

# Mprairie Messenger

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## Called to serve

In his message for World

Day of  
Prayer for  
Vocations,

Pope Francis hopes that in this Year of Mercy "all the baptized may experience the joy of belonging to the church and rediscover that the Christian vocation, just like every particular vocation, is born from within the People of God, and is a gift of divine mercy." This week the Prairie Messenger celebrates vocations to the religious life.

— pages 15-26

## Flash mob

A noon-hour flash mob of Grade 7 and 8 students was recently held at the University of Saskatchewan to raise awareness of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

— page 7

## Hospital chaplaincy

Jacqueline Saretsky, the new hospital chaplaincy co-ordinator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, believes that her formation as a nurse and EMT, as well as her experience and training as a therapeutic recreation technician, gives her an appreciation of the many sides of hospital work.

— page 7

## Indigenous masculinities

Editors Drs. Robert Innes and Kim Anderson recently hosted a book launch of *Indigenous Men and Masculinities* at Little Bird Patisserie and Café in Saskatoon.

— page 9

## Worldwide addiction

As the UN General Assembly prepares to meet April 19 - 21 for a special session on the worldwide addiction to illicit drugs, the church is calling on governments and civil society groups to address a problem that has existed for decades but continues to morph and pose new threats.

— page 27

# Pope releases positive text on family life

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Simple gestures such as a kind look or a morning kiss and family prayer can strengthen couples in living out their vocation to marriage, Pope Francis said in his apostolic exhortation.

Released April 8, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), on Love in the Family, not only addresses major themes discussed during the 2014 and 2015 meetings of the Synod of Bishops, but also delves deeper into the church's teachings on true love and the family.

It also highlights the importance of sexuality and passion as a manifestation of true love as a gift. Sex, Pope Francis said, should not be seen as just "a source of fruitfulness and procreation" or "a burden to be tolerated."

The pope reflected on the essence of St. Paul's definition of true love from the First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13, and its relevance "to the concrete situation of every family."

Simple gestures — a kind look, a morning kiss or an evening blessing — can counter a negative attitude that focuses solely on the other's shortcomings and allows couples "to be patient and to cooperate with others despite our differences."

"We need these moments of

cherishing God's gifts and renewing our zest for life. As long as we can celebrate, we are able to rekindle our love, to free it from monotony and to colour our daily routine with hope," the pope wrote.

For married couples, he continued, daily gestures and "moments of joy, relaxation, celebration and even sexuality can be experienced as a sharing in the full life of the resurrection."

St. John Paul II's catechesis on the theology of the body, the pope explained, places sexuality in its proper context. Sexuality in married life is not only "a source of fruitfulness and pro-creation," but also possesses "the capacity of expressing love: that love precisely in which the human person becomes a gift."

Sex in married life cannot be looked at as "a permissible evil" but rather as "a gift from God that enriches the relationship of the spouses," he wrote. That passion, channelled by a love that is respectful of the other's dignity, reveals "the marvels of which the human heart is capable."

"In this way, even momentarily, we can feel that 'life has turned out good and happy,' " the pope wrote.

However, the danger lies when reciprocal belonging turns into

— SMALL, page 31



CNS/Rebecca Dussault

**APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION** — A family is seen riding bikes together. Pope Francis' postsynodal apostolic exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), was released April 8. The exhortation is the concluding document of the 2014 and 2015 synods of bishops on the family.

## Efforts see \$3.75 million in matching funds for Syrians

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — There's another \$7.5 million heading out to help Syrians stuck inside the war-ravaged republic or living as refugees in surrounding countries thanks to Catholic donors and Ottawa's promise to match donations.

Three Catholic agencies with projects in Syria and throughout the Middle East raised nearly \$3.75 million for Syria before the Feb. 29 deadline set by the federal government. Ottawa set a cap of \$100 million on matching funds for the Syria crisis.

The lion's share of the Catholic contribution was raised by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Canada's Caritas agency with more than 10,000 members across the country. With the backing of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Development and Peace raised \$2.4 million.

"It is not easy to raise money for a crisis like this one which has been ongoing for more than five years," said Guy Des Aulniers, Development and Peace's humanitarian aid co-ordinator, in an email. "But our donors always

have the most poor and vulnerable close to their hearts."

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association-Canada raised \$925,051.37, while Aid to the Church In Need-Canada came up with \$440,326.59.

While the federal government matches funds raised by eligible agencies, the matching funds are not necessarily distributed back to the same agencies. Development

and Peace, CNEWA and Aid to the Church in Need, however, will be able to apply for funding from the pooled matching funds for their projects. Global Affairs distributes the funds on the basis of the merit of proposals it receives.

The Syria Emergency Relief Fund deadline was extended by two months when it reached the Dec. 29 deadline with just \$12 million raised from all of Canada.

At the time aid and development agencies said intense interest in bringing refugees to Canada had diverted attention from attempts to help the majority of refugees who remain in the Middle East.

Getting people interested in far-away projects in a five-year-old crisis is a tougher sell than renting an apartment and plan-

— DONOR, page 4

## Charismatic conference held in P.A.

By Sylvia Dion

PRINCE ALBERT — On March 5, approximately 150 people attended the annual Diocesan Charismatic Renewal Conference held at St. Michael's Parish in Prince Albert.

Music ministry by St. Therese College in Bruno began the day. Two young students of the college, Anais Perrault and Kallyn Anderson, shared their testimonials. This was followed by adoration, reconciliation and prayer.

Gary Francis, a speaker from Meota, Sask., shared the progressive deepening of his faith in the charismatic movement, despite recurring personal turmoil.

The first afternoon speaker, Rev. Millan Sajonas, pastor of Arborfield, Carrot River and Zenon Park parishes, spoke on how people are called by the Spirit to be merciful, highlighting concepts and practices of mercy in Old and New Testament passages. He widened the understanding of mercy, bringing it close to everyday life. He challenged those gathered that, when confronted with a decision, always select the most charitable, gentle and loving option. He explained the many facets of mercy which extend far beyond forgiveness.

Pauline Poulin gave a presentation on prayer ministry. She

invited everyone to experience praying over someone and to be prayed over in an unthreatening atmosphere.

Jim Anderson spoke on becoming mercy and how to apply what we learn from the parable of the Good Samaritan to our lives, becoming mercy to others. He focused on humility, which he said is essential in receiving and offering mercy, so that we can bear fruit. Anderson explained the concept of misericordia as our misery attracts the love of God and his grace.

The day ended with the eucharist, celebrated by Rev. Maurice Fiolleau, vicar-general of the Diocese of Prince Albert.



## God excludes no one from his love

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Jesus brought humanity God's merciful, saving love, not hatred and animosity, Pope Francis said.

"Jesus makes visible a love open to everyone — nobody excluded — open to everyone without bounds," he said at his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square April 6.

The pope also met with and blessed the eyes of five-year-old Lizzy Myers from Mansfield, Ohio.

Struck by a rare disease that is gradually rendering her deaf and blind, Myers was in Rome after a representative from Turkish Airlines heard about her story and offered her and her family free round-trip airfare to any city in the world.

Her parents, Steve and Christine Myers, had created a "visual bucket list" of places and things they wanted Lizzy to see before she loses her sight due to Usher Syndrome Type II A. They chose Rome and the Vatican to be their special destination because they are Catholic and because of the city's artistic and historical riches, they told Associated Press.

After meeting with bishops and a few special delegations at the

end of his general audience, Pope Francis went directly to Lizzy Myers, who was seated with her family in a section reserved for those with special needs. He leaned over her for several minutes, speaking with her and then laid his right hand over her eyes, offering his blessing. Vatican Radio said she gave the pope a small box containing a piece of a meteorite that fell in Ohio.

During his general audience, the pope continued a series of talks dedicated to God's mercy and reflected on how this mercy was fulfilled in Jesus.

The New Testament "is truly the 'Gospel of mercy' because Jesus is mercy," he said.

At every moment in his life, Jesus showed love to everyone: a love that is "pure, free and absolute," the pope said.

Jesus began his mission of mercy with his baptism in the Jordan River, the pope said, waiting in line "with the sinners, he wasn't ashamed, he was there with everyone, with the sinners, to get baptized."

He could have begun his public ministry with lots of fanfare, "in the splendour of the temple," to the "blast of trumpets" or "in the garments of a judge," but he didn't, the pope said. Instead he

chose to be with the people, taking on "the human condition, spurred by solidarity and compassion."

His driving purpose was "to bring everyone the love of God who saves; Jesus didn't bring hatred, he didn't bring animosity, he brought us love, a great love, an open heart for everyone, for all of us," the pope said.

Jesus accompanied the least and the marginalized, sharing with them "the mercy of God who is forgiveness, joy and new life. The son sent by the father is truly the beginning of the time of mercy for all of humanity."

The great mystery of this love is seen in the crucified Christ, the pope said, because "it is on the cross that Jesus offered to the father's mercy the sin of the world, everyone's sins, my sins, your sins" and took those sins away.

"We are all sinners, but we are all forgiven," Pope Francis said. "We all have the possibility of receiving this forgiveness that is God's mercy."

The sacrament of reconciliation, he said, gives the penitent heart "the strength of the forgiveness that flows from the cross and renews in our lives the grace of mercy that Jesus obtained for us."



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano handout via EPA

**POPE OFFERS BLESSING** — Pope Francis greets Lizzy Myers of Mansfield, Ohio, during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 6. Myers, who has a disease that is gradually rendering her blind and deaf, met the pope as part of her "visual bucket list."

## Vocations, community life must serve each other: pope

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are born within the Christian community, are meant to build up the Christian community and rely on the community for support, Pope Francis said.

"The church is the house of mercy, and it is the 'soil' where vocations take root, mature and bear fruit," the pope wrote in his message for the 2016 observance of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which is celebrated April 17.

"The church, mother of vocations" is the theme Pope Francis chose for the day.

While God calls individuals, and individuals have a duty to discern in prayer the vocation to which they are called, the call to priesthood or religious life comes because one has been baptized into the community of the church, the pope said. "The ecclesial dynamism of the call is an antidote to indifference and to individualism."

