities,” Global Affairs Canada told The Catholic Register. “We believe that some of these show the hallmarks of genocide.”

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has said Daesh, as the self-proclaimed Islamic State is sometimes called (though reportedly ISIS despises the word), may have committed genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Canada, along with the United States, the European Parliament and the United Nations, wants an “independent investigation and that a legal determination be made by a competent court or tribunal,” said a Global Affairs spokesperson in an email.

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as deliberate acts to “destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” These acts can include killing, causing bodily or mental harm, inflicting conditions intended to cause a group’s physical destruction, imposing measures to prevent births and forcibly removing children.



CNS/Nawras Aamer, EPA

**GENOCIDE DEBATE —** Iraqi soldiers observe the evacuation of families from the recently recaptured town of Zangura, Iraq, March 9. The Canadian government will not join a growing international movement and formally call the widespread slaughter of Christians, Yazidis and other ethnic and religious minorities a genocide before there is a third-party investigation.

The Conservatives have been pushing Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Dion to declare a genocide now. Shadow cabinet chair Jason Kenney has taken to describing the Islamic State as a “genocidal cult.”

In Europe, Catholic bishops welcomed a motion passed by the European Parliament that classified ethnic and religious cleansing by the Islamic State as genocide, but warned that calling it genocide must translate into action.

“Steps to prosecute criminals and bring them to justice are also imperative,” said Commission of

the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community general secretary Rev. Patrick Daley Feb. 4.

Pope Francis has spoken frequently about the atrocities inflicted on Middle East Christians. Last June he referred to “this third world war” of terrorism and how “a form of genocide is taking place, and it must end.”

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has urged the American government to classify various minorities living under Islamic State rule, including Muslim minorities, as victims of genocide.

United States Secretary of State John Kerry has formally and pointedly used the word genocide.

“In my judgment, Daesh is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control, including Yazidis, Christians and Shia Muslims. Daesh is genocidal by self-proclamation, by ideology and by actions — in what it says, what it believes and what it does,” said Kerry on March 17.

But Kerry at this point isn’t calling for the United States to do

anything more than it is already doing in co-ordinating a bombing campaign against the Islamic State.

“Ultimately the full facts must be brought to light by an independent investigation and through formal legal determination made by a competent court or tribunal,” said Kerry.

Kerry’s statement is “a historic first step towards addressing the human cost of IS’s atrocities,” said a statement from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. But the museum, a major centre for genocide research, wants more than just rhetoric.

“This finding of genocide must not merely be an acknowledgement of their suffering. Rather, it should serve as a call to action to protect and defend those remaining populations from the crimes that continue to be perpetrated today,” it said.

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association in Canada is not interested in a debate over whether or not the murderous, fake caliphate in eastern Syria and western Iraq has committed genocide.

“The issue is not the terminology,” said CNEWA Canada executive director Carl Héту. “For us, as an agency, we feel this is an empty debate. Daesh is dangerous. They’re killers. It’s clear they need to be stopped. The actions of our own government need to reflect that.”

However, Aid To The Church In Need-Canada believes the g-word needs to be applied now.

— SERIOUSNESS, page 5

## Grace underlies mercy: Perrault

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A spirituality of mercy is the willingness to love one another in our brokenness, Leah Perrault recently told a crowd gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Family for the third in a series of reflections for the Year of Mercy.



Leah Perrault

“Mercy is the offering of love to the broken, by the broken,” Perrault said March 6, during a talk about the spirituality of mercy, filled with stories of mercy in ordinary life.

Perrault recently began working for Emmanuel Care, a health care organization that oversees a number of Catholic hospitals and care homes in the province. She is

also the mother of three, an author and a speaker, with a master’s degree in pastoral theology from St. Michael’s College, Toronto.

Asking her listeners to share examples of times when they experienced or extended mercy, Perrault noted that mercy is not necessarily a grandiose project.

“In my experience, mercy is not a massive undertaking, or something that someone has calculated for months in advance. Often the person who offers mercy doesn’t even know what it is they are doing. There is some sense of kindness, some generosity in the midst of need.”

It is because we are the ones most in need of mercy that we are capable of offering it, Perrault insisted, pointing out that mercy does not come from a place of power or condescension, but rather from shared brokenness.

“We worship a God who chose to be broken, to be human, to be crucified, so that he could relate to our brokenness, and so ultimately that we could receive that mercy from him because he was one of us.”

Mercy does not stand in opposition to truth or to justice, she stressed, but rather is “the freedom to experience the consequences of our actions in the context of love.”

“Grace underlies the whole thing. If we understand grace as a

super-abundant gift that has nothing to do with what we deserve, then we can understand that our role in mercy — either giving it or receiving it — has very little to do with us.” Mercy begins and ends with God, she said. “We are able to show mercy because God has given it to us first.”

Perrault cited a prayer from St. Faustina Kowalska, the 20th-century Polish nun who shared a message about trusting in the divine mercy of God: “Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbour. I will refuse my heart to no one. I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock myself up in the most merciful heart of Jesus.”

Perrault noted that there is a difference between knowing about God and knowing God. Too often we mistake the idea of religiosity or piety with having all the right answers, rather than being engaged in a relationship with Jesus.

Perrault explored the challenges of living out a spirituality of mercy.

“I am so good at making sure mercy never reaches me,” she said, describing her struggle with depression and moving beyond the false idea that she had to earn

— HOW MANY, page 7

## Jews celebrate Purim at Beth Jacob Synagogue

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — It’s often called the Jewish Mardi Gras, when people dress in costumes, make noise and celebrate Esther, whose bravery in ancient Persia saved the Jews from extermination. Esther is called to be queen in King Xerxes’ court but unbeknownst to the king, she is a Jew.

The villain in the piece is Haman, a senior functionary in the court of King Xerxes of Persia. He’s royally ticked off that Mordecai, Esther’s cousin and caregiver in the unexplained absence of any parentage, convinces the king the Jews don’t obey his laws, have their own way of life and are not fit to be subjects of the king and should be exterminated, and the king agrees.

Mordecai, on hearing this, convinces Esther she should approach the king, a dangerous venture without first being summoned, and convince him not to proceed. She wins the day; the Jews are allowed to defend themselves, and kill about 70,000 of their antagonists. Haman is hanged for his efforts and all is well in Persia.

The story is told in the reading of the Megillah, which is really the Book of Esther, and the fun comes every time Haman’s name is mentioned. There are boos, hisses and the loud use of noise makers with the intent of drowning out the mention of Haman’s name. Many

wear costumes and masks depicting the characters in the story.

“We can’t tell who’s who anymore, so it’s hard to discern the difference between good people and bad people,” said Rabbi Jeremy Parnes following the reading of the Megillah at Beth Jacob Synagogue.

It’s also important at these events to give money and gifts to the poor, said Parnes. “We give gift baskets to seniors, shut-ins, food and money to poor people. It’s quite common for people to go from synagogue to synagogue and even house to house. We dress in costume and they do as well so that nobody knows who is poor and who is rich, so their dignity is held in place, which is rather a nice way of doing things.”

It may be common practice in larger centres but in Regina, Parnes said, money and food is given to the Food Bank or the Salvation Army or other charities. “It may not be traditional, but it follows the same intent.”

Food and drink are also available as part of the celebration, including *Hamentaschen*, fruit-filled cookies in the shape of the tri-corner hat worn by Hamas.

The event was held March 23, the same evening as the debate between Sask. Party Leader Brad Wall and NDP leader Cam Broten, which seemed to impact the number of people who turned out for the party.

# Papal apology still uppermost in TRC Calls to Action

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A request to Pope Francis for an apology in Canada for the Catholic Church's role in Indian residential schools has gone to the Vatican.

"The pope has received this invitation, this request, from the First Nations," said Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi. "He is considering it."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for the pope to apologize for Indian residential schools on Canadian soil within a year of the June 2015 publication of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action is



CCN/D. Gyapong

**NEWS CONFERENCE — Anglican Church of Canada National Indigenous Bishop Mark MacDonald at a March 30 news conference with representatives of a range of Protestant religions responding to Call to Action #48 asking faith communities to bring their policies in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).**

## Genuine diocesan efforts will be needed: Chatlain

Continued from page 1

ignoring or undermining treaties, the bishops said.

Other steps include: making interaction with indigenous communities part of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue; improving holistic health services; promoting a restorative justice model to combat the high incarceration rate of these communities; supporting the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women; helping indigenous communities build educational programs to promote their culture and experience; and reflecting on the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples so it can be supported and implemented.

Chatlain said the challenge is to "put into effect some of these clear goals."

"It's going to take time," he said. "I just pray we take genuine efforts in all of our dioceses to move forward in a positive way."

Chatlain said issues raised by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have been high on the bishops' agenda for a long time. He said "some of the philosophies and cultural practices" that went into

one of two that had a time limit, TRC Commissioner Marie Wilson said March 30 at an Ottawa news conference.

"We heard many survivors say, 'My church has not apologized to me,'" she said. Asked if an apology from Pope Francis would be enough, she responded, "I'm certain it won't be enough. It's all just movement forward."

"No one thing will be perfect for everyone," she said. "But we have to keep trying."

Wilson acknowledged many bishops and Catholic organizations have apologized over the years, and the structure of the Catholic Church as a group of dioceses and entities rather than one national church has not permitted one Canadian response. Many of the 7,000 witnesses the TRC heard wanted a "corporate response," she said.

"We, all of us, have inherited this," she said of Canadian church history. People are "still struggling over" it. "There's been a kind of apprehension We really blew it."

Wilson responded to an ecumenical statement made by an

array of Protestant denominations, from the Anglican Church, the United Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Lutheran Church to the Salvation Army and the Quakers, on Call to Action #48 asking all faith communities to bring their policies in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by March 31.

Though organized by KAIROS, no Catholic leaders were present. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Canadian Religious Conference and other Catholic organizations had published their response to #48 the previous day. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada also released its response separately.

"The churches are saying they will allow us to become what God called us to be," said the Anglican Church of Canada's National Indigenous Bishop Mark MacDonald.

Indigenous ways of life and spiritual practices "can no longer be excluded or precluded by members of the church," he said.

## An evangelizing church is needed: Jesuit

By Ramon Gonzalez  
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — Jesuit Father Richard Leonard says we can't sit at home, in the parish or in the chancery office and wait for the world to come to us.

"I can't find any evidence for it in the New Testament that the Lord intended that we would wait for the world to come to us," he said at a recent lecture.

"It's exactly the opposite. Today is about Matthew 28: 'Go out to the

world and proclaim the Good News.'"

Leonard, an Australian preacher and author, said if we want to talk to the world, we've got to know it and we have to answer its questions.

He gave stats, including the fact that 67.3 per cent of Canadians belong to a religion and 23.9 have no religion. About 11 per cent of Canadian Catholics go to mass weekly and 55 per cent of the goers are foreign-born. If we haven't done something to accommodate this reality we have to ask why not, he said.

Leonard, an author, educator and critic of modern culture, spoke to teachers and Catholic Pastoral Centre staff at Newman Theological College in early March.

He based his lecture mostly on his latest book, *What Are We Doing on Earth for Christ's Sake?* The book invites Christians to revisit their faith amidst the challenges of the contemporary world.

In his lecture, the Jesuit said the greatest evangelical moments where Catholics touch unbelievers are baptisms, weddings and funerals. "Where do most agnostics, atheists and searchers turn up on our terms: at a baptism, at a wedding and at a funeral."

Therefore, we have to be "ridiculously hospitable" at those events rather than saying, "Those who are Catholic come to holy communion."

"I have been at so many moments in the Catholic Church in the past 25 years where the first thing said at a Catholic liturgical event is who is excluded," he said.

"I've gone to funerals, baptisms and weddings where we have gotten rather worked up about who is coming to holy communion. It seems we are not interested in welcoming people."

Leonard said if we are going to be serious about evangelization

MacDonald said the Gospel was preached to "make us like other people."

The TRC report spoke of cultural genocide against Canada's indigenous peoples and Wilson said she had not been prepared to hear how often witnesses spoke of "spiritual abuse" at the schools.

Wilson stressed the Calls to Action were not issued "to make people comfortable," or to represent a "kinder, gentler assimilation."

The Calls to Action are "not optional," she said. The TRC deliberately made them "sound imperative."

Wilson called the response of the faith communities "bold" and "courageous."

"We, too, have been part of colonialization," she said, and through that have supported "spiritual displacement."

Wilson stressed, however, not all survivors' experiences of the church were the same. Some said, "I hate the church; I'll never set foot in the church again," she said. Others said they felt "hurt" and



CCN/D. Gyapong

Marie Wilson

injured when people spoke ill of the church. Some said the church had been "key to my healing."

Others said, "It wasn't the church who did these things to us; it was individuals who hid behind the church who did these things to us."



WCR/Gonzalez

Rev. Richard Leonard, SJ

we must strive to be "the best baptizers, the best marriers and the best buriers that we can possibly be because when we do it well nobody does it better than us."

The first thing to recognize is that believers and unbelievers have a lot in common, the Jesuit continued. "We all want justice, peace and love. Most decent people I know want that."

The idea that one needs God to be moral is obviously nonsense, he said.

"First, the sexual abuse scandal has put into the public what (moral) force we are ourselves: deeply immoral people who stood for decades preaching morality to the congregation (while covering up the sexual abuse). Look at us now. You can be admirably moral and not believe in anything."