Vocations are born within the church community, so "indifference is vanquished by love, because it demands that we go beyond ourselves and place our lives at the service of God's plan, embracing the historical circumstances of his holy people," the pope wrote.

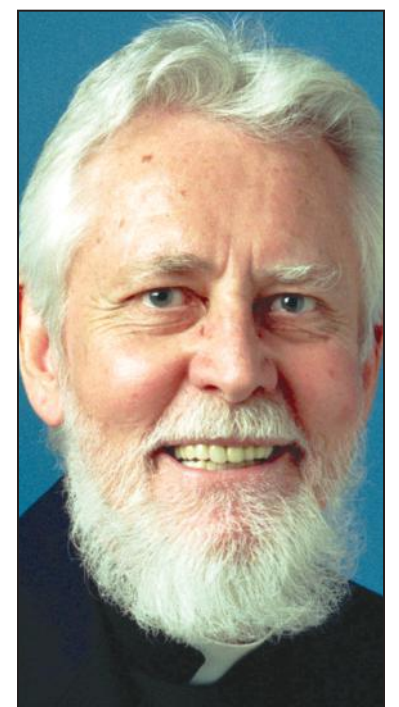
As women and men prepare for service in religious life or the priesthood, the pope said, their knowledge of and love for real Christian communities must grow.

While a vocation may be born in a particular parish, diocese or Catholic movement, God's call is to serve the entire church, he said. Already starting in the seminary or novitiate, candidates need experiences that help them "learn to know and to love their brothers and sisters who pursue paths different from their own; and these

bonds strengthen in everyone the communion which they share."

The community aspect of vocations, he said, also means that every Catholic and all of them together have a responsibility to pray for vocations, to help identify and encourage individuals suited to the priesthood or religious life and to give every priest and religious the care and support they need to continue their service faithfully.

Pope Francis ended his message with a prayer to the Father of mercy, asking God to "grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous, which are fountains of fraternal life and which nurture in the young the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelization."



CNS/Doug Hesse

**HAYS DIES** — Rev. Edward Hays, the author of more than 30 books on prayer and spirituality and a priest of the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kan., died April 3 at St. Luke's Hospice Care in Kansas City, Mo., after a fall at his home. He was 84.

## Saint's relics found in rubble of church

By Gaby Maniscalco

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The relics of Syrian St. Elian, which originally were thought to have been destroyed by members of the so-called Islamic State militia, have been found amid the rubble of the desecrated Mar Elian Church in Qaryatain, Syria.

The sanctuary was bulldozed in August 2015, according to Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Rev. Jacques Mourad, the prior of the Syriac Catholic monastic community, was kidnapped three months earlier when the terrorists initially raided the church.

Mourad, who was freed Oct.

11, reported the discovery of the relics to Fides April 5. "The fact that the relics of Mar Elian are not lost is for me a great sign: It means that he did not want to leave the monastery and the Holy Land," the priest said.

The relics of St. Elian, a third-century martyr, were discovered after Syrian military forces had retaken control of Qaryatain.

Even while the Islamic State forces controlled the area, however, local Christians preserved their veneration of St. Elian, Fides said.

Mourad had told his flock, "It is not important that the monastery is destroyed, it is not even important that the tomb was destroyed. The important thing is that you

bear Mar Elian in your heart, wherever you go, even in Canada, or Europe, because he wants to stay in the hearts of his followers."

A priest of the Syriac Catholic Archdiocese of Homs and monks from the Mar Musa monastery were set to go to Mar Elian to survey its condition, Fides reported. Mourad asked that they collect and guard the remains.

"We know that the old sanctuary was destroyed, the archaeological site was devastated, while the new church and monastery were burned and partly bombed," he said. "The life of grace will bloom again around the memory of the saints. It will be a great blessing for our entire church."



CNS/Reuters

**RELICS FOUND IN SYRIA** — A view shows the damage in the town of Qaryatain, Syria, April 4, after forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar Assad recaptured it. The relics of Syrian St. Elian, which originally were thought to have been destroyed by members of the so-called Islamic State militia, have been found amid the rubble of the desecrated Mar Elian Church in Qaryatain.



# Saskatoon panel discusses physician-assisted death

By Mary Deutscher

SASKATOON — The Student Medical Society of Saskatchewan (SMSS) Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee recently presented a panel discussion on physician-assisted death at the University of Saskatchewan.

The panel included Dr. Cindy Forbes, Canadian Medical Association (CMA) president; Bryan Salte, legal counsel, Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS); and Dr. Keith Ogle, College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) Task Force on End-of-Life Care. The March 15 event attracted a crowd of some 200, with a group also participating by video conference from the University of Regina.

The panel was convened to discuss the implications of the Supreme Court of Canada's Carter decision, which struck down Canada's laws against physician-assisted death. It is unclear whether the government will legislate to include both euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide under physician-assisted death, or if it will legalize only one of these practices.

Moderators from the SMSS posed questions to the panel for an hour, followed by a half-hour period in which written questions from the audience were posed. The first questions centred on practical considerations for physicians.

Panel members focused on a physician's ability to assess a patient's competency to give consent to physician-assisted death. While Forbes stated that physicians routinely assess consent, Ogle stated that most physician-assisted death guidelines require two physicians because these practices are different from most medical decisions. Salte echoed this, saying that patients experience many pressures at the end of life, including pressure from families, which makes them particularly vulnerable and increases the need to verify that consent is autonomous.

Panel members also discussed whether euthanasia and assisted suicide should only be performed by physicians, or if other health care professionals should be part of the decision-making process. They generally agreed that the model of care in Canadian health care is team-based, which would mean that physicians would likely consult with other health care professionals regarding a patient's decisions.

However, Salte pointed out that patients with different life expectancies will likely be treated differently. "This is intended to alleviate suffering. (I would) hate to see people remain in suffering due to lengthy checks," he said.

The panel also discussed extending physician-assisted death to persons with a psychiatric illness, children, and persons

who have given prior consent through advance care directives. Much of the discussion focused more generally on whether or not advanced care directives are an effective means of communicating a patient's medical decisions once the patient has lost the capacity to make his or her own. Salte suggested persons could consent to physician-assisted death through a special Advance Care Directive that is supervised by someone who can confirm the competency of the patient. This is in contrast to current Advance Care Directives that do not require such a witness.

Regarding physician-assisted death for children, Ogle referenced National Post columnist Andrew Coyne's comment that contemplating euthanasia for children is "indicative of a society that's lost its way." He said, "for the protection of children its reasonable to sacrifice some of their presumed rights."

The topic prompted Forbes to say, "I didn't enter medical school thinking I would be helping people die." She encouraged caution in expanding access to physician-assisted death to different groups.

The topic of mandatory referral for physicians was also addressed by the panel, who expressed a hope that the government would provide a centralized agency to address requests for physician-assisted death. They also said that govern-

ment-funded faith-based institutions would likely be required to provide physician-assisted death. However, these comments were tempered by an acknowledgment from Salte that there is "a great deal of uncertainty" around legislation in these areas.

The panel also focused on the need to develop palliative care to ensure that patients are making a true choice regarding their options at the end of life. They ended the discussion saying that it was impossible to guess the future.



Anne Wicks

## 'Heart-breaking' decision seen in P.E.I.

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

Pro-lifers are heartbroken that the last province that didn't provide abortion services has succumbed to pressure from the abortion lobby.

When the premier of Prince Edward Island announced that abortions will soon be legal on the island, it brought despair to the national pro-life movement.

"It is a heartbreaking situation," said Mary Ellen Douglas, Campaign Life Coalition's national co-ordinator. "I am very sad about it and a little surprised."

"I'm really disappointed that P.E.I. didn't hold the line. It is just another nail in the coffin."

On March 31 Premier Wade MacLauchlan, also the island province's justice minister, said that surgical abortions would soon be provided in the province. He was joined by Health Minister Rob Henderson and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Paula Biggar. The premier cited a women's right to equality in health care as a key reason for the change.

Up until now, P.E.I. was the only province in Canada that didn't provide surgical abortions within its health care system, although funding has been available to cover the costs of off-island abortions at specific hospitals since 1995, minus the cost of travel.

The province's change of heart comes as a response to a legal

challenge under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms filed in January by Abortion Access Now P.E.I. The group had filed a notice of application in the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island against the provincial government seeking full and unrestricted access to abortions on the island. The government had 90 days to respond.

Douglas rejected the notion that increased access to abortion promotes equality.

"What kind of equality is he talking about except to say that they have a right over another human being," said Douglas. "That is the equality they are asking for."

Campaign Life president Jim Hughes criticized MacLauchlan, Henderson and Biggar for siding with the pro-abortion activists.

"Shame on them for bringing abortion to the province," he said in a statement.

Despite being saddened and disappointed, Alissa Golob of the recently formed pro-life political and lobby group Right Now sees the change in P.E.I. as motivation for pro-lifers to continue their fight.

"The decision of the MacLauchlan government to bring abortion back to Prince Edward Island should motivate us to ensure pro-lifers are nominated and elected so that abortion advocates are no longer able to make legal changes on behalf of Canadians," she said.

It is expected that the province could be offering abortions on the island by the end of the year.

In the meantime, Douglas said the pro-life movement needs God's intervention.

"God help us," she said. "We need his help in order to get through the next phases of life in Canada. We have an awful lot of work left to do."

## Groups to get together for March for Life

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Pro-life groups have often fought over tactics, but this year Campaign Life Coalition is welcoming every organization fighting for the unborn to the National March for Life May 12.

"We've done something very deliberate this year," said Campaign Life Ottawa lobbyist Johanne Brownrigg. "We have decided to present a unified voice from the entire pro-life movement as far and wide as we could reach."

Even though Campaign Life, the national political arm of the pro-life movement, remains the sole organizer of the march, the march's promo video released March 14 includes groups such as WeNeedLaw.ca, the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA), educational pro-life groups such as LifeCanada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Priests for Life, and 4MYCanada. The promo may be viewed at marchforlife.ca

The theme of this year's march is End the Killing and its focus is abortion, "despite very serious,

**THE JOY OF LOVE** — Simple gestures such as a kind look or a morning kiss and family prayer can strengthen couples in living out their vocation to marriage, Pope Francis said in his apostolic exhortation. Released April 8, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), on Love in the Family, not only addresses major themes discussed during the 2014 and 2015 meetings of the synod of bishops, but also delves deeper into the church's teachings on true love and the family (see stories, pages 1 and 32).

very concerning developments on euthanasia and assisted suicide," said Brownrigg. "Of course, for us, these issues greatly intertwined. When you decide to kill the vulnerable, it's clear you are going to continue to kill more vulnerable people."