Leonard said the issue of sexual abuse has been front and centre in most of the serious conversations about religion he has had in the last 25 years. "You can tell people all the good we do every day in the Catholic community, the very next thing they say is 'What about the sexual abuse of children?'"

His usual responses have been

shame, grief and anger. Now he is demanding change. He wants every single brother, priest and bishop who has ever been convicted of child sexual abuse, to leave the ordained ministry for good.

"I'm not saying God can't forgive you, but priesthood is still a position of leadership in the community and you can't be a leader in the community."

The Jesuit said the church, for its part, must protect the right of minorities, including the right of transgendered students and staff in Catholic schools.

"We have transsexual students in our schools (in Australia). What are we going to do about that? We are going to be ridiculously hospitable; that's what we are going to do," he said.

Leonard said he recently learned the Catholic community in Canada is the biggest provider of health care, welfare, education, pastoral care and development aid outside government.

It is good to know that fact, he said, "because people want to tell you the only story about us is a bad news story. We are actually practising what we preach but we don't tell one another."

# Progress is not always a good thing, says cardinal

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — We have the technology to extend life beyond its natural limits, so why not apply our technological resources to end a life when natural death eludes us? Why not take full responsibility for the control humans already exercise over life?

For an African Christian, or any sort of Christian really, the idea that humans should engineer the end of life — or its beginning — is dangerous thinking, Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana told The Catholic Register.

Turkson was in Toronto March 21 to deliver the 2016 John M. Kelly Lecture at St. Basil’s Church on the campus of the University of St. Michael’s College. The president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace used his lecture to promote Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’* by questioning our definition of progress.

“We cannot live as a human society in our interconnectedness, in our interdependence, if we are not able to support and uphold one another,” Turkson said.

Whenever people decide to take charge over the end of life they act as individuals outside of society and without regard to the common good. To elevate individual will above every other consideration, making individual autonomy the only consideration, breaks the common bond of humanity. In the Catholic view and in the African view, humanity and human dignity are common

property which all people share as human beings.

“The thing about assisted suicide or euthanasia or whatever you call it, how does it make for the due recognition of the dignity and the character of human life?” Turkson asked.

“No individual is an island,” he told his audience. “This is true in every aspect and phase of human life. Relationship is fundamental to being human. End-of-life provisions must not neglect this point.”

It’s not as if the Catholic Church runs away from the struggle, pain and suffering that can accompany death. Nor does the church promote some sort of ideology of suffering, Turkson said. Palliative sedation and other forms of pain management which may hasten death but whose purpose is to keep patients comfortable and at peace are more than acceptable. But deciding that some forms of human life, some kinds of disability, make human lives disposable, used-up and undignified subtracts from the value and dignity of all human life.

“Compassion is misplaced when it intentionally hastens death, in fact, it discards. It is the ultimate form of exclusion, marginalization and throwing away,” said Turkson.

*Laudato Si’* is about much more than just the environment or climate change, Turkson said. Pope Francis is attempting to re-frame our thinking about progress, culture, technology and economics by asking how human beings should live together on a planet

with limited resources.

“We are on the brink. We are on the precipice. It’s almost like suicide now,” he said.

Catholic social teaching, which elevates the common good over individualism, is not an attempt to limit freedom or stifle liberty.

“We don’t force anything. This is offered,” Turkson said.

In the 21st century, accepting the church’s offering of social teaching means reconsidering our understanding of progress, he said. When progress is thought of

exclusively in terms of another point of GDP growth or the bit technology on the market it limits our ability to think about how communities advance collectively to build a better society, he said.

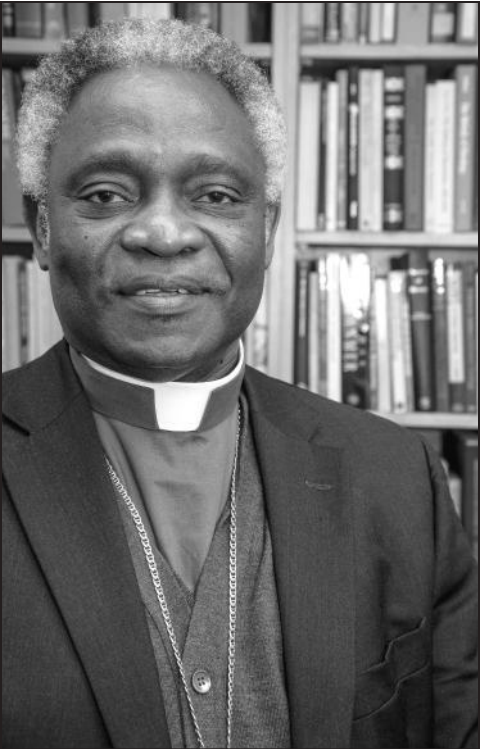
“Yes, there is the material side of a person. But there’s also the spiritual side.”

The spiritual isn’t necessarily confined to monasteries, monks and meditation. It relies on a culture that values human flourishing — that elevates the ways in which we collectively provide for everyone, including the poor, the marginal, the disabled and the heartbroken, to discover the possibilities of human life.

“Access to education, access to health care, access to information, these are ultimately what determines how well people live,” said Turkson.

Education is pointless in a culture that does not value knowledge. Health care is meaningless in a society that does not guard public health. Elevating the individual at the expense of our collective good can only undercut our freedom in the long run, Turkson argues.

Catholic social teaching, on the other hand, is all about the common good.



Catholic Register/M. Swan

Cardinal Peter Turkson

## UN Declaration echos Catholic social teaching

Continued from page 1

UN Declaration concludes with an “appeal to all our Catholic brothers and sisters” to undertake eight commitments as a way to “continue to walk together with indigenous peoples in building a more just society where their gifts and those of all people are nurtured and honoured.”

Those Walking Forward Together commitments include actions around education; learning to tell the history of Canada in a truthful and complete way; promoting and supporting indigenous reflection and dialogue; encouraging partnerships between indigenous groups and health care facilities; strengthening a restorative justice model in the criminal justice system; and supporting the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. The commitments also call for Canadian Catholic organizations and individuals to broaden and deepen relationships and collaboration with indigenous peoples in moving forward on the TRC Calls to Action, as well as inviting a greater familiarity with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to foster reflection on how aspects of the declaration can be implemented.

This is not the first time the Vatican and the church have responded positively to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, noted Bolen.

“Many of the rights identified

in that document find an echo in Catholic social teaching: these are rights that every human being, every cultural or linguistic group, and every community should have,” he said. “This includes the right to education, the right to their own cultural practices and spiritual traditions, the right to land, economic development, and so on.”

In addition to affirming the UN Declaration, the document acknowledges the failures of the church: “Although many priests, brothers, sisters, and laypeople served in the residential schools with generosity, faithfulness, care, and respect for their students, this was not always the case. The TRC Final Report rightly observes that when Christians, through the residential schools, belittled indigenous students as ‘pagans’ or ‘demonized, punished, and terrorized them into accepting Christian beliefs,’ this was in fundamental contradiction to the core beliefs of Christianity. While Christians have at times failed to live up to the standard to which they are called by God, the glaring failures to respect the identity and freedom of indigenous children outlined in the TRC Final Report are particularly saddening and must never be repeated.”

Bolen noted that, since the TRC national event held in Saskatoon four years ago, the diocese has established a Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation in which indigenous and non-indigenous representatives strive to discern what issues need to be addressed

and pursued together. “For instance, we are supporting a Cree language program in one of our churches, we are working with our indigenous community in terms of integrating indigenous spiritual practices and initiatives into celebrations and communities. We also worked with a number of Christian churches on an event about missing and murdered Aboriginal women.”

During the TRC process and at all the major national TRC events, Catholic bishops were present and offered apologies, which were well received, Bolen said. “But it is not enough simply to apologize. Reconciliation calls for more. I think there is a real readiness to engage not only with the Calls to Action, but to walk in solidarity in a new way with indigenous peoples.”

One of the other much-publicized TRC Calls to Action, #58, is to have Pope Francis come to Canada to meet with indigenous people and to apologize in person for the “Church’s role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.”

In conversation with indigenous people, Bolen said he has come to a deeper understanding of the reasons behind this request, and believes it would bring about a deep level of healing that can’t happen any other way. “One indigenous friend explained: ‘It’s not that we think the pope is personally responsible for everything

that went wrong in residential schools, but we understand from our sense of family, that when one person in a family does something wrong, the whole family needs to be involved in reconciliation — and we understand Pope Francis to be the father of your family.’ I find that argument very powerful.”

Bolen said that Pope Francis has been informed of the TRC request. “I am sure the Holy Father is going to take it very seriously. That being said, I am sure that he has received dozens if not hundreds of invitations, and every one of them has its own integrity. And so we wait and see.”

Noting that the pope apologized to indigenous peoples in the Americas while visiting Bolivia, as well as on a recent visit to Mexico, Bolen added, “I think the Holy Father’s heart is always open to and attentive to people in need, and he is looking to redress the wrongs that Catholics have engaged in in the past. I think his heart would be with this suggestion, but, at the same time, I can’t imagine what his schedule is like. Nevertheless, I’m hopeful.”

In the meantime, Bolen said he would encourage every Catholic, and every Canadian, to read the TRC Final Report. “We are called to deal with that history now,” he said. “It’s an invitation to change, an invitation to a deeper engagement. I believe the Holy Spirit is in this process and in this invitation to us as church.”

“The common good for us as a church is the ultimate objective and aim of any decent human progress,” Turkson said. “That all of us be enabled to experience the flourishing that belongs to all human beings allows the corresponding development of the dignity of every human being.”

The church isn’t against economic progress or advances in technology. It only argues these must serve a purpose.

“A technocratic mentality has come to dominate all aspects of life,” said Turkson. “It reduces all of reality to objects that can be manipulated limitlessly. . . . This technocratic paradigm is the conviction that all reality, including human life, can be reduced to objects which people can endlessly manipulate for the sake of profit and without the slightest ethical consideration.”

The issues of human trafficking and modern slavery which women’s religious orders have highlighted over recent decades, are a key area for Catholic social thought, said Turkson. Greed is not good and the global traffic in women for sex and men and children for the anonymous labour on the underside of the global economy only shows how the paradigm of profit can lead us away from progress.

“When one man is trying to step on another man’s head and neck, it’s always the gain. People think there’s gain to be made and then they are ready to do all of that,” Turkson said. “The fraternity of humanity would have us recognize and accept and affirm the dignity of each person, dignity which may not be compromised and reduced in any way by lifestyles such as enslavement or prostitution or any of those forms. There’s a big challenge there.”

## Seriousness of situation evident

Continued from page 3

“It’s going to show the seriousness of the situation,” said Aid To The Church In Need-Canada executive director Marie-Claude Lalonde. “When you talk about other genocides, you see the face of people changing when you use the word genocide. It means that it’s the worst it can be.”

Lalonde wants both government and the public to be in no doubt about the seriousness of the situation Christians face in Iraq and Syria.

“We’re not talking about genocide just to talk about it, but because we want to have people really mobilized to do something,” she said.

Lester B. Pearson signed the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on behalf of Canada Nov. 28, 1949. It states that persons charged with genocide should be tried in the territory in which the genocide occurred. While Canada would readily support a prosecution of Islamic State leadership, those leaders are not in custody and it’s unclear who is in a position to arrest them.

# Think Indigenous conference held in Saskatoon

By Andr  a Ledding

SASKATOON — The third annual Think Indigenous Education conference was held March 15 - 18, beginning with the first annual Think Indigenous Youth Conference at Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon and continuing with workshops, speakers, tours, panels and a banquet. On March 18 keynote speaker Cindy Blackstock spoke about her recent win against the government of Canada on behalf of First Nations children. “Nobody else has to fight from childhood to be treated equally by the government,” said Blackstock. “Kids codify that. When they don’t

see all of us standing up against it, it makes it that much harder.” Displaying information and documents from the recent court case, Blackstock explained that governments don’t create change, they respond to it, and it is incumbent upon Canadians and First Nations people to exert pressure on the federal and provincial governments. “It’s just as vital to teach non-Aboriginal kids about this as it is the First Nations, M  tis and Inuit kids,” noted Blackstock, giving examples of child activists, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who have supported her, or started their own initiatives to exert pres-

sure on the government. Some attended the court cases in person. “Kids understand equality, they understand love, and they understand fairness. Kids are not just learners, they’re teachers,” noted Blackstock, adding that children are our hope and our future; they are more important than we are, and need to be supported in the face of historic and contemporary injustice. A series on March 17 featured many presenters, beginning with Chief Delbert Wapass on the Treaty Right to Education, describing teachers as *oskapios* — ceremonial helpers with a sacred responsibility to the treaties and education. “We have to ask ourselves, where did I come from, what’s my story? If you don’t know where you came from there’s no way you’re going to know where you’re going,” noted Wapass. “Treaty is not about you, it’s about those kids who are not yet born. What is your responsibility?”

He reflected on the sacredness of the treaties, saying that while the government hasn’t held up its part, First Nations have to be vigilant about their part nonetheless. “What is the spirit and intent? A lot of us as Indian people fail the spiritual part of our treaties. Why did they negotiate treaties, what does that mean, a covenant? Why did they use prayer? Why do we still exist, why does our treaty right to education still exist, and what does that mean?” “Treaty is about controlling our own destiny, not being dependent on government,” noted Wapass. “Decolonize your thinking.” Kenisha Tootoosis spoke on empowering women and youth, quoting the prophecy of Crazy Horse: “Upon suffering beyond suffering, the red nation shall rise

again and it shall be a blessing for the sick world. A world filled with broken promises, selfishness and separations. A world longing for light again. I see a time of seven generations, when all the colours of mankind will gather under the sacred tree of life and the whole earth will become one circle again. In that day, those among the Lakota who will carry knowledge and understanding of unity among all living things, and the young white ones will come, to those of my people to ask for wisdom. I salute the light within their eyes where the whole universe dwells, for when you are at the centre within you and I am at the place within me, we are as one.” Dr. Shauneen Pete, of First Nations University in Regina, observed that every learner in the country has been disadvantaged by not learning about indigenous communities, and responsibilities are not only to indigenous students but non-indigenous students to fix that. Traditional medicine woman Kathleen Bird encouraged teachers to learn alongside their students by going on medicine walks and beginning to learn how to identify basic plants and medicines. “We come from a beautiful place,” she observed, “and we need to listen to the stories the old people have. They’re going, and we’ve got to capture them before they go, because that’s where our children and our grandchildren are going to heal. So I encourage you as educators — don’t get stuck in the box. Take our kids out for medicine walks. Learn with them. Open the doors, even if it’s just a crack. There are still many of our people who know the knowledge of the land.” Jeremy Thompson of the Saskatoon Rush lacrosse team

talked about the traditional and ceremonial healing aspects of the game, and how it saved his own life when he was a challenged teen. “Lacrosse is much more than a sport, it’s part of our community, it’s part of our life,” said Thompson. “For me, from birth to death, lacrosse is with us. We’re given a little lacrosse stick in our cradle board, and given one in our coffin as well to use in the next lifetime.” Curtis Jo Miller came from a life of abuse and crime and a series of foster homes to gang life and prison, to become an artist and youth worker with a full pardon. He advocates giving responsibility to young people who are having hard times in school, and helping them to teach others. “I’ve been really good at being bad, what about being good?” Miller asked himself at age 34, after a life of drugs and violence. He became sober and wanted to work with other youth at risk, emphasizing the importance of empathy and compassion. “Every person has value and every life can be turned around; it takes no more than a simple decision and the courage to come back.” Norman Fleury ended the Thursday talks with reflections on the M  tis perspective, saying that there were many misconceptions about the M  tis. He objected to the offensive term half-breed. “I’m not half, I’m double if I’m anything,” said Fleury, noting that, of all indigenous people, “our language and our culture and our spirituality and the land are the glue that makes us who we are and holds us together.” The talks, MCed by Ryan McMahon, were live-streamed and will be uploaded on USask’s YouTube channel.



**HOLY TRINITY HOUSE** — A group at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Russell, Man., is working to establish a retreat house in a restored 1926 farmhouse to be known as Holy Trinity House.

## Retreat house envisioned for Russell, Man.

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — A group at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Russell, Man., is working to establish a retreat house in a restored 1926 farmhouse to be known as Holy Trinity House. Darin and Carlene Douglas say the vision for the space is one of “a means for encountering and experiencing the divine most Holy Trinity. A space to reside for prayer.” Once a family home, the house sits on a treed farm yard located near Binscarth, Man., 20 km south of Russell. Organizers describe the grounds’ winding wooded paths as places “providing time for prayer during contemplative walks. The freedom to be as we are in our circumstance of life, with our Lord in prayer. A home of hospitality, a quiet, safe, restful overnight accommodation, providing retreat and revitalization to people of all ages, individuals, families or groups. An atmosphere of simplicity, inspired through prayer and the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi, inviting in union with our Lord as the focus.” Permission and blessings to proceed with the Holy Trinity House project have been granted by Archbishop of Winnipeg Richard Gagnon, Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan Lawrence Huculak,

and former Archbishop of Winnipeg, Rev. James Weisgerber. Continuing discernment of the vision is moving forward with the advice and guidance of Rev. Norberto Monton, pastor at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Russell, and Rev. Leo Fernandes, pastor at Ste-Rose-de-Lima Church in Ste-Rose-du-Lac, Man. The property was donated and the status of the retreat house is currently one of a non-profit corporation, in need of further renovation before officially opening. The Knights of Columbus from St. Lazare, Rossburn, Roblin and Russell have donated their time and effort to aid with renovation. Organizers say they welcome and appreciate individual or group volunteers. Being ecumenical in nature, numerous other Christian denominations will be made aware of Holy Trinity House. A board of directors has been formed with members Darin and Carlene Douglas and Gary and Nicole Petz, from St. Joseph the Worker Church, and committee members Rick and Patti Anderson from St. Augustine of Canterbury Church in Brandon. The board asks “for your prayers that our Lord God’s divine will continue to be done.” For more information contact Darin or Carlene Douglas at 1-204-532-2157.

## Knights to refocus on parishes

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — “Our Supreme Council has relooked at it; are we doing as much as we can to be involved in our parishes, to be supportive of the ministry of our clergy? As we looked at it, there were a number of things that maybe were not in align with what is happening in the parishes.” is to be in solidarity with our priests,” said Schatz. “Are we doing as much as we can to be involved in our parishes, to be supportive of the ministry of our clergy? As we looked at it, there were a number of things that maybe were not in align with what is happening in the parishes.” The idea of the special presentation came from Holy Child pastor Rev. Danilo Rafael, who heard Precourt at a priest gathering in February and was so impressed he felt it should be heard by more priests. It began with a 25-minute video of Supreme Knight Carl Anderson delivering a speech at a K of C mid-term meeting in San Antonio late in 2015. He described the new initiative as a refocus on traditional activities for the Knights. “The Knights were founded on the principles of charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism, but our unwritten mode of operation really

other youth programs that were not part of the parish. He emphasized that family activities, too, were apart, but the refocus is to bring them more in align with the parishes. He noted that all Saskatchewan K of C councils are parish-based, and that K of C councils have partnered with the Regina archdiocese in several youth gatherings. Precourt, also speaking with the PM, echoed much of what Schatz said. “This is really getting our brothers and our families to sort of come home and make the parish the centre of all activity, and that’s really the direction our Supreme Knight is showing.” In the 132 years since its formation, it’s time to refocus to bring young people back to church, said Precourt. Many parish priests are knights, said Precourt, and getting on and are tired. “Maybe it’s time we contact more brother knights and help our parish priests and our parishioners as a whole.” He referred to Boy Scout and



Brian Schatz and Guy Precourt

F. Flegel

# Diverse crowd follows Way of the Cross

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A diverse crowd sang and prayed through the streets of Saskatoon on Good Friday morning, continuing the annual tradition of an outdoor Way of the Cross connecting the passion, suffering and death of Jesus Christ to injustice and suffering in today's world.

The event began with a reflection on Jesus' agony in the garden, in light of the agony of refugees around the world who are displaced by violence or persecution. "They know what it is to pray for some other option, to have that cup removed; yet, no matter how difficult, these courageous people arise. They stand up, and like Jesus, face what lies ahead with steadfast courage and initiative," reflected Christine Zyla, co-ordinator of the diocesan Office of Migration in the Diocese of Saskatoon.

Frances Stang, president of the diocesan council of the Catholic Women's League, led the reflection at the second station, Jesus' betrayal and arrest, with a reflection about the looming legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

"Today we are facing betrayal by those whom we should trust: our lawmakers, health care professionals, family members, our own pride and arrogance," said Stang. "We pray for true compassion for those who face this ultimate betrayal — that they have been deemed to be not as worthy of life as others. We pray for a change of heart for those who believe it is their right to choose when to end a life."

Members of the Saskatoon L'Arche community carried the cross to the third station, praying for welcoming and open commu-



Tim Yaworski

**WAY OF THE CROSS —** Hundreds followed the cross through the streets of Saskatoon on Good Friday in Saskatoon, singing and praying the Way of the Cross and reflecting on justice and peace issues and suffering in our world today. In this photo members of the L'Arche community carry the cross to the third station.

nities that respect the dignity of all people.

Reflecting on Peter's denial of Jesus at the fourth station, Pastor George Hind, trustee of Saskatoon Native Ministry, recalled others like Peter who have "seen justice distorted and compassion extinguished," including indigenous peoples, as revealed through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. "Against this force of history, it is difficult for First Nations people to speak. In the face of neglect, injustice and abuse they, like Peter, feel compelled to deny who they are and what they value."

Members of the Micah Mission, an ecumenical restorative justice ministry, led the reflection and prayers at the fifth station, focusing on Jesus being judged by Pilate,

and on the unhealthy thirst for vengeance in our society.

MaryAnne Morrison of the Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation and Rev. Deb. Walker of the River Bend Presbytery of the United Church led reflections and prayers about murdered and missing women, affirming "there is no life that does not find its source in God. We are all struck down, wounded and broken when we fail to remember that every person is beloved by God."

The need for palliative care and preserving the dignity of the

vulnerable was the theme of prayers at the seventh station, "Jesus takes up the cross," led by members of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan and the St. Thomas More Lawyers' Guild.

Members of the Friends of Loa prayed at city hall, recalling how Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry his cross and reflecting on the call to solidarity with people around the world.

Caring for the earth as our common home was the theme of the reflection and prayers presented by Caritas Canada/Development and

Peace at the ninth station. Members of Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic Church led prayers at the 10th station, reflecting on Christian persecution around the world

The vulnerability of newcomers who come to Canada in search of peace and security was the focus of a reflection by members of Couples for Christ at the 11th station, while peace and peace-building was the theme at the 12th station. The Hispanic Catholic community then carried the cross to the 13th station for a time of silent reflection on Jesus' death.

Faith leaders of Saskatoon led the prayers at the final station on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, reflecting how love can be at work even in moments of darkness and suffering, and looking to the hope of Easter.

"Where are the places where death reigns, and what can we do there while we wait for the bigger narrative to interrupt death's victory?" asked Bishop Donald Bolen. "Where can we prepare the tomb and bring the spices and watch and pray in our day? How can we, as witnesses to the bigger narrative, bring hope into the places of despair, light into the darkness? And how can we be witnesses, together, of the bigger story at work, God's story, love's victory?"

The event concluded with the assembled reciting the Lord's Prayer in their own language before being blessed by the faith leaders. A soup and bannock lunch prepared by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish was served in St. Paul's Parish hall after the event.

## How many people have no friends or connections?

Continued from page 3

love. "I have all these amazing relationships in my life where people are pouring out love, and when I mess up, they are forgiving me over and over," she said, but she found that she was not really receiving that mercy or accepting forgiveness. Her own spiritual walk has been learning to let that love and mercy wash over her, rather than building walls to keep them out.

Following Dorothy Day's observation that everything a baptized Christian does should be directly or indirectly related to the corporal and spiritual acts of mercy, Perrault reflected on everyday expressions of feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, freeing the imprisoned and burying the dead, of instructing the ignorant, counselling the doubtful, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving offences willingly, comforting the afflicted and praying.

The corporal and spiritual acts of mercy simply involve "the ability to notice that someone needs something, and to show up to provide it just because you can,

even if it is inconvenient to you — to share what you've got with somebody else who needs it."

The homeless and the hungry are all around us, even if we live in the suburbs. "Who are the homeless in my neighbourhood? Who are the people who go home to a place with lots of stuff but have nowhere to call home?" she asked. "How many people in our culture have no friends, or are lacking connections, or don't feel at home, even though they are there? And what can I do to ease that?"

She provided a series of practical examples about living acts of mercy: in choosing not to ostracize, in reaching out to protect those who are vulnerable, in responding with solidarity and encouragement to those wrestling with doubt, and in sharing the wisdom of experience with those who are seeking.

Expressing profound gratitude for the mercy and love she herself has received, Perrault concluded with the call to live mercy as a witness in the world. "We have been given this great deposit of faith, not for us to hold in our heads and lord over other people, but for us to practice imperfectly, moment by moment, day by day."

## Conference on the Family held

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — Bishop Noël Simard has never been married or had children, but he is the 11th of 13 kids and has long-married siblings "who tell me their problems," and he believes that counts for a lot when it comes to knowing about families.

In fact, Simard has spent years studying and writing about families, and was one of five Canadian bishops participating in the synod on the family last October at the Vatican.

He said the dilemma facing Catholics is how to promote the model of the Christian family without discriminating against those who don't comply with it. "A lot of people want a traditional family," he said, "but question what that is now. What is a family?"

Simard was guest speaker at a Conference on the Family in Winnipeg March 19, presented by the Catholic School of Evangelization in St. Malo and sponsored by the archdioceses of Winnipeg and St. Boniface.

Simard was ordained in 1972, taught at Laval University in Quebec City, the University of Sudbury and St. Paul University in Ottawa. He is a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life and the International Federation of Catholic Bioethicists. Simard is a founding member of the Canadian Catholic Institute of Bioethics and is past chair of the

Catholic Organization for Life and Family. He has authored several articles on bioethics, human sexuality and AIDS: Ethical and Spiritual Considerations. He was installed as bishop of the Diocese of Valleyfield, Que., in 2012.