"For our purposes, the March for Life is about abortion and we don't want that issue to be diluted," she said. The march is one of the only opportunities every year where abortion is guaranteed a headline.

"We are grateful to Campaign Life Coalition for hosting this event and will do what we can to build support for it," said WeNeedLaw.ca director Mike Schouten in an email.

WeNeedLaw.ca supports incremental legislation that would use a gestational approach to restricting abortion, a tactic Campaign Life has opposed because of its emphasis on protecting life from conception.

"It has been our experience for some time now that if we are going to be successful in advancing legal protections for pre-born children it is necessary for respective pro-life organiza-

tions to focus on those things we have in common, rather than on our differences," said Schouten. "The annual March for Life needs to become more than a stand-alone event. The March for Life affords us a great opportunity to work together to build as much momentum as possible for the following weeks and months."

ARPA legal counsel Andre Schutten thinks the inclusion of his and other organizations in the march's promotional video is a "sign of healthy growth and the maturing of the movement."

"I think it's great," he said, noting "a movement that has many different perspectives and approaches is a sign of a healthy and large movement."

When a movement only has "a single way of dealing with the issue," it is likely "very new, small and probably not going to be effective," he said.

Schutten said he has observed a trend over the past five years of the pro-life movement working together more and more. There is also "more and more diversity" among pro-life groups, and "that's a good thing."



# Mercy central to Abrahamic faiths' core: scholar

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Despite their vast differences, the three major Abrahamic religions share one trait that runs central through everything each does — the promotion of mercy.

"There are many things different about the three," said Murray Watson, a Catholic biblical scholar and professor at Huron University College in London, Ont. "But mercy is one of the things about which we are surprisingly — or perhaps unsurprisingly — united, and about which Judaism, Christianity and Islam can speak with a common voice."

Watson calls mercy "the central pillar of Christianity." Society, however, isn't so sure about that, and unfairly so, said Watson.

"Christianity has become associated with a shrill and harsh public voice which excludes and condemns in very black-and-white ways, the very opposite of what mercy is usually taken to mean," he said. "(But) for me mercy is at the very core of the faith that

guides my life. It is a defining quality of Christianity."

Watson isn't alone in thinking this way.

"Mercy is the very foundation of the church's life," wrote Pope Francis in *Misericordia Vultus*, the document in which he announced the Jubilee Year of Mercy. "Nothing in her preaching or in her witness to the world can be lacking mercy. The church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love."

There are countless tangible examples of Catholics exhibiting mercy across the world. In the Archdiocese of Toronto there is the annual ShareLife appeal which funds the various Catholic charities, many parishes have sponsored a refugee at some point with many supporting a Syrian family at the moment, and during the cold winter nights a number of church basements morph into a homeless shelter as part of the Out of the Cold program.

These are not unique to Christianity. Much of it comes from the Old Testament. Exodus 34,

for example, reads: "I am Lord, the God of compassion and mercy."

Rabbi Ed Elkin, spiritual leader of the First Narayever Jewish Community in Toronto and a literary lecturer at York University, also put mercy at the centre of his faith.

"I would call mercy quite central" to Judaism, said Elkin. "Mercy appears all over the Bible. God behaves with us in *tzedaka* (Hebrew for justice through mercy or charity) and we therefore are supposed to imitate God and therefore behave with *tzedaka* toward others."

Not only does Judaism, the faith of Christ, share its primary source for understanding mercy with Christians, the faiths also share mercy as a theme in their major celebrations — Passover and Easter respectively.

"The holiday of Passover is our great paradigm of God's loving intervention in history," said the rabbi. "God entered history and intervened to help us. That is what we recall and celebrate at the holiday of Passover and we are certainly inspired by God's

actions to our own actions and interventions to help others wherever we can."

Easter, held around the same time as Passover, also celebrates God's mercy exemplified by the resurrection of Christ following his crucifixion. In the days leading up to Easter Christians focus on the mercy Christ showed which ultimately brought about his prosecution and execution.

"The whole message of Holy Week is God's mercy, God's compassion and love for us in our fragility and struggles and the mercifulness that flows to us in the death and resurrection of Jesus," said Watson. "Throughout Holy Week Jesus shows mercy to those around him . . . showing people what God's love for humanity looks like in its most concrete, graphic form."

Muslims too hold mercy as a key tenet of Ramadan.

"The month of Ramadan is called the month of mercy," said

Imam Hamid Slimi, founder of the Syeda Khadija Centre and educator at the Canadian Centre for Deen Studies, a Muslim seminary.

"For 30 days we seek the mercy of God and what we do is we reflect in the first 10 days on mercy and the second 10 days God's mercy and forgiveness and the third 10 days we focus on God's mercy and deliverance and salvation," said Slimi, who along with Elkin and Watson, was a keynote speaker for Scarborough Missions' recent three-part series on mercy from the perspective of their respective faiths.

Slimi said mercy extends beyond the month-long celebration for Muslims for the "mission of Islam" is to "voice mercy."

"There are two main missions of every prophet, messenger, teacher and good pious person," said Slimi. "And to bring people closer together . . . by being merciful to each other."

## Time is right for Christian unity dialogue

By Ramon Gonzalez  
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — The lack of Christian unity is one of the strongest motives for people abandoning their faith altogether, says a local Lutheran minister.

"People outside don't understand why we are separated and why we don't work together," said Rev. Ingrid Dorschel, senior pastor of Edmonton's Trinity Lutheran Church.

"What happened in the past cannot be changed, but what is remembered of the past and how it is remembered can, with the passage of time, indeed change," Dorschel said at the last in a series of five lenten dialogue sessions between Lutherans and Roman Catholics.

"This is, I think, one of the purposes we are here together: to change, grasp and understand each of our pasts in order to change and to transform what we have learned into something that is live-giving."

Dorschel hopes that sooner, rather than later, both churches will overcome the differences that have shaped their "polemical and sometimes hostile environment for a very long time."

The dialogue must continue today because "the time is right as the time was right 500 years ago when Luther and his contemporaries tried to reform the church," she said.

"They didn't want to have another church; they just tried to reform the Catholic Church. So the time is right to change this again."

Dorschel and local Catholic theologian Bob McKeon addressed the session March 16 at Providence Renewal Centre.

In 2017, Lutherans and Catholics will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. As well, 2017 will also mark 50 years of Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue.

Over the 50 years, members of both churches have grown in



WCR/Gonzalez

Rev. Ingrid Dorschel

mutual understanding, co-operation and respect.

Dorschel said Lutherans and Catholics are baptized into the one Body of Christ and "Jesus is constantly praying for us to be united."

She called on members of both churches to work together to support refugees and to face the scourges of pollution, war, violence and injustice.

McKeon said the local gatherings between Lutherans and Catholics have been encouraging, supportive and certainly challenging.

"Each night I think we modelled what it looks like to go forward," McKeon pointed out.

"We have talked theology with each other, we've been faith sharing with each other and we've taken turns offering hospitality."

Lutherans and Catholics have made exceptional advances in their quest for unity. "For example, we acknowledge each other's baptisms," noted McKeon.

"Catholics don't rebaptize Lutherans who have been baptized and vice versa. We share baptism. We have come to a renewed understanding of the importance of baptism in the Christian life and Christian discipleship and our role in the world."

However, in spite of the many things they share, the churches do almost everything on their own, except for the occasional meeting.

"The challenge here is how we get to know each other better, how we can find occasions to pray together and work together in all the different ways we live together in our common communities," McKeon said.

"In other words, through the dialogues we have done a lot of talk. If those are authentic, we need to walk," he said.

"Maybe what I'm thinking is that there is an ecumenism of head, heart and feet. If we only do one of those, it's not going to work."

At the meeting, participants learned that Lutherans, Catholics and others already work together on various fronts, including serving the poor.

One example is the Inner City Pastoral Ministry, a ministry of Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and United churches. Every Sunday morning, they offer worship and a meal to more than 200 inner city people, many of them homeless.

## Former Ottawa priest found guilty of sex abuse charges

OTTAWA (CCN) — Rev. Jacques Faucher, 79, was convicted March 30 of six counts of indecent assault and gross indecency involving young boys.

The incidents took place between 1969 and 1974 at the former Notre-Dame-des-Anges Parish. The five boys involved were between the ages of nine and 11 at the time of the offences. According to the Ottawa Citizen, they were altar servers.

The judge acquitted Faucher on charges involving two other boys on the basis of a "reasonable doubt."

"When Jacques Faucher was criminally charged in February of 2013, I suspended him from all ministry and prohibited him from representing himself as a Catholic priest," said Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast in a March 30 statement.

In light of his conviction, the archbishop said, "that suspension and prohibition will continue in force indefinitely."

Prendergast stated the archdiocese's commitment to "creating a safe environment for minors and other vulnerable persons."

"We are also committed to the

process of justice and reconciliation for the victims of clergy abuse," he said. "Further, we follow the requirements of canon law and the most recent procedural requirements of the Vatican requiring that cases of the abuse of minors by priests be reported to offices of the Vatican."

"I invite the faithful to pray with me that justice may be done and that healing and reconciliation will come to the victims," he said.



Art Babych

Jacques Faucher

## Donor fatigue is 'understandable'

Continued from page 1

ning city tours for a Syrian family coming to Canada, said CNEWA-Canada executive director Carl Héту.

"For five years, people have been giving for Syria and now there's donor fatigue, which is understandable," said Héту in January.

So far Global Affairs Canada is not releasing totals for the Syria Emergency Relief Fund.

Since January of 2012, Ottawa has so far committed \$877.5 million in humanitarian and development assistance to the Syrian crisis, with another \$82.91 million going for "security and stabilization."

The money Development and Peace raises will eventually be

spent by Syrians on their own priorities, said Des Aulniers.