Simard spoke of the challenge of accepting the diversity of modern family experiences without giving up one's convictions and beliefs.

He said once-faithful churchgoers who experience divorce suddenly find the church has no place for them, and the same can be said of people of different sexual orientations. "There are good people who leave the church because they feel like the church hates them. It's one of the reasons the pope called the synod," he said.

Simard said the synod's final report includes 92 points and Pope Francis will soon issue a statement on the report. He said points 84 and 85, regarding the baptized and divorced, prompted difficult debate and were narrowly approved by the 270 voting priests.

Simard voted for the recommendations, which state: "The baptized who are divorced and civilly remarried need to be more integrated into Christian communities in a variety of possible ways, while avoiding any chance of scandal. The logic of integration is the key to their pastoral care, a care which might allow them not only to realize that they

belong to the church as the Body of Christ, but also to know that they can have a joyful and fruitful experience in it. . . . It is therefore the duty of priests to accompany such people in helping them understand their situation according to the teaching of the church and the guidelines of the bishop."

Simard said it is wrong to force one's values on others, and what is right is "to love and respect and learn from each other, to live our Christianity."

"A family is any group that has love and commitments in a relationship. Others in a different combination can love each other. When we define something we create limits, so what limits can we put on a family?"

Regardless of the inability to define family, Simard said, "Family is the core of society; when family goes well, society goes well. Family is the principal identity of individuals; it helps them to be objects of evangelization and subjects of evangelization."

"We must announce the good news of families, but we are facing many challenges. Do we take time to talk and reflect? Don't miss a chance to start a conversation in the family."

"These new situations create lessons about accepting," Simard said, adding that the word synod means "walk with" and Pope Francis strives for a synodal church. "It doesn't mean we agree with, but we can accompany."

# Caravaggio masterpiece on mercy calls to Pope Francis

By David Gibson  
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If Pope Francis wanted a single image to illustrate the special Year of Mercy that is the current focus of his ministry and, indeed, the theme at the heart of his pontificate, he could do no better than choosing an underappreciated masterpiece by the thrilling Italian artist known as Caravaggio.

In fact, the 400-year-old canvas, an altarpiece in a Naples church titled *The Seven Acts of Mercy*, may represent the perfect combination of the man — or, rather, two men — and the moment: a brilliant painter with a scurrilous reputation who was striving for redemption, and a popular pontiff struggling to make the church more welcoming to outcasts.

“A dramatic convergence has taken place between Pope Francis’ teachings and Caravaggio’s message,” writes Terence Ward in his new book on the painting, titled *The Guardian of Mercy*.

Even Ward’s book represents a stroke of providence in that he started it years ago after wandering into the church where the painting has hung for centuries, only to have his laptop with the first manuscript stolen.

The delay meant that the publication of Ward’s book coincided with the pope’s Jubilee Year of Mercy, and a revolutionary pontificate that would seem to dovetail so easily with Caravaggio’s boundary-pushing style.

The confluence of developments is also no small irony, and perhaps some posthumous vindication, for an artist who died while desperately seeking mercy from another pope, of an entirely different cast, in an entirely different era.

## Among the worshippers of the deprived

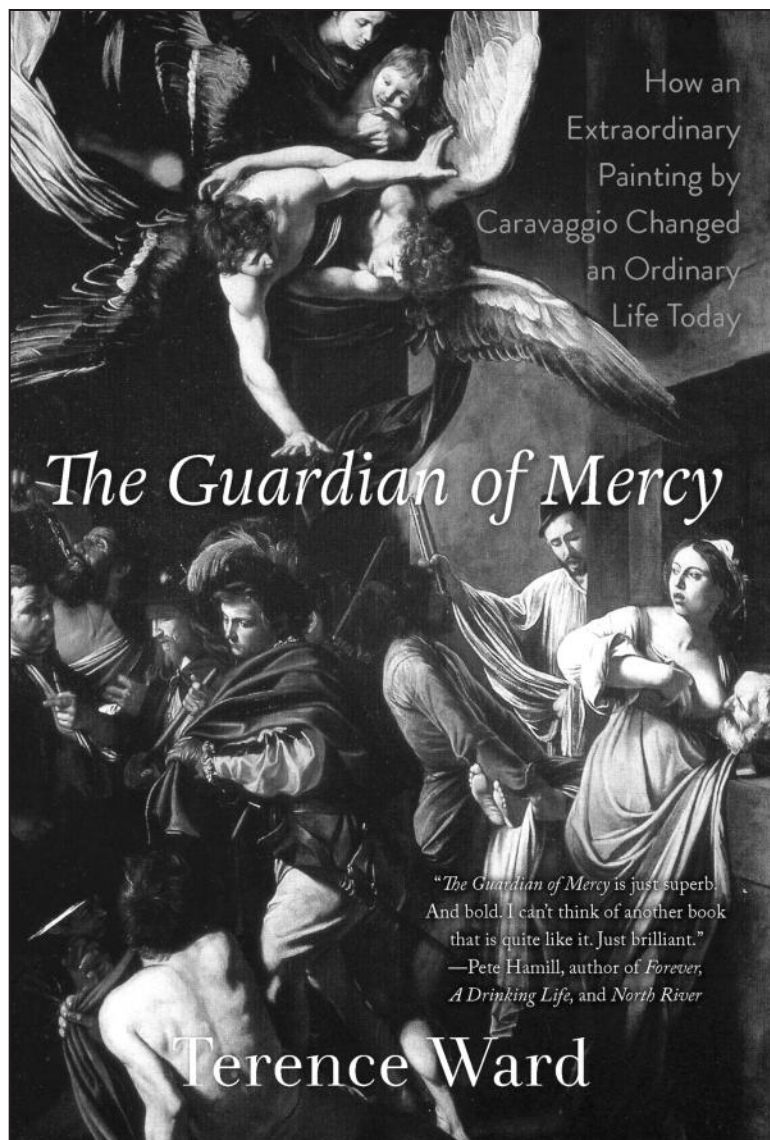
Michelangelo Merisi was born in 1571 in northern Italy and grew up in the town of Caravaggio — hence his later moniker. He was orphaned at 11, just as he began an apprenticeship in an artist’s workshop. He was known as a hothead early on, however, and had to leave Milan for Rome around 1590, reportedly after getting in trouble for wounding a police officer in a street fight.

But Caravaggio’s remarkable talent always seemed to save him.

Whether painting a basket of fruit or a fortuneteller, Caravaggio used darkness and light to convey such realism on a canvas that he quickly became the toast of the big-money Roman art scene — a bustling and prestigious market in which the Roman Catholic Church and its cardinal-princes were among the chief patrons.

Yet if hefty commissions were the lure, it was in the predominantly religious images that Caravaggio was paid to paint that he may have found his true vocation, as well as his greatest fame. His series on the life of St. Matthew, for example, had by 1600 made him arguably the most controversial, and most imitated, artist in Italy.

Gibson is a national reporter for Religion News Service.



Arcade Publishing

**CARAVAGGIO AND MERCY — A 400-year-old canvas by Italian artist Caravaggio is the inspiration for a new book titled *The Guardian of Mercy* by Terence Ward.**

(One scene from that cycle, his famous *Calling of St. Matthew*, has been cited by both Pope Francis and his immediate predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, as an inspiration. “Among the great painters, I admire Caravaggio; his paintings speak to me,” Francis has said.)

Some of Caravaggio’s other Gospel-themed masterpieces from this period were *The Taking of Christ*, *The Conversion of St. Paul* and *The Penitent Magdalene*, paintings that became touchstone representations of those New Testament episodes and characters. His naturalistic style and theatricality also served him particularly well in depicting graphic scenes of martyrdom and violence, such as *The Crucifixion of St. Peter* and *Judith Beheading Holofernes*.

In interpreting these religious narratives, Caravaggio seemed to find the perfect vehicle to express not only his bravura talent and technique (he was famous, or infamous to many of his peers, for painting directly from life onto canvas without preliminary sketches) but also his own intense, if turbulent, spirituality — a struggling sinner who can’t seem to stay out of trouble.

Artistically, that made for a potent combination that was, however, sometimes a bit much for his church patrons; they occasionally found his sensibility leaning closer to sensuousness than devotion, forcing Caravaggio to rework some commissions to make them more palatable to religious authorities.

In the end, however, it was Caravaggio’s unbridled temper rather than his dramatic painting style that would lead to his downfall.

so that it is most awkward to get along with him.”

His reputation was such that when he killed a young man in 1606, perhaps accidentally, he had little chance to defend himself — Caravaggio soon had a price on his head and the authorities at his heels. So he fled to Naples, where he initially enjoyed the protection of the influential Colonna family, and in the space of just a few months painted some of his greatest works, including *The Seven Acts of Mercy*.

Yet he still felt uneasy about his safety and he bolted again, this time to Malta, where he continued to paint, and fight, and in 1608 he was again forced to run, first to Sicily and then back to Naples, where he was gravely wounded in an attempt on his life.

Desperate to find sanctuary and a pardon, in the hot summer of 1610 Caravaggio set out for Rome with three paintings in tow that he planned to give to the powerful Cardinal Scipione Borghese, nephew of Pope Paul V, who alone had the power to pardon Caravaggio and finally provide him a respite from his travails.

But Caravaggio didn’t make it. The circumstances of his death have never been clear, and the artist’s body has never been definitively identified. But sometime during a stopover in a port city in Tuscany, Caravaggio died, or, perhaps, he was killed. He certainly had enemies, and the three paintings — two of which disappeared and have never been found — were worth stealing. He was just 38.

History did not treat Caravaggio very mercifully, either: his once soaring reputation quickly hit the skids after his death, and even the 19th-century aesthetes who “rediscovered” Italian painting disdained

Caravaggio as a low-life who dragged religious art into the gutter with him.

As Ward notes in his book, the English critic John Ruskin lumped Caravaggio “among the worshippers of the depraved,” and Ruskin’s contemporary, John Addington Symonds, said the artist portrayed “sacred and historical events as though they were being enacted in the ghetto by butchers and fishwives.”

It was only after the Second World War that the rehabilitation of Caravaggio began (even if rumours of his scabrous personal habits persist), and in recent years his popularity has reached unimagined heights. He has been called the father of modern painting and the inspiration for film noir. With relatively few canvases extant, and no drawings, every Caravaggio exhibit is a blockbuster and every chapel that houses a Caravaggio becomes a destination.

Except for *The Seven Acts of Mercy*.

## Feeding the hungry . . .

The painting was commissioned shortly after Caravaggio arrived in Naples by a group of pious nobles who were dedicated to caring for the poor. They wanted an altarpiece for the church of *Pio Monte della Misericordia* that reflected their mission to carry out the seven works of mercy set out in the Scriptures: feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, visiting the prisoner, clothing the naked, healing the sick and burying the dead.

Eager for the cash, Caravaggio finished the work in less than four months, and he managed to repre-

— PAINTING, page 9



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# Church’s challenge: forgiving the sins of the fathers

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



When *Spotlight*, the drama about the Boston Globe’s past investigation of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, somewhat unexpectedly took the best-picture Oscar at the Academy Awards on Feb. 28, it shone a renewed global spotlight on a scandal that continues to reverberate at the highest levels of the church. Since 2002 when Globe journalists broke the story of what was happening in the Boston archdiocese, over 3,400 cases have been brought to the attention of the Vatican.

**The Club**  
(Chile, 2015)

Just hours before the Oscar ceremony, Vatican treasurer Cardinal George Pell had testified before Australia’s Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse on the numerous failings in how clerical abuse allegations had been handled dating

back decades. Some have accused Pell of being complicit in that regard. While he did not admit to any personal responsibility, he told the inquiry: “I’m not here to defend the indefensible. 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 let people down. . . . There’s a tendency to evil in the Catholic Church too, and sometimes it’s better, sometimes it’s worse, but for good or for ill, the church follows the patterns of the societies in which it lives.” In other words, the church needs forgiveness for its sins and a process of reconciliation as much as any other area of society. This moment of reckoning could become an Easter opportunity for atonement and renewal. I find it heartening that *Spotlight* was screened at the Vatican for the commission set up by Pope Francis to deal with the



Berlin Film Festival

**CHALLENGING FILM —** The characters in *The Club*, a film about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, live in a “grim world bathed in shadow and fog,” according to one description.

scourge of sex abuse of minors. The day after *Spotlight*’s Oscar win the Vatican daily *L’Osservatore Romano* praised the film as an accurate portrayal and “not anti-Catholic.” While cautioning that “predators do not necessarily wear ecclesiastical vestments, and pedophilia does not necessarily stem from the vow of chastity,” the paper’s front-page editorial acknowledged “it is now clear that, in the church, too many people concerned themselves more with the image of the institution than the gravity of the act.” Moreover, the *Spotlight* filmmakers’ call for

action from the Oscar podium was welcomed as a positive signal that “there is still trust in the institution and in a pope who is pressing ahead with the cleaning up begun by his predecessor.” Still, the trust that was lost will not be easily restored. There are plenty of skeptics, including among the faithful, and especially among survivors of sexual abuse, who have felt the betrayal most keenly.