"Our partners in the region are doing tremendous and courageous work, helping families meet their basic needs, providing medical and psychological services, as well as organizing educational activities for children," he said.

The gap between actual needs and the internationally funded humanitarian assistance for Syria is huge, according to the United Nations agency that tracks humanitarian funds. In 2016 the international community has actually funded just 5.6 per cent of the \$3.2 billion (U.S.) in humanitarian assistance needed this year, according to the UN's Financial Tracking Service (FTS). Last year ended with only 43 per cent of Syria's humanitarian needs funded.

While international funding for Syria has grown from \$216 million in 2012 to \$1.3 billion in 2015, the needs have grown even faster. Total humanitarian requirements for Syria were just \$348 million in 2012. But with 13.5 million Syrians in urgent need of help, including 6.5 million internally displaced, the country this year needs \$3.2 billion in aid.

So far this year Canada has contributed \$279.4 million (U.S.) in humanitarian funding, about half of which was in response to UN humanitarian appeals, according to the FTS. Canada's funding in 2016 represents 8.5 per cent of the total committed to emergency plans worldwide, and 5.5 per cent of the total committed to Syria, according to the FTS.



# Canadian bishops try to limit euthanasia damage

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Catholic bishops, anti-euthanasia activists and doctors all know they're not going to get what they want out of a court-mandated law regulating doctor-assisted suicide likely to be introduced into Parliament this month, but they're still trying to limit the damage.

"We are trying roads of advocacy," Peterborough's Bishop William McGrattan told an audience of more than 100 at Toronto's University of St. Michael's College March 30. "Elected officials are reaching out to me. I take that as a good sign."

McGrattan represents Canada's bishops on the governing council of the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada, the national lobbying organization for Catholic hospitals, nursing homes, hospices and other health institutions. The bishop and moral theologian teamed up with Euthanasia Prevention Coalition executive director Alex Schadenberg to outline the Catho-

lic position on physician-assisted death legislation which the Supreme Court of Canada says must pass by June 6.

"(Assisted suicide) can't take place in a Catholic facility," said McGrattan, but he is realistic about opposition to the Catholic position.

"I would guarantee you that there will be a test case," he said.

The Catholic Health Alliance and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops are lobbying hard to have the government recognize the conscience rights of individual doctors and of Catholic and other religious health care institutions. That right includes the right not to directly refer a patient to another doctor or hospital for the sole purpose of administering a lethal dose.

Given the delicate, frail state of many patients who will request assisted suicide, it seems likely that sooner or later a patient will be deemed too frail to move from their Catholic nursing home to one willing to administer medical death. Such a scenario has the

makings of a legal challenge to Catholic conscience rights, assuming the federal government can be persuaded to enshrine conscience rights in the law, said McGrattan.

In the audience, Dr. Adam Krajewski didn't like the political calculus on his conscience rights.

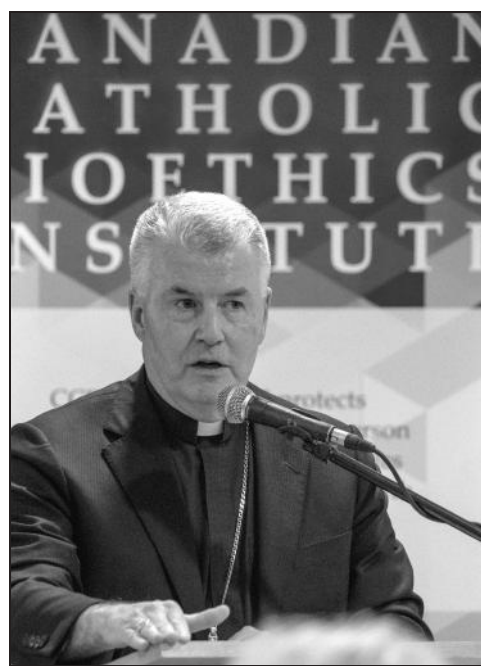
"We're at the beginning of a big problem," Krajewski said. "As a physician, I am very unhappy that I may be facing this situation. It's going to be tough."

In addition to conscience rights for doctors and Catholic health care institutions, Schadenberg and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition are putting the threat to the poor, the weak, the lonely and other vulnerable populations front and centre. Schadenberg distributed postcards at the end of his talk asking the House of Commons to "reject lethal injection of people with dementia and minors."

"Obviously, I'm not competent if I have dementia," Schadenberg said.

If Parliament passes a law that allows for killing people with dementia on the basis of advance directives or other forms of prior consent, the law will have gone much further than the Supreme Court ruling which allows for assisted suicide for people who are of sound mind. Though we all fear dementia, not all dementia patients are unhappy. Schadenberg asked if doctors will kill happy dementia patients because of a document they signed years before their diagnosis.

"You're not giving him a chance to change his mind," he said.



Catholic Register/Swan

Bishop William McGrattan

Schadenberg ruled out continued campaigning for Parliament to apply the notwithstanding clause to halt new legislation for five years.

"That's outside the realm of possibilities," Schadenberg said.

The idea of euthanizing people based on their subjective experience of psychological suffering is particularly troubling to Schadenberg. There can be no objective definition or measurement of psychological suffering.

"I cannot look into your brains to know what's going on," he said.

It is the poor and the marginal who are most likely to reach for an option of death when they've never had any meaningful choice in their lives.

"There are a lot of people in our culture who are socially and culturally abandoned," Schadenberg said. "When you introduce euthanasia into the culture then somebody who is alone and lonely, who just needs a reason to live, they get euthanasia."

McGrattan warned against allowing others to portray the Catholic position as extreme or "vitalist."

"We need to explain our position as a church," he said. "We need to understand that if the process of dying is underway, we need to respect that."

Both Pope St. John

Paul II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly teach that there's nothing suicidal or wrong about refusing medical care and accepting a natural death, and nothing homicidal about administering drugs to relieve pain which may also shorten life.

"One does not will to cause death," said McGrattan.

The bishop also warned against "pharisaic scandal," a scenario in which some Catholics accuse others of being bad Catholics because they continue to be involved in a health care system that allows for euthanasia even when they are not directly involved in administering lethal medicine or referring patients for assisted suicide.



Art Babych

**McLACHLIN HONOURED** — Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson presents the key to the City of Ottawa to Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin of the Supreme Court of Canada at a ceremony at City Hall in March. McLachlin is Canada's longest-serving chief justice and the first woman to hold the position.

## Priest gambles away money for refugees

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The Diocese of Hamilton is picking up the pieces after a Chaldean Catholic priest admitted to gambling away \$500,000 of donations meant for refugees.

The diocese has vowed to make sure no refugees are turned away due to the loss of funds.

Rev. Amer Saka, parish priest of St. Joseph Chaldean Catholic Church in London, Ont., confessed to Chaldean eparchial Bishop Emanuel Shaleta last month that the money for the parish's refugee sponsorship had been gambled away. Saka was immediately suspended and was sent to Southdown

Institute, a mental health treatment facility north of Toronto for religious and clergy.

"Bishop Shaleta contacted us right away to let us know that (Saka) had told him," said Msgr. Murray Kroetsch, chancellor for the Diocese of Hamilton. "At that point we issued a press release just to let people know that . . . we would honour the commitment that was made to those people who are refugees."

The Hamilton diocese is the local Sponsorship Agreement Holder working with Catholic parishes and refugee sponsorship committees in the region. Its refugee office is processing more than 50 individual cases for St. Joseph's Church. Kroetsch said

the priority now is to let the refugees and the sponsoring families know that the diocese has taken over the financial responsibility for their cases.

Kroetsch admits this will be no easy feat. Eleven sponsored refugees have already arrived in London and about 40 more individuals are approved to arrive in Canada in the next few months.

"As a diocese, we respond to it, the same a family does to a crisis," said Kroetsch. "If you have a financial crisis in your family, things that used to be priorities go down to the bottom of the list and this becomes a priority."

Kroetsch said the diocese is also working with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to ensure that the parish's commitments are honoured and the refugees that are coming will be well looked after.

"We don't want those people to feel even more vulnerable than they already are," said Kroetsch.

Kroetsch said he hasn't had contact with Saka since the investigation launched. Saka falls under the responsibility of Shaleta and the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of Mar Addai. Shaleta has refused to comment further as the investigation is ongoing.

A report was filed with London police on Feb. 24 and the fraud unit launched an investigation. No charges have been laid as of The Register's press time.

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# Art helps others to 'stand in wholeness of their life'

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Kiki Smith grew up in a Catholic home dominated by art because her father Tony Smith was an acclaimed American minimalist sculptor who worked in large geometric sculptures.

In a public conversation March 31 at the National Art Gallery with the gallery's curator Rhiannon Vogl co-sponsored by the American Embassy, Smith said she and her sisters would help her father make the geometric scale models or "maquettes" of his work out of cardboard.

"All he did was art," she said. They had no television and little exposure to other information outside of the art world. Her mother was an opera singer and actress.

"We had no furniture," she said. "If you need a chair, you had to move it from one room to the next."

Her father's friends were famous modern and abstract expressionist artists such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman.

She recalled how after the Second World War there was a great call for artists to participate in the rebuilding of the churches. Her father had designed a chapel that included Jackson Pollock's painting on glass for the windows. Though the chapel was never built, the National Gallery has the painted windows by

Pollock in its collection.

But Smith's becoming an artist herself was not immediately apparent to her. Growing up in New Jersey, she took a course in industrial baking, but the work demanded getting up early and felt too much like "a real job."

When one of her sisters decided to become an emergency medical technician (EMT), Smith decided to take the course as well. She found the work fascinating in "learning about other peoples' experience of being in their bodies."

She joked she would often gaze too long at stab wounds she saw in Bedford-Stuyvesant because of the way it penetrated the surface of the body and exposed the inside. After she became an artist this prompted her to do a series of sculptures of internal organs.

Because one of her younger sisters died of AIDS, her initial desire as an artist was to produce work that could be hung in hospitals. But she soon became classified as a "museum artist."

"Would I want that on my dining room table," she quipped.

Unlike her father and his friends, Smith was drawn to more representational art and works not only in sculpture but in stained glass, textiles, prints and drawings. She described moving from human figures to focusing then on the animal world, and the relationship of animals and humans.