Although it won’t get nearly the attention accorded *Spotlight*, there is another excellent 2015 film that penetrates this disturbing situation and the challenge it poses to church authorities. This is *The Club* from prominent Chilean director Pablo Larraín. The film is making its way into a few Canadian theatres many months after it premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2015 where it was awarded the “silver bear” grand jury prize. Although the film is a work of fiction, the stories it probes are all too plausible.

Larraín is best known for a trilogy of remarkable features that uncovered dark corners of Chilean life during the Pinochet dictatorship (*Post Mortem*, *Tony Manero*, *No*). In *The Club* he turns his unsparing lens on a small group of fallen members of the church who have failed to live up to their religious vows. They live together almost hidden away in a house in the coastal village of La Boca. The members of this “club” are four wayward priests and a nun, resigned to a sort of spiritual exile. The priests are Father Vidal (Alfredo Castro), Father Ortega (Alejandro Goic), Father Silva (Jaime Vadell) who had been an army chaplain, and the addled elderly Father Ramirez (Alejandro Sieveking). The nun, Sister Monica (played by Larraín’s wife Antonia Zegers), takes charge of the housekeeping duties as the men pass the time and indulge a rather unpenitential passion for pet greyhound dogs that they are preparing to compete in a national racing circuit. La Boca harbours a religious outpost that has literally gone to the dogs. While house rules and obligatory prayers are observed, by and large this purgatorial refuge has become a rather cozy hideaway from the residents’ scandal-plagued pasts.

That is until another troubled priest, Father Lazcano (Jose Soza), arrives and their placid existence is upset by a local fish-

erman, Sandokan (Roberto Farias), who recognizes him. Sandokan, fuelled by alcohol and rage, starts shouting in the street about graphic details of the abuses he claims he was subjected to by Father Lazcano when he was a boy. So much for the club’s quiet anonymity. And a crisis looms when the accusations provoke a shocking suicide.

The church hierarchy reacts by sending a young priest, Father Garcia (Marcelo Alonso), a trained psychologist with missionary experience in Africa, to investigate and figure out what to do. He has extensive files at his disposal, including records of confessions, and sternly interrogates the members of the club. An ominous picture emerges of patterns of misconduct, not just of preying on children but of abducting babies born to unwed mothers. Father Garcia bans the use of alcohol and lays down some strict rules. He is not aggressive but he has no time for denials or evasions. There are frank discussions about pedophilia, homosexuality, and feelings of self-loathing. He treats the members of the club as damaged individuals in need of healing as much as their victims.

The residents, however, suspect that Father Garcia has an agenda to close down their house. Arguments escalate when he demands they get rid of the dogs. Meanwhile, the aggrieved Sandokan continues to verbally harass the club like a madman possessed. Father Garcia reaches out to try to help him, to ease the pain of his terrible burden. But he is unable to prevent another shocking act of violence that leads to Sandokan being assaulted. As Garcia patches up the beaten man and kisses his feet, he forces a repentant deal on the club: they must take in Sandokan and care for him, or else.

The movie closes with the words of the liturgy: “Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Give us peace.”

What Larraín exposes in *The Club* makes for very unsettling viewing. At times it may seem like the church is just trying to protect itself, to find a way to put all the bad publicity behind it. But in the figure of Father Garcia there is both justice — an honest accounting of guilt — and a path to forgiveness.

That is not such a bleak outlook for what Pope Francis hopes will be a “church of mercy” for all.

## Painting continues to reveal its secrets

Continued from page 8

sent each of the works of mercy in a single frame — an astonishingly compact composition that continues to reveal its secrets to persistent viewers.

The images are arresting, and themes sometimes overlap: an old man in prison is suckled at the breast of a young woman, a saint divides his cloak for a naked man and comforts a beggar on the ground, an innkeeper welcomes a pilgrim.

The main problem was finding the painting. The Pio Monte society that commissioned the work stipulated that it remain in the church, and even as Caravaggio’s reputation was revived in recent decades, *The Seven Acts of Mercy* was largely left behind because it was never part of a museum’s collection or any special exhibition outside Naples.

Moreover, few would wander down the warren of Neapolitan streets to the church the way Terence Ward did one day in 1998. Stunned by what he found in the painting, he was just as captivated by the custodian of the church who stood guard in virtual solitude: Angelo Esposito, a one-time city sewer worker who in

one of the city’s typically dysfunctional reorganizations, was shuttled to look after this backwater masterwork.

After years of contemplating the image, Esposito had come to appreciate and understand *The Seven Acts of Mercy* in ways few scholars have, and Ward’s book recounts Esposito’s own transformation in relationship to the altarpiece, along with the tangled past and present of Naples itself, and the life of Caravaggio. “The poet of hope,” as the painting’s guardian calls him.

It makes for a compelling narrative, and it also gets to the heart of Caravaggio’s appeal — to modern eyes and, perhaps, to Francis and his fans. That’s because Caravaggio drew from life, and street life in particular, and his saints are peasants; all of them are baptized but unwashed — even the angels “look more like Neapolitan street kids,” as Ward writes.

Little wonder that his book is blurbed by the likes of Pete Hamill, the famed chronicler of New York’s streets, and that at a recent book party for Ward, Bible scholar Elaine Pagels praised the author and artist (“It’s a story of grace,” she said) while William Vendley, head of Religions for Peace International, recounted how much the story moved him.

“Irony is too meek a word for how mercy can penetrate its antithesis,” he said. In San Francisco, California Gov. Jerry Brown — a former seminarian — and his wife attended a lecture on the book.

“What Caravaggio does is to bring common men and women into his paintings and make them sacred,” Ward said at the New York book launch. “Which gives hope for us, no?”

### ‘He’s the artist of the poor.’

Will Francis join in this chorus of hosannas?

As with almost everything about Caravaggio, and *The Seven Acts of Mercy*, there is no simple answer, and much debate.

Esposito and the Pio Monte society in Naples that still owns the painting seem to expect that this “pope of surprises” might pop down from the Vatican any day. “They’re just waiting for the call,” Ward said.

And why not? Francis loves Caravaggio, and mercy. But the pope is busy, and dedicating a day’s travel for a painting, even this Caravaggio altarpiece, is asking a lot.

A suggestion by Italy’s president to bring the painting to Rome for an exhibit for the Year of Mercy where Francis — and many, many others — could see it sparked intense polemics. The head of the Pio Monte society was in favour, but other Neapolitans protested, loudly, and the idea to move the painting outside the city for the first time ever was quashed.

Some alternatives have been proposed, such as recreating the painting as a “multisensory” work in Rome in which each act of mercy would be recreated for viewers to see and hear and touch. But that doesn’t seem nearly as attractive as contemplating the original.

“In the end, his art isn’t about bishops in silk robes giving hand-outs to the needy,” Esposito tells Ward at one point. “It’s about simple people helping one another. He’s the artist of the poor. Our artist! There’s no one else like him. It’s all there! . . . What more do you want?”

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# Easter: the voice waiting around the corner



There's a great Newfoundland song I often sing to my grandchildren. Its called Sarah and its sung by the group called Buddy Whasisname and the Other Fellas. The chorus is an invite from Sarah's boyfriend and somewhat haunting: "Sarah, Sarah, won't you come out tonight. Sarah, Sarah, the moon is shining bright. Put your hat and jacket on. Tell your mother you won't be long. And I'll be waitin' for you 'round the corner."

My grandchildren now sing this song, complete with a slight Newfie accent! I once told my daughter that when I die, I want the last line of the chorus to be my epitaph: "I'll be waitin' for you 'round the corner." Her response was: "Dad, that's creepy!"

But really, I think there's something very deep about the meaning and transition of our lives and how it's tied up with the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. We are told by

*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.*

Jesus to no longer fear death. We have an eternal inheritance waiting for us. St. Paul's cry: "death where is your sting?" reminds us that while life on earth is short, we have an eternal banquet awaiting us "just around the corner"!

The Easter season is filled with stories of encounters with the risen Lord. Like ripples in a lake, these stories give us a glimpse into the ever-expanding news of Jesus' triumph over sin and death. His appearances give renewed hope to his band of believers. He also prepares them for a time when they will no longer see him face to face. He invites them to listen for his voice.

In our first reading today, Paul and Barnabas are looking for those who would be open to receiving this Good News. Finding the door closed with the Jewish leadership, they turn to the gentiles for a more receptive audience.

<b>Fourth Sunday of Easter</b> <b>April 17, 2016</b>	<b>Acts 13:14, 43-52</b> <b>Psalm 100</b> <b>Revelation 7:9, 14b-17</b> <b>John 10:27-30</b>
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Although their message will cost them their lives, they have great confidence in the promise of Jesus that eternal life awaits them.

The second reading is from the Book of Revelation. This book in the Bible is meant to stir us into hope even when faced with persecution. Many in that generation of courageous Christians died for their faith and are honoured in a special way in heaven. "May the company of martyrs praise you!" So goes a litany of prayer and blessing. What is held in balance here is a passion for living today against the backdrop of an eternal inheritance. The Irish call this

"living in the thin places," that is, living with confidence in an eternal promise of Jesus.

Today's Gospel takes us to a more personal level of faith; that place where we hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us, calling us, directing us toward his reign. "My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me." Jesus uses this image of sheep and shepherd multiple times in the Gospels. He knows his audience. It's like using the images of fishing in Newfoundland, grain farming on the prairies, ranching in Alberta, or forestry in British Columbia. These are all pillars of the culture in a particular region. People from there share in a common knowledge about how things go.

Everyone knew in Jesus' day, how shepherds cared for their sheep. They knew that sheep shared a common pasture with other flocks. They also knew that shepherds controlled their own flock by the particular sound of their voice or whistle. So when a pasture land had given out, and they had to travel to a new pasture, the shepherd would call his sheep. His sheep knew his voice and would respond by following him.

So here is the Easter question: Do you hear the voice of Jesus? How is he calling you? Is his call a soft, gentle voice that beckons? Or is it a loud and thunderous voice? Like Mary Magdalene who mistook him for a gardener, it is often only when we hear him call us by name that we recognize his presence.

There are many voices clamouring for our attention, but the voice of Jesus is one we must hear through the din. Its a voice of beckoning, a voice of mercy, a voice of love. Listen for it. You just might hear him softly sing with a slight Newfie accent: "And I'll be waitin' for you 'round the corner!"

## The constant resurrection of goodness speaks the truth about our world



The stone that rolled away from the tomb of Jesus continues to roll away from every sort of grave. Goodness cannot be held, captured or put to death. It evades its pursuers, escapes capture, slips away, hides out, even leaves the churches sometimes, but forever rises, again and again, all over the world. Such is the meaning of the resurrection.

Goodness cannot be captured or killed. We see this already in the earthly life of Jesus. There are a number of passages in the Gospels that give the impression Jesus was somehow highly elusive and difficult to capture. It seems that until Jesus consents to his own capture, nobody can lay a hand on him. We see this played out a number of times. Early on in his ministry, when his own townsfolk get upset with his message and lead him to the brow of a hill to hurl him to his death, we are told that "he slipped through the crowd and went away." Later when the authorities try to arrest him we are told simply that "he slipped away." And, in yet another incident when he is in the temple area and they try to arrest him, the text simply says that he left the temple area and "no one laid a hand upon him because his

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hour had not yet come." Why the inability to take him captive? Was Jesus so physically adept and elusive that no one could imprison him?

These stories of his "slipping away" are highly symbolic. The lesson is not that Jesus was physically deft and elusive, but rather that the Word of God, the grace of God, the goodness of God, and power of God can never be captured, held captive or ultimately killed. They are adept. They can never be held captive, can never be killed, and even when seemingly they are killed, the stone that entombs them always eventually rolls back and releases them. Goodness continues to resurrect from every sort of grave.

And it is this, the constant resurrection of goodness, not that of viciousness and evil, which speaks the deepest truth about our world and our lives. The Jewish-Hungarian writer Imre Kertesz, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2002, gives a poignant testimony of this. He had as a young boy been in a Nazi death camp, but what he remembered most afterward from this experience was not the injustice, cruelty and death he saw there, but rather some acts of goodness, kindness and altruism he witnessed amidst that evil. After the war, it left him wanting to read the lives of saints rather than biographies of war. The appearance of goodness fascinated him. To his mind, evil is explicable, but goodness? Who can explain it? What is its source?

Why does it spring up over and over again all over the earth, and in every kind of situation?

It springs up everywhere because God's goodness and power lie at the source of all being and life. This is what is revealed in the resurrection of Jesus. What the resurrection reveals is that the ultimate source of all that is, of all being and life, is gracious, good, and loving. Moreover, it also reveals that graciousness, goodness, and love are the *ultimate power* inside reality. They will have the final word and they will never be captured, derailed, killed or ultimately ignored. They will break through, ceaselessly, forever. In the end, too, as Imre Kertesz suggests, they are more fascinating than evil.

And so we are in safe hands. No matter how bad the news on a given day, no matter how threatened our lives are on a given day, no matter how intimidating the neighbourhood or global bully, no matter how unjust and cruel a situation, and no matter how omnipotent are anger and hatred, love and goodness will reappear and ultimately triumph.

Jesus taught that the source of all life and being is benign and loving. He promised too that our end will be benign and loving. In the resurrection of Jesus, God showed that God has the power to deliver on that promise. Goodness and love will triumph! The ending of our story, both that of our world

and that of our individual lives, is already written — and it is a happy ending! We are already saved. Goodness is guaranteed. Kindness will meet us. We only need to live in the face of that wonderful truth.