A lot of her work began in



credit: ©Kiki Smith, courtesy Pace Gallery Photo ©NGC

**ART IS LIFE** — Kiki Smith's "Born" is on display at the National Gallery in Ottawa. Smith says making art as a way to "keep kicking out a space so people can stand in the wholeness of their lives, to help them to stand in the wholeness of their life."

dreams, she said. Then, she would try as best she could to reproduce it with "as close a proximity as I could."

Sometimes she dreamed about art that was "other peoples' work and I'd get jealous!" She would have to convince herself these were her own dreams.

"When one is an artist, one grows to trust what one is given, following one's own work rather

than trying to manipulate it," she said.

The gallery's present exhibit features her father Tony Smith's "Black Box" which is a black, rectangular sculpture in the same room as Kiki Smith's "Born" which shows a doe giving birth to an even larger figure of a woman.

"I have no idea what it means," Smith said.

The gallery bills the two artists

as representatives of the "zeitgeist" of their particular generations, marking the shift away from representational forms in her father's case and back to them in Smith's.

The process that led up to the creation of "Born" began with an interest in stories of children raised by wolves, such as Mowgli, a portrait of St. Genevieve in the Louvre, and the story of Little Red Riding Hood. After doing a print of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother emerging from the belly of the wolf, she asked herself, "What does it mean if you are born out of a wolf?"

She created work based on this question. Then, this theme progressed to "What does it mean if you are born out of a deer?"

Smith stressed it is important for artists to create their work rather than "wait for the universe to give you permission."

"We have much more power as artists to initiate" than we realize, she said.

She and her neighbours had bought a plot of land to preserve a bit of greenspace and she put a sculpture on it of a woman carrying a deer. "It completely changed my block to have that public sculpture," she said. "It really changed everything radically."

"It made people have pride in that place by being attended to," she said.

For Smith, doing art is about more than mastering how to represent the body or animals properly. "I'm not good at this," she said. "I need to do it more than I care about whether I can do a hand properly."

"A lot of it is getting out of your own way," she said. If you are blocked by not being able to represent something properly, "just lower your standards."

She called being an artist a privilege. We are "stopped mainly by our own brains," she said.

She described making art as a way to "keep kicking out a space so people can stand in the wholeness of their lives, to help them to stand in the wholeness of their life."

## Homeless Jesus finds a new home at the Vatican

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Homeless Jesus has found another home, this time in the Vatican.

Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz's sculpture of a homeless man on a park bench, wrapped in a rough blanket, with his bare feet exposed showing the wounds of Good Friday nails through the arches, has been placed in Sant' Egidio's courtyard, near the entrance to the

Office of Papal Charities.

From St. Jacob, Ont., Schmalz told The Catholic Register he couldn't be more pleased to see his work placed at the entrance to the papal charities.

"I can't think of any other spot that is more symbolically significant than on the steps going into the papal charities building at the Vatican," Schmalz said.

The first life-sized casting of Homeless Jesus sits next to the entrance to Toronto's Regis College, the University of To-

ronto's Jesuit faculty of theology. It was installed in 2013.

In addition to the Vatican's copy of the sculpture, Schmalz has recently seen it installed in front of the *Catedral de Santa Maria la Real de la Almudena* in Madrid. On Palm Sunday another copy was permanently installed on St. Thomas Mount, the site of the martyrdom of the Apostle Thomas outside Chennai in southern India.

"I like to say it's more than a sculpture. It's almost a move-

ment, where the Gospels are challenging people everywhere around the world," said Schmalz.

Acceptance at the Vatican follows one day after rejection in London. The City of Westminster Council decided the sculpture "would fail to maintain or improve (preserve or enhance) the character or appearance of the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square Conservation Area."

Each time the sculpture is rejected it stiffens Schmalz's resolve to see it placed in every major city around the world.

"When they can't see Jesus in the least of our brothers, I think they need a Gospel lesson," he said.

Schmalz travelled to Rome in 2013 to have a small model of the eventual sculpture blessed by Pope Francis. The night before his audience with the pope, Schmalz sat wide awake with anticipation in his Rome hotel room. Looking out his window, Schmalz found himself keeping vigil with a homeless man in the street, just a short walk from St. Peter's Square.

"I open my window, what do I see? It's basically a homeless person right bee-line in front of me, down in the street. So all night long I'm awake because I'm excited to have the sculpture blessed by Pope Francis. And the homeless man beneath me is awake because of the cold. I could see he was awake because of the light of his cigarette glowing in the darkness. I sat there at four in the morning thinking, 'Isn't this ironic?' " said Schmalz.



Catholic Register/Swan

**HOMELESS JESUS** — Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz's Homeless Jesus has found a home at the Vatican. The original, pictured above, is at Toronto's Regis College.



# At historic church, pilgrims walk at heart of Gospels

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — There's nothing quite like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to give one a sense of the origins of Christianity.

"There is really nowhere on earth that compares to it," said Murray Watson of the pilgrimage site in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem that draws hundreds of thousands of Christians to the Holy Land every year, and particularly during Holy Week.

"You become conscious of walking on very holy ground and being at the literal heart of the Christian Gospel. This somewhat ramshackle building contains within its stones the most transformative and hope-filled message in the world: the message of forgiveness, new life, hope and renewal that Jesus offers to us," said Watson, a Catholic biblical scholar and professor at Huron University College in London, Ont.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre brings you back to the days Christ walked the earth spreading his message. Inside the church, which today is under the control of a number of different Christian denominations under a complicated arrangement, pilgrims find the Rock of Calvary where the crucifixion is said to have taken place, the Stone of Anointing where Jesus' body was prepared for burial and the Aedicule, which contains both Christ's tomb and the Angel

Rock, a fragment of the stone which sealed Jesus' tomb.

Built in the fourth century, the church also holds an abundance of art spanning the centuries, including paintings, mosaics and carvings from ceiling to floor, including the famous Christ Pantocrator in the dome.

But what stands out to Watson is the simple cross engravings on the church walls left by pilgrims over the centuries.

"On many of the walls of the Holy Sepulchre, there are tens of thousands of small crosses carved there by pilgrims over the centuries to signify that they had made it," said Watson, who has been to the church hundreds of times over the past 15 years. "I always find those crosses a very powerful and poignant reminder of how I am following in the footsteps of the millions of Christians before me for whom the Holy Sepulchre was the most important place in their world."

Watson isn't the only one who's been paying attention to inscriptions left by pilgrims of the past.

For a number of years Jordan Ryan, a historian and professor of New Testament at Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener, Ont., has been fascinated by the Holy Sepulchre, particularly the second-century inscriptions of pilgrimage Psalms 120-134, Song of Ascents, in Latin.

"That's kind of interesting because if it does come from the pilgrimage psalm it means that early Christians or somebody was making pilgrimages to this site



Wikimedia Commons/Jorge Lascar

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE — There's nothing quite like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to give one a sense of the origins of Christianity, says Murray Watson.**

and the ruins of the Temple Mount," he said. "This is an indication that Christians were already remembering the site in the second century. There is some indication that there might have been some pilgrimages to this site going on quite early on."

Ryan calls the inscriptions hard evidence that helps to validate the Bible against one common criticism: when were the Gospels written.

"It does sort of loan this idea that if sites can be remembered for 300 years, if memory can crystallize in that way, then who is to say that other things could

not have been remembered with accuracy like that," he said. "If you compare that to the writing of the Gospels, 30, 40 years (after Christ's death and resurrection) doesn't seem like quite so much when you compare it to the memory of where Jesus died and is buried."

Ryan, who recently lectured on the historical accuracy of the church at Toronto's Blessed Trinity Church, admitted that when he first visited the Holy Sepulchre in 2012 he was skeptical about its authenticity despite the overwhelming support of his historian peers and archeologist

friends. That was until he felt the presence of those pilgrims, the forefathers of the faith.

"It was kind of really getting in touch with the Christian past and the Christian fathers in really a sort of tangible way," he said. "Once I was sort of more convinced I had this sense that I really was in the place where the Christian faith had kind of all began; where Christ had paid the price and where God had raised him and vindicated him victorious."

"It's a direct connection with Jesus himself that you don't really get by kind of reading the text."

## Two friends worlds apart make for a Chalice success story

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — In 22 years, one story stands out among thousands of Chalice Canada's

success stories.

It's a story about two friends worlds apart and two doves.

This story has been turned into Chalice Canada's first children's book. *The Perfect Gift* is a true

story famous among the people of La Ladrillera, near the city of Chiclayo in northern Peru.

At the centre of the story is 10-year-old Ricardo who is searching for a gift to express his gratitude for his Canadian friend MaryAnne McKinnon. Nothing seems to be quite right, but he soon learns that the best gifts are the ones from the heart.

"It was just one of those events, I guess, in the community that was sort of imprinted in their hearts and their minds and so they were still talking about it," said McKinnon, international manager of Chalice's Latin America initiatives.

In February 2013, McKinnon visited the sponsor site in Chiclayo to oversee local initiatives and train local staff in community programs. La Ladrillera is one of nine communities the site serves. She had been meeting with community members to help raise money and resources to build a water system for the village.

As part of her visit, she visited the children from Chalice's child sponsorship program. She and Ricardo had bonded in her frequent trips to the village.

She remembered that Ricardo's family did not have much before joining the sponsorship program. Now, the family is raising some chickens, roosters and a pig. Ricardo even told

McKinnon how he was taking good care of the pig so that he could sell it to earn money to buy his parents a front door for their mud brick house.

To show his appreciation for everything McKinnon, her staff and Chalice has done for their small village, Ricardo told her that he wanted to give her his most prized possessions — his two doves.

"Ricardo is just a truly special kid and despite his poverty, he just shines in a lot of different ways and I think that sort of stood out that day," said McKinnon.

Months later, the whole village was still talking about Ricardo's gift to McKinnon. That summer, Harumi Flores Montalvo and Ciera DeSilva, two interns from Chalice Canada, came to volunteer and caught wind of the story. It had become an oral history the villagers had passed onto each other and the two girls decided it was something worth writing down.