They couldn't arrest Jesus, until he himself allowed it. They put his dead body in a tomb and sealed it with a stone, but the stone rolled away. His disciples abandoned him in his trials, but they eventually

ly returned more committed than ever. They persecuted and killed his first disciples, but that only served to spread his message. The churches have been unfaithful sometimes, but God just slipped away from those particular temple precincts. God has been declared dead countless time, but yet a billion people just celebrated Easter.

Goodness cannot be killed. Believe it!



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# A few lost minutes altered a common Easter forever

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

The most significant 11 minutes and 48 seconds in the history of Christianity have been widening the gulf between Orthodox and western Christians since 1582. But if Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Protestant Christians can get their act together, the world's Christians might finally start celebrating Easter on the same day.

"I often wonder what it signals to the rest of the world that Christians cannot assemble around a common date for Easter," said Archdiocese of Toronto ecumenical and interfaith affairs officer Rev. Damian MacPherson.

It might be of no interest to non-Christians, concedes MacPherson, but it certainly matters to Christians who yearn for unity.

"I feel the division when we're not able to do a common liturgy on a common date around the most significant event in our history — resurrection," MacPherson said.

Speaking to a gathering of priests last year, Pope Francis said he was open to changing the date of Easter in the West so that all Christians around the world can celebrate on the same day. On June 12, 2015, he said, "We have to come to an agreement."

He joked that the current situation causes confusion because it allows Christians to say to one another: "When did Christ rise from the dead? My Christ rose today, and yours next week."

In January, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said Anglican leaders were willing to join the discussions for a unified date. He said he had discussed the subject with Pope Francis, Coptic leader Pope Tawadros and Orthodox Church leader Patriarch Bartholomew, and hoped a change would occur within 10 years.

Dating Easter is a problem as old as Christianity. Even the Gospels don't agree. In Matthew, Mark and Luke the Last Supper takes place on the first day of Passover, which began this year on Thursday, March 24. In the Gospel of John, the Last Supper takes place on the evening before Passover, Wednesday.

In the early church, when Christianity was a Jewish movement, most Christians celebrated Easter on the first Sunday after Passover. The Jewish lunar calendar prevailed. But it did not bring unity.

A group called the Quattuordecimans insisted there was no reason to do Easter on Sunday. They wanted it three days after Passover — the 14th of Nissan according to the Jewish calendar. By 325, when Emperor Constantine called the first ecumenical council in Nicea, Christians all over Europe, the Middle East and North Africa had a wide variety of dates for Easter.

"People were celebrating all kinds of dates, whether it was in the British Isles or Spain or Italy, North Africa, Jerusalem," said Orthodox Church of America Archbishop of Canada Irénée Rochon. "Everybody had their own way of calculating."

So the first order of business at Nicea was a common date for Easter. Easter would be on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the spring equinox. The Spring Equinox was determined to be March 21 on the Julian calendar. That was the common calendar for the civilized world at the time, in use since Emperor Caesar Augustus decreed it should be the standard in AD 46.

By 1582 Renaissance astronomers knew there was something wrong with the Julian calendar.

It was off by 11 minutes and 48 seconds per year. Pope Gregory XIII decided science



Anne Wicks

**CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION — For those Christians who desire unity, a common Easter date matters a great deal, says Archdiocese of Toronto ecumenical and interfaith affairs officer Rev. Damian MacPherson.**

should rule and ordered a 10-day correction. That was the beginning of the Gregorian calendar, which today rules in the secular order the world over. It actually took until 1752 for the British Empire to bow to a papal decision on the calendar, and Greece didn't budge until 1923.

Because the Julian calendar always observes a leap year every four years, the gap between the calendars has been widening. The Gregorian calendar skips one leap year every century. Thus, by the time the King of England went Gregorian the British had to drop 11 days from their 1752 calendar and the Greeks in 1923 had to drop 13 days. By 2100 the gap will be 14 days.

Generally, the Orthodox celebrate *Pascha* (the Greek word for Easter) one to five weeks after the western world celebrates Easter. But there's reason to hope East and West can get back on the same page.

In 1997 a meeting convened by the World Council of Churches in

Aleppo, Syria, came up with a formula for calculating Easter completely divorced from both the Gregorian and Julian calendars. Since the Council of Nicea used the science of its day to determine the vernal equinox, the churches today should rely on the science of our own time, said the Aleppo statement on Easter.

Whatever the calendar date may be, the vernal equinox should be determined scientifically by astronomers. Once the equinox is decided, Christians should look for the first full moon in Jerusalem — the city where Christ actually rose from the dead. Easter is on the Sunday after that — according to the Council of Nicea formula.

The Aleppo solution was heralded as a great breakthrough, but none of the churches represented at the World Council of Churches gathering in Syria that year actually followed through.

However, in 2015 the Pope of Alexandria, head of the Orthodox Copts, wrote to the papal nuncio

in Egypt urging a common date for Easter. Pope Tawadros II was acting on the same anxieties that prompted Catholic bishops of the Middle East gathered in Rome for the 2010 Synod on the Middle East to call for a common date for Easter.

In the Middle East, where Christians are increasingly a minority, a common date for Easter would be an important symbol of unity and a clear signal to the Muslims who surround Middle East Christians. A common date for Easter also means common observance of Lent. Parallel to Ramadan, the Christian season of fasting is recognized and respected in the Muslim world.

By chance, Orthodox and Catholic Easter do sometimes coincide. They did in 2014 and will again next year. But after 2017 such serendipity will not visit again for another 17 years.

Irénée isn't holding his breath. The only resolution, as far as the Orthodox bishop is concerned, has nothing to do with science or the World Council of Churches agreement in Aleppo or the ecumenical movement. Rome must re-adopt the Julian calendar and fall into line with Orthodox practice based on the Council of Nicea.

"The western, Gregorian calendar, which came about in the 16th century, was a unilateral thing by the church of Rome," said Irénée. "The Orthodox Church never accepted this change for the paschal date because this was something agreed upon by the whole church and only the whole church can change it."

Which means that another ecumenical council of both western and eastern churches could decide again on the date of Easter. Though the Orthodox will hold their largest and most significant synod in nearly 1,000 years on the island of Crete this June, the date of Easter has been excluded from the agenda.

Neither the pope nor the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople can simply call an ecumenical council. The first ecumenical councils were called by emperors, but since then the Orthodox practice has been that only a council of the entire church can declare a previous council ecumenical, said Irénée.

It is the Slavic Orthodox, principally the Russians, who object to any move toward a common date. For many of them their own date for Easter has become a mark of Orthodox identity, distinguishing them from Rome and the Protestants. The Middle Eastern and other Orthodox (Syriac, Armenian, Jacobite, Ethiopian, Coptic) would gladly talk about a common date and are generally much more open to ecumenism.

"The Holy Spirit can move," said Irénée, whose church began with the Russian Orthodox living in 19th-century Alaska. "(She) can move and melt the hearts of people. So we will see. You can never say never."

"I don't know whether it's a measure of pride or of fidelity, quite frankly," said MacPherson. "It would seem that there's a value, a real value, to sharing a common date for Easter."




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# Post-Christian world remakes language of human rights

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

The Supreme Court ruling that legalized assisted suicide last year didn't just find a technical problem in the wording of the Criminal Code. It said that Canadians have a right to ask for and receive state-sanctioned aid in killing themselves under certain circumstances.

What kind of right is the right to kill yourself, or to have someone else kill you? How can a right that obligates a third party to kill you be called a human right? Does insisting that assisted death is a humane action make it a human right?

The court's answer is that assisted suicide is a Charter right found in Sections 7 and 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Those sections guarantee the right to "life, liberty and security of person" and a right to "equality."

Charter rights are important, but they aren't necessarily equivalent to universal human rights. Charter rights underpin the Canadian constitution and are essential to how Canadian courts interpret and apply common law. The problem is that Charter rights sound like universal human rights, and that has made it easy for pro-euthanasia forces to inaccurately portray the Catholic position against assisted killing as being opposed to human rights.

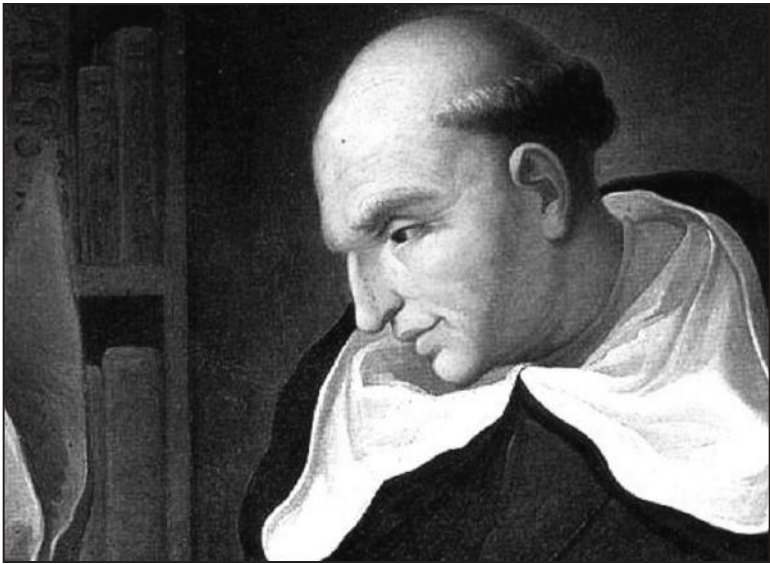
Society must maintain a distinction between legal rights and human rights. Legal rights are rights enshrined to keep the mechanism of the legal system working. Human rights are rights that pre-date the law, constitutions and legal institutions. You have human rights because you are human and they are there to ensure the fullest possible flourishing of your humanity.

Some contemporary Catholic thinkers believe the church is handicapped in modern debates about public morality because it has accepted the idea and the secular language of human rights. Even though the concept of rights has deep roots in the church, some Catholics insist that human rights are foreign to Christian thought and tradition. This view was expressed in Alasdair MacIntyre's influential book *After Virtue*. The conservative philosopher asserted that human rights are a fiction from the 18th-century Enlightenment which we've been duped into believing.

"There are no such rights, and belief in them is one with belief in witches and in unicorns," wrote MacIntyre, a Scottish convert to Catholicism.

If the framers of the American Declaration of Independence and the French philosophers who inspired them really thought human rights were "self-evident truths," they were wrong, according to MacIntyre. "There are no self-evident truths," he said.

Instead of trying to distinguish good actions from bad actions by appealing to rights, the Christian tradition defines the good. Only then does it judge individual acts good or evil by measuring them against Christian ideals. We call these ideals virtues. This is the idea behind "virtue ethics."



**THEORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS** — "The legal theory of human rights is generally traced back earlier than the American and French revolutions, to the writing and campaigning of Dominican preacher and Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas," writes Michael Swan. "De las Casas witnessed the treatment of native American slaves on Spanish *encomiendas* in the New World of the 16th century and he knew evil when he saw it."

Rights, after all, are bare minimums. A right to life is just a minimum standard that says other people may not kill you. A right to free speech means only that you cannot be arbitrarily silenced. Property rights are a minimum standard that holds your property may not be seized without compensation.

But MacIntyre's interpretation of the Enlightenment and modernity is at odds with the church's history of social teaching.

The legal theory of human rights is generally traced back earlier than the American and French revolutions, to the writing and campaigning of Dominican preacher and Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas. De las Casas witnessed the treatment of native American slaves on Spanish *encomiendas* in the New World of the 16th century and he knew evil when he saw it. Influenced by the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, de las Casas argued that the native people deserved their freedom and their land, along with the protection of both the church and the king, for no other reason than that they were human beings.

This was a whole new notion of rights. Prior to de las Casas, the church spoke of rights as a feature of a person's job or office. Bishops had certain rights the king must acknowledge and priests had rights their bishop must respect. This idea of rights was mostly derived from Roman law and was expressed in the church's canon law. De las Casas began to express rights in theological language.

"The church has a really good answer for the ground of our rights," said Matthew Kostecky, a philosophy professor at St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta. "It's because we are made in the image and the likeness of God. It's a good answer insofar as it is straightforward. There it is."

In Catholic social thinking the idea of human rights developed slowly over time. As late as the 1950s some theologians argued against freedom of religion. That nonsense ended with the Second Vatican Council. In *Dignitatis Humanae* church fathers reasoned that if religion is part of what makes us human, it follows human beings have a right to practise,

hold and believe their religion.

But the Catholic embrace of rights was really confirmed further back, in 1891, when Pope Leo XIII issued *Rerum Novarum*, which re-imagined the Industrial Revolution with human rights — property rights, the right of workers to associate and act collectively, the right of society to collectively regulate the economy for the common good. Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain was among the principal authors of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War. In *Love and Responsibility*, St. John Paul II spoke of the rights en-

tailed in being human in theological terms.

"A person's rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use," he wrote.

It is nearly impossible to imagine how Catholics could speak about public issues of morality without talking about rights.

"(Without rights) you would have to rewrite the catechism. You would have to rewrite all of these encyclicals that have been coming out the last 100 years," said Kostecky.

Instead of arguing that human rights are a fiction, or railing against courts and legislatures that interpret rights differently, Catholics need to make better arguments about why a request to kill yourself or to kill a fetus is not a right, said Joe Boyle, emeritus professor of philosophy at Toronto's University of St. Michael's College.

"The fact of the matter is that you still do need rights, even if the rights that people think you've got are not properly justified," said Boyle.

To know whether a right really is a right, look on the flip side at duties. Every right we hold creates a duty on the part of other people.

"If somebody has a right then somebody else has a duty," said Boyle. "And that duty is not based on the fact that the king said so or God says so, but on something about the person who has the right. If I have a right to life there's something about my right that makes a claim on you, that imposes a duty on you, and

on everybody else for that matter, not to kill me."

A right to assisted suicide which creates a duty for a doctor or nurse to kill you cannot be construed as a human right, because human rights cannot have anti-human outcomes, Boyle reasons.

Forcing doctors and others to violate their conscience to satisfy an individual's request exposes any legal right to assisted suicide as something different from human rights. The problem is that courts, legislatures, academics and journalists who claim the high ground of human rights do not know the Christian origins of the idea, said Kostecky.

"We take a concept that comes to us through the distinct Christian heritage and hollow it out of its original meaning and pass it on without realizing that it was, in its genesis, a Christian concept. But we're in a post-Christian world that doesn't understand that stuff," he said.

We must ask a question about the purpose of human rights. Looking back at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the final result sought by Maritain, Canadian legal scholar John Humphrey and Soviet diplomat Alexander Bogomolov was a world where the Holocaust could never happen again. The purpose of human rights at that point was to create a better world, better human societies. It wasn't about individuals and individual choices. It was about how we choose, collectively, to be a fully human society.



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# Yearning for ritual leads to Catholic Church

## Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



We had a quiet Easter this year. I had bought an enormous ham, expecting the usual crowd, but in the end it was just Colleen, our daughters, and me. Brigid and Caitlin are vegetarians, so the ham seemed like overkill. I cut a few slices off one end and put the rest away for another occasion. Thank God for freezers.

Brigid and Caitlin both read at the Easter Vigil, leaving them free to create a sumptuous breakfast Sunday morning. They had spent Holy Saturday baking, as they do every year when they are together, so there was Easter bread and hot cross buns, plus fresh fruit and coloured eggs, coffee with cream, cheese and fruit,

and a profusion of chocolate. At the conclusion of the meal I was so stuffed I could hardly breathe.

Compared to breakfast, supper was almost anticlimactic, though Caitlin had baked a dessert — something called *Bienenstich*, or bee sting cake, a rich confection filled with pastry cream, made from scratch with honey and almonds. There were potatoes and green vegetables to go with the ham, plus a tofu creation that tasted surprisingly like sausage.

We sat at the table long after the meal was over, reminiscing about childhood and talking about Easter rituals. I had little to share, for my parents did not celebrate Easter as a Christian feast. They

had each rejected the stern institutional Protestantism they had grown up with, and Easter to them was a private matter between the individual and God. There was always company for supper, but we never went to church.

When my parents were first married they were interested in the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, and when they moved west from Ontario in 1948 they attended meetings regularly in Borden, a small community 50 km northwest of Saskatoon. They would drive out Sunday morning and often not return until after dark, so busy was the community on the Sabbath. It was quite a commitment for a young couple with a growing family, and as the children increased in number it became increasingly difficult to follow the ritual. Ironically, it was the lack of ritual in the Quaker faith that had attracted them in the first place.

Listening to my daughters speak of their own faith and the importance they place on ritual led me to reflect that I had missed a lot as a child. I don't remember my parents explicitly teaching me anything about Easter.

I remember my Grade 1 teacher reading from the Passion in class. She delivered the words in a voice filled with drama and emotion, gesticulating with one hand as she held the Bible in the other. I can hear her now: "Crucify him! Crucify him!" the rabble shouted when Christ was brought before



Design Pics

**RITUALS OF FAITH —** The rituals surrounding a celebration like Easter — baking, preparing food for the feast, colouring eggs, attending church services — are special times.

Pilate. It obviously made a deep impression on me or I wouldn't remember it so vividly 57 years later, but when I was a child Good Friday was just a day off school, followed by the Easter holidays. I had no clear understanding of the crucifixion or the resurrection.

I learned the Lord's Prayer at school, too, more or less by osmosis. We recited it every morning in the King James version: "Our Father, which art in heaven. . . ." For a long time I thought it was "Our Father, we chart in heaven,"

for it was never explicitly taught to me. It must have made a sort of sense at the time, though I remember thinking it was an odd way to address the deity.

Looking back, it is easy to see a yearning for ritual in my childhood. I think it is a human longing, for there is comfort in community and we instinctively try to create it when it is not there. My parents rejected ritual in the practice of their faith, and as a result they were unable to share their faith with their children.

It was the yearning for ritual that led me eventually to the Catholic Church, and which was later reflected in the raising of my own children. Colleen and I quite consciously embraced the rituals of faith, from Sunday mass during Ordinary Time to the special observances of Advent and Lent. Obviously it made a difference in our daughters' lives or they wouldn't as adults derive such comfort from them.

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New pastoral issues

New legal ramifications coming into effect June 6 with the legalization of assisted suicide in Canada will have consequences not only for medical staff but also for the clergy.

The Special Joint Committee of the Government of Canada on Physician-Assisted Dying released its report, Medical Assistance in Dying: A Patient-Centred Approach, on Feb. 25. The report recommended a broad approach to legally mandated physician-assisted death.

In their pastoral statement Feb. 26 in response to the committee’s report, the Canadian bishops said, “The teaching of the Catholic Church and the stance of the Catholic bishops of Canada are clear. Suicide is not part of health care. Killing the mentally and physically ill, whether young or aged, is contrary to caring for and loving one’s brother and sister.” The bishops disagreed that the report’s recommendations are “patient-centred.”

Dr. Vivian Walker, co-director of palliative care at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon commented in the March 16 PM: “The seismic shift in our culture toward physician-hastened or physician-assisted death is big, especially in the context of what we know to be poorly accessible palliative care services nationwide.”

This seismic shift is creating pastoral dilemmas for clergy and pastoral workers.

What should a hospital chaplain do if a patient expresses a determination to use assisted suicide? Can anointing of the sick be given to such a patient? How do pastors decide whether a person who carried out an assisted suicide should receive a Catholic funeral?

These are questions bishops, priests and health care

providers are beginning to struggle with. They are new dilemmas. Some guidelines are beginning to emerge.

Archbishop Terrence Prendergast of Ottawa did not specifically address the pastoral implications of assisted suicide in a letter read at all masses in the archdiocese March 5 - 6. But he said, “From not only a Catholic perspective but any rational perspective, the intentional, wilful act of killing oneself or another human being is clearly morally wrong.”

He quoted the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which says, “Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.”

In an interview with Canadian Catholic News, Prendergast said those who choose to participate in assisted suicide do not have “the proper disposition for the anointing of the sick.” The rite is “for people who are gravely ill or labour under the burden of years, and it contains the forgiveness of sins as part of the rite,” he added. “But we cannot be forgiven pre-emptively for something we are going to do, like ask for assisted suicide when suicide is a grave sin.”

The Code of Canon Law says anointing of the sick “is not to be conferred upon those who persevere obstinately in manifest grave sin.” But the 1983 code dropped a norm from the 1917 code that had denied a Catholic funeral to those “who killed themselves by deliberate counsel.”

Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the American Catholic Health Association, isn’t so sure the answer is clear cut. “At this point in time, you really can’t give an answer,” she told Catholic News Service.

“If someone confessed or told a priest about their individual situation, their individual culpability about

the decision remains between the person and God, and the priest cannot talk about it,” she added. “I don’t think we ought to ever decide what should happen in the internal forum between the mercy of God and a priest working with someone.”

Marie T. Hilliard, director of bioethics and public policy at the National Catholic Bioethics Centre in Philadelphia, also said the question is not a matter of ethics but of “the governance of the church in terms of access to sacraments.”

“The denial of absolution is not at all our call at the NCBC, nor the call of any one ethicist, but the judgment of the confessor at the time, considering the intention of the penitent to reform,” she said.

As medical and religious leaders ponder these new questions, it is clear that Catholics need to be clear about what the church now teaches about end-of-life decisions. There is no obligation to undergo “massive amounts of intrusive but futile care” at the end of life, Keehan said. “We are finding over and over again that there are misunderstandings about dying and that the church’s teaching gets misrepresented and misunderstood,” she said.

“People need to understand that when they are “fully in control” of their thought processes and their faculties, their wishes and autonomy are going to be respected, she said. “Dying patients have a right to make those choices” or designate someone to make those decisions for them.

“The church does not advocate prolonging life at any cost,” Prendergast noted. “Rather, the church is guided by the principle of the quality of life that considers the whole person and not simply keeping the body going no matter what.”

Assisted suicide will soon be legal. We have to deal with how to handle it morally. — PWN

Canadians need to expand the narrow, distorted history they learned

By Bishop Donald Bolen, Saskatoon

As a boy growing up on a farm in Saskatchewan, my telling of the history of that place began with the arrival of my grandparents and great-grandparents. Last summer I learned that the oldest traces of settlement in the province, dating to about 8,500 years ago, were only a half hour from our farm. I had no idea of that larger history of indigenous peoples on the prairies.

Bolen is chair of the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Over the past seven years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has challenged the often narrow or distorted ways in which we have told the story of our nation and of European and immigrant settlement here. After hearing from over 6,000 witnesses, the TRC process and its Final Report have given witness to a particularly painful part of our history: the waves of suffering that accompanied the Indian Act and the residential schools.

That hidden history continues to resonate in our Canadian present — in broken communities and struggling families, in high incarceration and suicide rates among our indigenous popula-

tion, and in a systemic racism embedded in societal structures and attitudes. The TRC process has taken Canadian citizens back

to school, and its Final Report calls all of Canada to a profound examination of conscience.

The TRC process has brought

about a painful awakening for many Catholics, whose church — CHILDREN, page 15

First Nations thriving in Saskatchewan

By Ravina Bains and Taylor Jackson, Vancouver Troy Media

We often hear about First Nation communities in Canada opposing natural resource projects. Whether it’s an LNG plant in British Columbia or mining projects in eastern Canada, the news is full of First Nation opposition to resource development.

However, the one jurisdiction that may be the exception to that rule is the land of living skies, Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan there are countless examples of First Nations communities working in partnership with mining companies to bring projects to fruition. In fact, there are more than 45 mining partnerships between First Nations and resource companies in Saskatchewan. For example, Muskowekwan First Nation and Encanto, a Vancouver-based company, are undertaking a joint venture to develop the first on-reserve potash mine in Canada that will generate 2.8 million tons of potash annually and create approximately 1,000 jobs. Just recently, English River First Nation and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation acquired 30 per cent of JNE Welding, a company that manufactures steel vessels for mining companies. With these types of partnerships it’s no surprise that the mining sector is the largest private-sector employer of aboriginal people.

But what helps make Saskatchewan an attractive jurisdiction for mining investment from both First Nations and resource companies?

Unlike provinces like B.C., Saskatchewan is covered by historic treaties and Treaty Land Entitlement agreements. These agreements allow First Nations to purchase Crown land anywhere in Saskatchewan to convert to reserve land, providing land certainty not currently found in provinces like B.C., where more than 100 per cent of the land is under claim with very few historic or modern treaties.

And First Nations partnerships and land certainty are two of the things that have made Saskatchewan the most attractive province for mining investment.

In 2015, as in 2014, Saskatchewan was not only the most attractive jurisdiction for mining investment in Canada but also the second most attractive jurisdiction in the world, according to the Fraser Institute’s annual mining survey.

Saskatchewan is also one of the only jurisdictions in Canada where uncertainty surrounding disputed land claims is not a significant barrier to investment in the mining sector. In fact, Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of respondents across all Canadian jurisdictions that view the situation regarding disputed land claims as an encouragement to investment at 22 per cent.

The province’s standing on this measure has also been improving. Back in 2012, only 16 per cent of respondents for Sas-



BOSNIA GENOCIDE — Victims’ pictures are displayed on a table in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, as people watch a TV broadcast of an international tribunal in the Netherlands March 24. Radovan Karadzic, a former Bosnian Serb leader, was convicted of genocide and nine other charges for orchestrating a campaign of terror that left 100,000 people dead during the 1992 - 95 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bains is the associate director of the Centre for Aboriginal Policy Studies and Jackson is a policy analyst in the Centre for Natural Resources at the Fraser Institute. www.troymedia.com

— POSITIVE, page 15

People who break rules need ministry of mercy from church

**The Editor:** I am in agreement with Cardinal Collins and Archbishop Prendergast that assisted dying is a serious issue that requires much thought and reflection. There are many discussions and government papers dealing with that.

However, I am in disagreement with Prendergast's mention that those who choose to have assisted dying be excluded from the healing rites, communion and funerals in the church. Are we back to a patriarchal-rule-bound church that tosses into the garbage of broken rules those who do not conform to rigid rules?

Where is the church of mercy Pope Francis desires for all of us? Who are we to judge?

Clergy and pastoral care workers have the ministry of Jesus at their core. How often Jesus mingled with the broken, rejected, rule breakers without judgment but with a listening presence,

compassion and inclusion. We as People of God are called to be that presence especially in a medical world that often forces us to live and does not allow us to die with all kinds of drugs and research to prolong life.