When they brought the story back to Chalice headquarters in Nova Scotia, everyone loved it. McKinnon said Chalice had been looking to launch a storybook project and this was the perfect one for the series' debut.

"A part of it was a lot of children that we sponsor don't necessarily see themselves represented

in the books that they were reading," said McKinnon. "We were also looking for a way to be able to share stories that are happening in our sponsor sites . . . I think that (the story) is a really good depiction of how Chalice operates in a community."

McKinnon worked on the final draft of the manuscript with the consultation of children's author Sheree Fitch. The village children drew colourful illustrations to bring the story to life. Their mothers also created unique, handmade bookmarks to be sold with the book.

"There were a lot of people involved in bringing the whole project to fruition."

The book also includes a guide for teachers, parents and children to discuss the values of gratitude and gift-giving.

The Chalice Storybook Project was launched in November with the official launch of *The Perfect Gift*. Profits will go toward Chalice Canada's educational programs.

Chalice Canada, a Catholic charity based in Bedford, N.S., was started by Rev. Patrick Cosgrove in 1994. It began as a child sponsorship program, but has since expanded to other initiatives, such as community project funding, disaster relief and educational programs.

More information can be found at [chalice.ca](http://chalice.ca)



Chalice

**THE PERFECT GIFT — MaryAnne McKinnon with Ricardo and his prized doves.**





# Hospital chaplaincy co-ordinator interviewed

By Blake Sittler

SASKATOON — Jacqueline Saretsky is the new hospital chaplaincy co-ordinator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. She replaces Céline Hudon, who retired in December.

Funded by the Bishop's Annual Appeal, the diocesan hospital chaplaincy program includes Saretsky as co-ordinator, working with priest chaplain Rev. Rhéal Bussière and some 30 volunteers who provide Catholic spiritual care and pastoral visits at Royal University and Saskatoon City Hospitals.

Saretsky grew up in Burr, Sask., south of Humboldt. She was born into a close German Catholic family of seven children. She has been involved in various types of hospital work and ministry for most of her life. Some of the roots of her calling were planted as a child; her mother was a nurse.

Saretsky was trained at Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon, now known as Saskatchewan Polytechnic. As a nurse, her first placement was in St. Elizabeth's in Humboldt. She later went on to become an emergency medical technician.

Saretsky believes that her formation as a nurse and EMT, as well as her experience and training as a therapeutic recreation technician, gives her an appreciation of the many sides of hospital work.

She completed her first unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE) in 2002 and has completed three units to date. She started at Saskatoon's St. Paul's Hospital in 2009.

"If I didn't have CPE I'd be floundering," she said. "CPE isn't about hospital visiting, it is about self-formation so before you can sit at the bedside of a patient you have to know all the things about yourself, the good and those things that set us back, so you can better deal with patients."

She explained that the best spiritual care visitors are people who have been wounded and have healed. "That awareness (of suffering) is always there."

What Saretsky likes about hospital chaplaincy is the direct contact with patients.

"I like the time to sit at the bedside," she explained, "to take the time to hear their stories."

Hospital chaplaincy is more than visiting patients. There are a

number of other needs including advocating for patients, recruitment, training and caring for volunteers, and expanding the ministry into parishes.

"(When you are with a patient) you hear hurts and struggles, and if they have no family support, you have to take those concerns up the line to someone who can do something," Saretsky clarified. "This is difficult sometimes because it means going to a nurse or doctor and helping the patient to manage their own physical and medical condition."

When asked about her role in terms of the whole care team of an individual patient, she noted that the professional relationship is still evolving. She sees chaplains as a resource that could be used more often.

"I see myself being called more often when a patient is in crisis," she said. "When a patient is in the hospital there is a lot of emotion, and I'd like to see chaplains being accessed for those moments when nurses and doctors are busy with the more pressing physical needs."

The role of hospital chaplaincy co-ordinator is focused around



Sittler

Jacqueline Saretsky

Saskatoon City Hospital and Royal University Hospital, but in the upcoming year Saretsky hopes to start making inroads into parishes to invite more ministry to the hospital.

"I'd like to offer more education concerning patient experience in the hospital," she said. "We need a greater understanding of what we are going to see in the hospitals as the population is aging."

The aging population and increased pressure on hospitals is a common story in the media. Some see it as a crisis. Some see it as an area of growth.

"There is going to be a greater need for parishioner involvement in the lives of these people who have nowhere to go," she said. "Our hospitals are full."

"We need the volunteers, the

ones who have a heart for this ministry. You learn as you volunteer and grow as you go along."

Saretsky noted that with physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia becoming legal in Canada, the need to inform Catholics about the health care consequences is a new challenge.

"We need to inform people about compassionate terminal care and palliative care — what it means, what it entails. To me it is promotion and advocating for these things."

Saretsky would like to see the church promote visiting the sick more often and to give people the tools to visit their loved ones courageously.

Most families are afraid to engage in those critical conversations about end of life, she noted. "My advice would be, 'Go visit them.' They might think they are doing them a favour by not bringing up difficult conversations, but in reality they are already there, and they want to talk about it."

"Don't be afraid to ask the big questions: the death questions, the end of life conversations," she urged. "The patients aren't afraid of those conversations, they want them."

"As a chaplain, death isn't a failure," she said. "It is a success if you've helped them journey well."

## Year of Mercy retreat held

By Marianne Hammond

PRINCE ALBERT — On Feb. 22 and 23, Prince Albert and area parishes hosted their annual lenten retreat at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Prince Albert.

The speaker for the retreat was Rev. Millan Sajonas, pastor of Zenon Park, Carrot River and Arborfield.

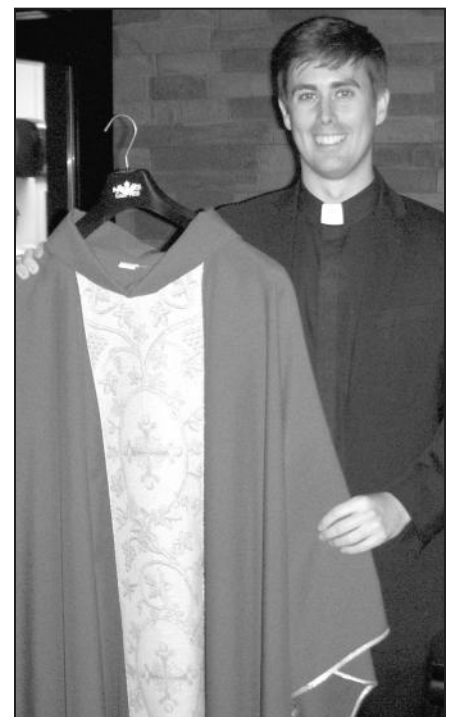
He spoke on the history of a holy year or jubilee. The Catholic Church held its first jubilee in 1300, with Pope Boniface VIII proclaiming a year of forgiveness of all sins. This year, 2016, marks the Year of Mercy.

Many examples were given from Scripture of God's goodness, fidelity, kindness, favour, tenderness and pity. Sajonas said that we are to aspire to be merciful and loving like God. This is a time for all God's people to turn to him and receive his grace.

He explained the importance of tying Lent into the Year of Mercy with the need to pray, fast and give alms. He gave Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta as an example of one who was mindful of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. She put at least one of the works into practice each day.

Sajonas explained how after the front doors of Sacred Heart Cathedral were blessed on December 8, 2015, they became holy doors, and thus is a pilgrimage site during this Jubilee Year. Those who pass

through the door obtain special indulgences. It is the Door of Mercy, through which anyone who passes will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons and instills hope.



**ORDINATION CELEBRATION — A favourite son of the City of Brandon, Rev. Christopher Dubois was honoured by the Knights of Columbus West Brandon Council #1435 on Feb. 29 with a dinner in his honour at St. Augustine of Canterbury Church in Brandon, and the presentation of a gift of a red chasuble. Dubois was ordained for service in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg last July 3, and is currently a parochial vicar at St. Peter's Church in Winnipeg under the guidance of Msgr. Enrique Samson. It was some time before all could be assembled to celebrate the ordination of Dubois, who grew up a parishioner at St. Augustine.**



Ledding

**FLASH MOB — A noon-hour flash mob at the University of Saskatchewan helped raise awareness of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.**

## Flash mob raises awareness

By Andréa Ledding

SASKATOON — A noon-hour flash mob of Grade 7 and 8 students from St. Mary's Wellness and Education Centre was recently held at the University of Saskatchewan's Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre to raise awareness of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

The flash mob took place during an anti-racism presentation March 21 by the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, in support of the International Day for the Elimination of Racism.

St. Mary's students have been researching missing and murdered women in Canada as part of the identity and social justice unit in social studies and English language arts classes. The students joined to form a long line with a length of rope on which they had pinned photos, poems posters, and research on individual cases, and invited conference attendants to examine their findings.

"There's a lot of racism and a lot of missing and murdered indigenous women; we just wanted to try and stop it," said student Jessica McNab.

"It's not fair for these women to be forgotten or to be on a list, it's important to give them a voice," added Khyle Refuerzo, a student who also participated in the flash mob.

Student Keenan Kakakaway researched Susan Duff, a girl from Saskatoon who went missing 32 years ago. "She was just 12 years old, the same age as me," noted Kakakaway. "It's really sad that this happens to girls."

When asked what could be done about racism, Kakakaway suggested people need to stand up to it and tell offenders it's wrong.

"Our unit was looking at modern injustices in Canada, focusing on identity, racism and stereotyping," said Tara Desroches, the Grade 7/8 teacher. "The students' goal is to give these women back their voice so they are no longer

just a number on a long list. We didn't want these women being remembered and stereotyped for being just another missing Aboriginal person. We wanted them to be remembered for being human. Their lives matter."

Desroches added that the initiative was a perfect fit for the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' mission to reach out and transform the world. "We did the flash mob so we can learn more information about the missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada; also, so that we can share this information and take a stand to say this isn't right and justice needs to be found."

The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, which sponsored the event, is a non-profit organization committed to promoting, fostering, improving and developing multiculturalism in the cultural, economic, social and political life of Saskatchewan while working to achieve equality for all residents.



# Vanier students celebrate unique prayer

By Michele Yeager

MOOSE JAW, Sask. — As part of the call to greater prayer in Lent, the students of Vanier Collegiate in Moose Jaw created mandalas which now hang in the school as a reminder of the varied and beautiful ways in which our relationship with God can grow.

At Vanier Collegiate, all students take Christian Ethics at the same time. The project began with one Grade 12 class that wanted to give students a different experience of prayer. Teachers were asked to invite their students to listen to meditative music while quietly colouring a mandala design chosen from 16 possibilities. Teachers were hesitant when they picked up their kits, but all returned with but positive comments. "It was great — they were so focused. They were shushing each other! And they want to do it again." Staff members who were not part of classes were also invited to participate.



M. Yeager

**MANDALAS —** Christian Ethics students at Vanier Collegiate in Moose Jaw, Sask., created mandalas as a reminder of the varied and beautiful ways in which our relationship with God can grow.

Each student's mandala became part of a class mandala, and all the class mandalas became part of a huge school mandala (eight feet in diameter) during a school liturgy. The liturgy also featured a game show quiz on prayers of different faiths, jokes (God can be fun) and bal-

loons (with prayers inside) that students popped at the end of the celebration.

Cookies iced like the mandalas were distributed to students as a reminder that prayer can be nourishing and sweet.

One student commented after the celebration, "It was the first

liturgy where I didn't want it to end."

The school mandala hangs in the hallway at Vanier, reflecting the varied and unique places in which each person finds her or himself along their own spiritual

path. The unfinished mandalas reflect the ongoing nature of prayer and relationship.

A further explanation is centred in the middle of the school mandala: "Together, these mandalas represent the power and the beauty of prayer. Each mandala not only enriches its creator, but has a ripple effect in the community around us, bringing harmony and joy to those whose lives are touched. Multiplied and joined our voices become stronger. They change the world with their beauty. So it is with prayer."

Ms. Yeager, whose class conceived and organized the mandala project, was thrilled with the results among her students. "They have grown so much through this project, as a team and as individuals. From the beginning, their focus was how they could bring a different experience of prayer to others, and they were not only successful in doing this, but they created something incredibly beautiful."

## Stations of the Cross re-enacted

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — It ended on a hill, not unlike Golgotha, where they hanged him from a cross after parading him to various Regina landmarks. "They" are Grade 8 students from Deshayes and St. Dominic Catholic schools and their teachers who re-enacted the route Christ was taken on, on his journey to the cross. It began at one p.m. and ended around three p.m. March 23 on the hill at the east end of Wascana Lake.

They began in the parking lot of Holy Rosary Cathedral and followed a five-kilometre route, stopping at Regina landmarks: Holy Rosary Cathedral, the Catholic School Board building, First Presbyterian Church, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, historic buildings on College Ave., the CBC building, then through Wascana Park to the hill near Douglas Park games fields. There the crucifixion was re-enacted by nailing St. Dominic student Liam Harding to the cross. Huge nails were hammered between Harding's fingers, enabling him to hang on when the cross was raised.

The entire route was walked on sidewalks, so no permit was

required from the police. Meyers introduced each station, followed by a reading from one of the students, though school trustee Gerald Kleisinger read the prayer at the first two stops. The group attracted a lot of attention, most noticeably at the museum on the corner of Albert St. and College Ave., one of the city's busiest intersections.

A few people on the hill, runners or walkers who were enjoying the view, stopped to watch when they realized what was happening. Miles Meyers, coordinator for religious education for the Regina Catholic School Board, said he was impressed when the people appeared to give some reverence to the students' activity.

After the cross was raised, Deshayes Grade 8 student Sam Stawarz played *Were You There* on his violin with the students singing along. "It was quite emo-

tional," said Meyers.

Harding was limp when they removed him from the cross. A sheet was placed over him and very reverently he was carried off. When it was done, school buses returned the students to their respective schools.

The idea for the re-enactment came from Matt Bresciani, a Grade 8 teacher at Deshayes, and Rob Csaba, a Grade 8 teacher at St. Dominic. The two were meeting with Meyers, discussing a retreat, when the idea was discussed and agreed to. "This is the first time we've done this," said Meyers. It came off so well that it may become an annual event.

The students' re-enactment was the only outdoor Stations of the Cross to be performed this year. What had become an annual Stations of the Cross held Good Friday through downtown Regina did not happen this year.

## Rivier Foundation fundraiser 'phenomenal'

By Brigid Lancaster

PRINCE ALBERT — The fourth annual Rivier Foundation Steak and Lobster Supper took place at the Prince Albert Exhibition Centre on March 12. A great number of people attended the event. The Grade 11 and 12 students of Rivier Academy came to work as volunteers.

The supper included a Chinese auction, a silent auction, a 50/50 draw and an ice cube contest. Two hundred ice cubes were placed in a cooler. Plastic diamonds had been frozen into 12 of them. Guests could purchase one cube for a dollar or three for five dollars. Those who received ice cubes containing plastic diamonds had their names entered in a draw to win a real

diamond worth \$500.

Each guest was given a choice between steak and lobster. The lobsters provided entertainment for the volunteers. One student nearly got sprayed trying to crack hers open. The boys played with theirs, and some were uncomfortable seeing food with faces.

After dinner, an office chair and a Roughriders jersey were auctioned off. The auction was followed by music and dancing. The singer was Rivier's own music teacher, Erika Rybinski. The volunteers involved in Rivier's Jazz Choir, Cassandra Rybinski and Brigid Lancaster, were called onstage to sing with Rybinski. The three sang an original called *Day Old Coffee*. Overall, the event was phenomenal.

## Teacher brings Great Big Crunch to staff and students

By Marie Graw

NORTH BATTLEFORD, Sask. — Acknowledging March as National Nutrition Month, students in the Light of Christ School Division joined the national initiative, The Great Big Crunch!

On March 10, over 1,500 students, staff and guests at the six LOCCS elementary schools joined students across Canada and took a big bite out of an apple, a healthy snack. The apples were supplied by local grocers in their support of students and healthy food choices.

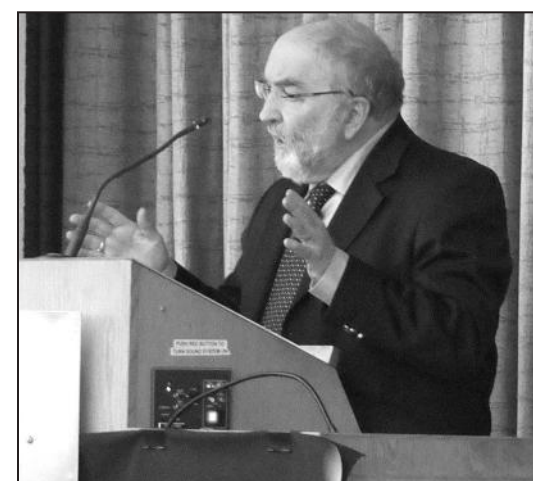
Local grocers adopted schools: Frazer's No Frills provided apples for Holy Family School; Discovery Co-op provided apples to Notre Dame School; École Monseigneur Blaise Morand's apples were provided by Sobey's; and St. Mary's School had their apples provided by Super A Grocery in Battleford. Hujber's Market in Spiritwood provided the apples for Rivier Elementary School, while Midwest Food Supplies and Delta Co-op provided apples to the students at St. Peter's.

The Great Big Crunch is a national initiative that local teacher Rhea Good came across at the Changing the Menu Conference in Montreal in November. The conference was the first-ever gathering of dietitians, nutritionists, politicians, teachers, cooks and non-profit organizations dedicated to improving the state of school food in Canada.

On hearing of this initiative, Cory Rideout, director of LOCCS, created the momentum by contacting all the elementary school principals. Very quickly, it became a community event for the Battlefords, for Unity and for Spiritwood.

Heading the initiative, Good involved her class and staff at John Paul II in the gathering, washing and delivery of the apples to local schools. In the spirit of stewardship, the activity did not stop once the crunching was done. Good and her crew collected the apple cores to be composted.

Good's original goal was to celebrate the joys of eating a healthy diet, including lots of fresh fruits and vegetables.



J. Berg

**THE GREAT FRIENDSHIP —** Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen: The Great Friendship was presented March 10 by guest lecturer Michael Higgins of Toronto at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon. "The friendship of Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen is one of the key spiritual friendships of the last century," said Higgins. "The philosopher and the psychologist had much in common: they shared a ministry of tenderness with the disabled; they advocated relentlessly for the curative and transformative power of genuine community; they stood for the perduring witness of Christian humanism." Higgins shared with the STM audience an exploration of this friendship and how through L'Arche relationships the two discovered an enlightening path to holiness.

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# Indigenous masculinities book launched

By Andréa Ledding

SASKATOON — Editors Drs. Robert Innes and Kim Anderson, professors in Indigenous Studies

at the Universities of Saskatchewan and Alberta, respectively, recently hosted a book launch of *Indigenous Men and Masculinities* at Little Bird Patisserie and

Café in Saskatoon.

The book brings together prominent thinkers from the Americas and New Zealand to explore the meaning of masculinity

and being a man, within traditions of gender equity and the sacred feminine through art and literature, sport, prisons, and gangs. The voices of indigenous male writers, traditional knowledge keepers, ex-gang members, war veterans, fathers, youth, two-spirited people, and indigenous men working to end violence against women are highlighted to offer a vision toward equitable societies that celebrate healthy and diverse masculinities with an ultimate goal to “rebuild healthy communities and healthy families,” said Anderson.

Two local contributors, Dr. Robert Henry and Allison Piché, shared on their chapters in the book, and their overall involvement in the field. Henry came from a background of working with gang and ex-gang members through a photo voice project for his PhD, collaborating with many members of STR8 UP and the work of Rev. André Poilvière, and so he returned to the men to write his chapter.

“The men created a mask to protect themselves from colonial violence,” explained Henry, who wrote about gangs and masculinity. “They perform a masculinity that protects them, and adopting a mask is a performance.”

He added that vulnerability helps males drop their masks and address underlying issues.

STR8 UP employee and MA student Piché spoke about colonial violence and prisons as structures that interrupt and harm healthy masculinity, speaking from her experiences teaching within the penal system with STR8 UP and Inspired Minds, and observing that the constant negative interruption and removal of men continues even within the prison system where some of her students are forcibly removed from her classes.