Palliative care, healing presence and listening are the gifts we all need in accompanying those who are dying. But what if the pain is not alleviated and endless? — **Helena Robb, Orleans, Ont.**



Anne Wicks

Children forbidden to speak their language

Continued from page 14

was involved in running 60 per cent of the Indian residential schools. We heard how children were in many instances forcibly removed and taken great distances from their families, forbidden to speak their languages and prevented from learning about their culture in a system expressly established for their assimilation. Many students suffered physical and emotional abuse, and there was a deeply disturbing number of students who were sexually abused. Students grew up in an institutional environment where they learned little about normal family life or how to be a parent.

The primary interest of the TRC was to bring to light the residential school system's legacy of hurt and alienation, by providing survivors with an opportunity to tell their stories in a non-adversarial context. Creating a space for telling those stories of suffering is indispensable to healing and reconciliation, and the Catho-

lic Church, along with other Christian churches, has strongly supported the TRC process.

One of the challenges faced by the Catholics has been how to come to terms with the history of our involvement in residential schools without adopting a defensive posture, but also without scapegoating or "throwing under the bus" the many priests, members of religious communities, and laypeople who served at the schools, or who worked with Canada's indigenous peoples over the last four centuries. The fact that the residential school system was misguided and deeply flawed, and that some who worked at the schools committed terrible deeds, does not nullify the truth that others served there generously, with self-sacrifice and good intentions.

The TRC's Final Report gives a telling account of the regional event in Victoria, where the superior of a Catholic religious community gave an account of his experience of serving at a residential school, and was chal-

lenged by a student who attended the same school but had a very different (and negative) experience. The Report points to their "seemingly irreconcilable" accounts and experiences as "a stark reminder that there are no easy shortcuts to reconciliation" (Vol. 6, pp. 10-11).

While visiting Saskatoon in 2014 for an event entitled 10,000 Healing Steps, TRC Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair spoke of the experience of shame that many now feel regarding the residential school legacy, and stated: "you should not feel ashamed about this, you should feel committed to doing something about it. Shame will get us nowhere; guilt will get us nowhere. . . . We must commit to working together to fix this."

The TRC's Final Report and Calls to Action do not give up on the churches who were involved with the residential schools. Rather, they call us to integrity by owning past sins and mistakes, and to be actively engaged in the process of reconciliation and of building a better future. That approach is laudable and to be welcomed.

On March 29, Catholic responses were published addressing two of the TRC's Calls to Action: one responding to the invitation to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over indigenous lands and peoples, the other endorsing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. More responses will be forthcoming, not only in written form, but also through a deeper engagement with indigenous people as we look to strengthen relationships, stand in solidarity in the pursuit of justice, and take other small steps on the long walk toward healing and reconciliation in our nation.

Easter Mountain

As dusk settles over  
the blue mountains  
I drop my pack  
near the garden  
at the end of my hike.

Through the long night  
I sit alone by the fire  
waiting as smoke flows  
over the darkness of  
earth and sky.

Then as dawn approaches  
a warm scent sifts  
through the redwoods  
I waken, rub my eyes,

then stand and bow  
before the mighty wind  
coming through  
the world.

By Michael Dallaire

Positive trend in Saskatchewan

Continued from page 14

Saskatchewan reported that the situation surrounding disputed land claims was encouraging investment.

This positive trend for Saskatchewan stands in stark contrast to how disputed land claims are affecting the perceptions of miners in B.C. In 2013 in B.C., 69 per cent of respondents found disputed land claims to be a deterrent to investment. This increased to 73 per cent of respondents in 2014 and finally reached 77 per cent in 2015.

And it's not just that more and more miners are finding that disputed land claims are hurting B.C.'s investment climate; it's also the extent to which they say it's hurting. In 2013, only six per cent of potential investors said

that they would not pursue investment in B.C. because of disputed land claims. Fast forward to 2015 and this number has risen to 13 per cent.

No respondents for Saskatchewan said that uncertainty arising from disputed land claims would lead them to not pursue investment in the province, and of those who did say that disputed land claims were a deterrent to investment, the vast majority noted it was only a minor deterrent.

Through its consistent high ranking in the annual Fraser Institute Mining Survey, Saskatchewan has demonstrated that land certainty and positive partnerships with First Nations help make the province one of the most attractive jurisdictions in the world for mining investment.



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We welcome your response to articles published in the Prairie Messenger. Two-way communication assures everyone of a better exposure to the truth.

We cannot publish any letters to the editor unless you give us your full name, your address and your telephone number. *(It is especially important to remember this if you are sending your comments by email).*

Due to limited space we ask you to keep your letters short — 300 to 350 words maximum. The Prairie Messenger reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space requirements and newspaper style.

# Sexual violence against women is history's 'silence'

By Beth Griffin

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — Sexual violence against women is one of history's great silences. It is a crime against humanity, happening on an unfathomable scale and has become a systematic, dramatically underreported tactic of conflict, said Archbishop Bernardito Auza.

He spoke at a March 22 event to mark the 60th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

The permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations was joined on a panel by Catholic women who work with victims of violence in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Holy See mission sponsored the discussion on Women and Girls: Victims of Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Auza said the Catholic Church is present and runs a network of institutions to provide essential health care and support in most of the areas of conflict. He said Catholic organizations and agencies also "promote programs aimed at preventing such violence and ensuring women's dignity and effective role in society while addressing the deeper causes of violence against women and girls."

The nuncio said direct targeting of non-combatants was formerly considered off-limits in warfare, but "that essential ethical frontier has been getting ignored and in many cases mocked."

He said various armed groups are now intentionally targeting non-soldiers as part of a concrete strategy to humiliate and terrify innocent women and girls by rape, sexual assault, torture and human trafficking. In addition, women and girls are "bought and sold or even given as gifts or trophies to warring soldiers."

Since the early 1990s, the United Nations and the International Criminal Court have characterized rape and sexual violence against women and girls in violent conflicts a crime against humanity alongside torture and extermination, Auza said. In a 2015 report, the UN secretary general detailed 19 countries in which such violence is used as a systematic tactic.

Auza described the "unfathomable scale" of violence. "Between 250,000 and 500,000 women and girls were raped in 1994 in the Rwandan genocide. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1,100 rapes are being reported each month and hundreds of thousands since armed conflict began."

"Boko Haram is raiding whole schools and ISIS (Islamic State) is openly 'selling' Yezidi and Christian women and girls as young as eight, 'giving' them to ISIS fighters as gifts, and using them as a recruitment strategy in its propaganda materials," he continued.

"All violence against human life is terrible, but sexual violence is designed to debase, dehumanize, and demoralize women, girls

and their families in a unique way," he said. "This violence has long-term, even lifelong, traumatic effects of women and girls in terms of the stigmatization and exclusion that often follows."



CNS file

**MOTHER ANGELICA DIES — Mother Angelica, founder of Eternal Word Television Network, is pictured in an undated photo. She died March 27 at the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration monastery in Hanceville, Ala. She was 92. Feisty and outspoken, she was a major controversial figure in the U.S. church in the closing decades of the 20th century. A 2001 stroke left her with partial paralysis and a speech impediment.**

## U.S. Court seeks alternative coverage

By Carol Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Less than a week after the Supreme Court heard oral arguments about the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive requirement, the court released an order requesting that additional briefs be submitted showing if and how contraceptive insurance coverage could be obtained by employees through their insurance companies without directly involving the religious employers objecting

to this coverage.

The order was released the afternoon of March 29, just six days after the justices heard oral arguments in *Zubik vs. Burwell*, a consolidated case involving the Little Sisters of the Poor, Priests for Life, the Pennsylvania dioceses of Pittsburgh and Erie, and the Archdiocese of Washington. The groups are challenging the Affordable Care Act's mandate that most religious and other employers must cover contraceptives, sterilization and abortifacients through employer-

provided health insurance.

Religious groups who did not fit the narrow exemption to the contraceptive mandate given to churches and religious groups argue that they cannot participate in providing contraceptives without violating their beliefs and that the Obama administration's "work-around" allowing them to acknowledge their opposition and thereby trigger an arrangement for a third party to provide the coverage is still objectionable.

The court's March 29 order specifically outlined the procedures that objecting religious employers must follow if they do not want to provide insurance coverage of contraceptives and went on to suggest that the groups could contract a third party to provide health insurance for their employees, but they would need to inform the insurance company that they did not want the plan to include contraceptive coverage that they find objectionable.

The insurance companies, the order said, could "separately notify petitioners' employees that the insurance company will provide cost-free contraceptive coverage, and that such coverage is not paid for by petitioners and is not provided through petitioners' health plan."

The Supreme Court's order also pointed out that the parties involved in this case may have "other proposals along similar lines," but they should avoid repeating what they mentioned in previous briefings.

Sister Mary Angel Acayo, a Little Sister of the Immaculate Heart from Gulu, Uganda, described cultural practices that support sexual violence against women and girls among the Karamojong people of northern Uganda.

Acayo said rape is considered an acceptable practice among the Karamojong after a boy or man identifies a girl as a potential wife. Describing it as "marriage through rape," Acayo said, "He can take her at any time without her consent. It can be an ambush when she goes to fetch water or firewood. His friends hold her down. Boys consider their marriage to begin when they have sex."

If a girl reports the rape to her family, she is beaten, and she has to marry the boy because if she does not, her family is denied a dowry, Acayo said.

Northern Uganda is a stronghold for the Lord's Resistance Army, a terrorist group fighting in several African countries. Acayo told the chilling story of Grace, a girl who was abducted at age 14

and held for six years by the Lord's Resistance Army. She was abused, enslaved and forced to train as a soldier. Other girls who refused were hacked to death in front of them, she said. Grace became pregnant. She and her child were rescued by government troops during an ambush and brought to a community centre where Acayo treated her.

Grace completed her education and works at a secondary school. She was scheduled to be a panelist at the UN event, but was unable to get a visa.

Acayo said the Catholic Church and other organizations provide counselling, education and training to empower girls and women and reduce dependency. She also works with community elders to try to sensitize them against rape.

According to Acayo, Archbishop John Baptist Odama of Gulu prevented sexual assaults on children by repeatedly staying overnight with them in a retail area known for human trafficking.

## Fair trade shop is a ministry, for husband-and-wife team

By Denis Grasska

SAN DIEGO (CNS) — After three years of working for Catholic Relief Services promoting the fair trade movement, Evangely Aliangan Ward decided she could do more.

So, in late 2010, she founded Around the World Gifts. Located in Old Town San Diego, nestled among an assortment of shops and restaurants, the gift shop sells only items that are certified "fair trade," meaning that they were produced in an environmentally friendly manner by artisans and farmers in developing countries who received fair wages for their labour.

For Evangely and her husband, Gerrit Ward, who manages the shop, Around the World Gifts is more than just a business.

"This is a ministry," Evangely told *The Southern Cross*, newspaper of the Diocese of San Diego. "It's a place where I can bring my faith and my beliefs. It's a place (where) I know I'm making a difference."

About 75 developing countries currently have fair trade co-operatives, and almost 50 of those countries are represented by products at Around the World.

"The theme of our store is gifts from all over the world, so we try to get things that are endemic to the culture of that particular region," said Gerrit, noting that Indian artisans are known for woodworking with brass inlay and that soapstone carvings and items constructed from recycled plastic are commonly produced in Kenya.

He said, "The idea is that when you pick up items in our store . . . it should be indicative of their particular culture."

The shop's inventory includes

home and garden decor, Nativity sets and other holiday items, chocolate, clothing, accessories such as jewelry, scarves, hats and belts, and even musical instruments, like pan flutes, recorders and whistles.

"We try to think of all members of the family" when placing orders with fair trade vendors, said Evangely, whose awareness of fair trade came about through her employment with CRS from 2007 to 2010. CRS is the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, and among its many projects, it is a strong proponent of the fair trade movement.

"When I learned what fair trade really is, it made sense," she said. "To think of the artisans in developing countries, the children that are being worked when they should be in school; to think of the men and women that are working so hard and are treated so wrong, are not paid even a portion of what they deserve, what their working conditions are like."

Fair trade cuts out the middleman, she said, explaining that the artisans and farmers are able to receive a larger percentage of the profit, reinvest in their business and bring about more opportunities within their community.

The store has benefited from the "steady foot traffic" of tourists in Old Town, said Evangely, whose shop also is part of the Fair Trade San Diego network and an exhibitor at events, including the San Diego diocesan Church Ministers Conference last September.

Many of the items sold at Around the World come with a tag with information about the group of artisans who made them — and some even have the name of the specific artist within that group.



CNS/Rahat Dar, EPA

**PAKISTAN CHRISTIANS — People carry a coffin March 28 after the previous day's suicide bomb attack at a park in Lahore, Pakistan. Observers say the terrorist attack that killed more than 70 people in a Lahore park on Easter was not the first time Christians in the Islamic country have been targeted. The Asian church news portal ucanews.com said this is largely because discriminatory laws, the state's patronage of militants groups, deep-rooted intolerance and chronic ignorance give rise to incidents of persecution in Pakistan, "making it a living hell for the minority Shia Muslims who, along with Christians, Hindus and Ahmadis, became the prime target of Sunni extremists."**

Not knowing when the dawn will come, I open every door.

— Emily Dickinson