“Indigenous men experience violence, both as victims and as perpetrators,” noted Anderson, adding that they deal with similar burdens as indigenous women and people of colour, but include negative outcomes in the penal system, in education, and in high

rates of mortality. “‘Who is walking with our brothers?’ is a question we ask in the introduction, having both worked with the *Walking With Our Sisters* art installation and ceremony.”

She explained that many men feel abandoned, and there is importance in addressing and healing the masculine spirit as well as the feminine.

Colonialism has stripped both males and females of their natural communal authority as it existed pre-contact, and the balance that existed as well as the more equitable roles and overall community balance. In addition, there was more variance for both female and masculine performances, said Anderson. In colonial society, this variance is often replaced with very narrowly performed male dominance and patriarchal violence, a dysfunction that begins in the family and continues in the community through Indian-Act-style governance in a way that maintains oppression, both individually and collectively.

It is important to recognize successes and resilience, though, and tell the good stories of positive male influence, she noted. Contributors focus on areas of strength as well as making critiques of colonial impositions. She often tells stories of her uncles, father, and grandfather and the great men they were, despite struggling with colonial burdens and dysfunctions, including alcoholism. They still worked hard to carry out familial responsibilities and protect their families as best they could.

“Responsibility and identity are intimately connected in Indian country,” noted Anderson of male roles and resiliency.

Innes described the field as relatively new, giving a brief overview of how the book came to be, and how he became involved. An examination of masculinity through family responsibilities was a natural extension of his original work studying the extensive role of kinship ties through Cowessess First Nation.

## Candidate journeys toward priesthood

By Frank Flegel

ASSINIBOIA, Sask. — His journey to the priesthood began four years ago in Philippines and Sunday April 3, Arpee Urquico took the third step in that journey, with Winnipeg Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber accepting him as a candidate. It's the

serving his internship at St. Georges' Parish and wanted to take this third step in the church where he serves with Father Gerard Joy Montague.

“This is my first assignment and it's pretty important for me,” said Urquico in an interview with the PM.

He's always wanted to be a priest, he said, because he saw the priests and seminarians in Philippines and they were all smiling and seemed so happy and he wanted to be like that. He wanted to enter the seminary even before he finished high school, but his mother insisted he complete school first. He entered the Dominican

Albert Diocese, suggested he come to Saskatchewan as a “missionary.” Being a missionary appealed to him so he applied, came to Regina for a short while, then went to Edmonton for his theology education. He requested a small town for his year-long internship and was assigned to Assiniboia. “I think it is God's will that I am here and I am happy.”

Weisgerber's homily centred on the day's readings, which spoke of mercy. April 3 was Mercy Sunday. The archbishop said the meaning of the Gospel is to be in God's presence in Assiniboia today.

“We tend to mind our own business,” said the archbishop, “but God wants us to be there for others.”

He urged the congregation to know who are the poor among us and to be there for them. “The role of the priest is to make sure you do the work of Jesus. It is your role to share with others.”

After the homily, Urquico answered the call of the archbishop who said “The church is calling Arpee to be a priest. We accept and he is ready to go.”

Most of the prayers of petition were for the candidate.

Many of the congregation gathered in the church hall after mass for a potluck lunch.



Flegel

Arpee Urquico and Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber.

third step in that journey; the remaining two — ordination to the diaconate followed by ordination as a priest — will be completed sometime within about a year.

He is in Assiniboia, Sask.,

order and finished his philosophy studies and began theological studies soon after arriving in Canada four years ago.

His cousin, Rev. Roque Conception, a priest in the Prince

## Conference looks at common home

By Gertrude Rompré

SASKATOON — How do we transform our consciousness to care for our common home?

Dr. Michael Duggan explored this question at Beyond Silos: Prairie Views on Caring for our Common Home, a conference held March 11 - 12 at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

Duggan is a professor of religious studies and holds the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Mary's University in Calgary. He is also an STM alumnus.

The conference was designed to bring together speakers from diverse backgrounds to reflect on Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si'*.

Three themes from the encyclical were discussed: 1) Can technology save us? 2) How do we educate to care for our common home? 3) What does an ecology of daily life look like?

Speakers from different academic, cultural and religious perspectives modelled the type of dialogue called for by Pope Francis. Profound insights emerged in the process.

Dr. Philip Loring, from the U of S School of Environment and Sustainability, reminded participants that technology alone is not adequate to respond to the needs of the planet. He further agreed with Pope Francis' assessment that environmental problems are

intimately linked with social inequality and injustice.

Activist Erica Lee made the link between the environmental crisis and colonial violence, which continues today.

Dr. Michael Poellet drew parallels between *Laudato Si'* and the thought of Naomi Klein, while Dr. MJ Barrett challenged listeners to question those discourses that keep us from connecting to the earth.

Dr. Nettie Wiebe wove together

insights from her identity as a woman, a farmer, a Mennonite and an ethicist and challenged listeners to recognize the regenerative force of women.

Other speakers throughout the weekend included Dr. Chris Hrynkow, Janelle Delorme, Dr. Neil Alexander, Michael Carten and Sister Judy Schachtel, SMS.

The Beyond Silos conference was sponsored by the Dubé Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Thomas More College.



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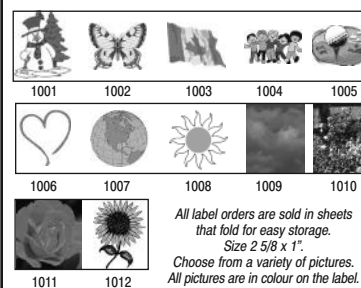
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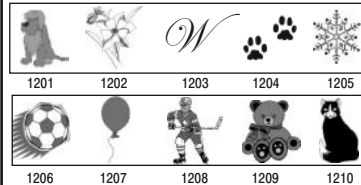
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# South By Southwest keeps it wondrous and weird

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Thank goodness for film festivals given the domination of theatre screens by huge noisy superhero franchises (Deadpool, Batman vs. Superman, the upcoming Captain America: Civil War) whose only point is commercial. Quality films, especially independents, need all the exposure they can get.

In its 30th year, Austin's South By Southwest Festival (SXSW) has grown into a huge cultural exposition and networking event. SXSW Interactive is at the cutting edge of cultural media and SXSW Music is one of the world's great musical showcases. SXSW Film now ranks among North America's leading film festivals having expanded, like Sundance, from small beginnings to become globally significant. Like Sundance it's also very strong on documentary selections. Fittingly, there is a "24 beats per second" category for music-themed films.

This year's festival from March 11 - 19 was energized by the vibrancy of Texas filmmaking, opening with the world premiere of Richard Linklater's **Everybody Wants Some!!** Linklater (Boyhood) is a pillar of the Austin film community and its most famous export. That was

narrative features that impressed and a few that provoked a more mixed reaction.

**Everybody Wants Some!!** (U.S. 2016, now in theatres, <http://www.everybodywantsomemovie.com/>)

Linklater's latest is no masterwork like Boyhood but it sports terrific ensemble acting delivering a highly entertaining look back at college days circa 1980. A semi-autobiographical followup of sorts to the high-school antics of Dazed and Confused, the central character, Jake (Blake Jenner), is a freshman at a south-east Texas college and a promising pitcher hoping to make its baseball team. The often raucous action takes place over a few days before classes start as Jake tries to fit in with an eclectic gang of guys and future teammates. Amid the pranks and competitions there's more going on than guys tooling around in cars trying to pick up girls. Jake belies the jock stereotype in making a soulful connection with an arts major, Beverly (Zoey Deutch). They share a moment that elevates the picture and suggests a youthful



G. Schmitz

**MIDNIGHT SPECIAL** — Jeff Nichols and the cast of **Midnight Special** at its North American premiere at the South By Southwest Film Festival in Austin, Texas, March 12, 2016.

blending of raw cinema verité and compelling hard-luck narrative.

**Midnight Special** (U.S. 2016, <http://www.midnightspecialmovie.com/>)

True to Austin's slogan to "keep it weird," writer-director Jeff Nichols (Take Shelter, Mud) serves up some supernatural strangeness in this haunting tale of an eight-year old boy from another world. Alton (Jaeden Lieberher) has been adopted as a "saviour" by a Texas cult led by Pastor Calvin Meyer (Sam Shepard). A few days before their expected rapturous "day of judgement" in March 2011 the boy is abducted by his biological father Roy (Michael Shannon) aided by off-duty Texas state trooper Lucas (Joel Edgerton). Their violent escape eventually reunites the boy with his mother Sarah (Kirsten Dunst). Not only does Alton possess explosive powers emanating from his eyes (shielded by protective goggles), he is being sought by the National Security Agency (NSA) for his apparent access to top-secret information. NSA investigating agent Paul Sevier (Adam Driver) plays a pivotal role in an escalating drama leading to a shootout with church pursuers and a military occupation. In this taut thriller, nothing can stop the cosmic event of a parallel universe made visible that will forever separate the boy from his parents.

**Chevalier** (Greece 2015)

Presented in the "festival favourites" category, this award-winning film by director/co-writer Athina Rachel Tsangari cleverly probes the vulnerable male egos of six men of varying ages, including two brothers, on a fishing boat in the Aegean Sea. To pass the time as they make their way back to port they engage in a series of competitions, the ultimate winner of which gets a signet chevalier ring. Exposing male vanities, rivalries and anxieties provides plenty of foibles

about which to smile, or wince, and apart from pride no one gets too hurt in the end.

**Under the Shadow** (U.K./Jordan/Qatar 2016)

Iranian writer-director Babak Anvari's debut feature, which premiered at Sundance in the midnight program, takes the horror-thriller genre to another level. Set during the real terrors of the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, it centres on a young woman, Shideh, denied a medical career for political activism, who is left to care for young daughter Dorsa while her physician husband Iraj is sent to frontline duty. Their apartment building shakes under Iraqi missile strikes until they are the only residents left. While Shideh first dismisses religious superstitions of invading malevolent "djinn" forces, the fears of her daughter, distraught over a favourite doll being taken, become increasingly real.

**Born to Be Blue** (Canada/U.K. 2015) and **Miles Ahead** (U.S. 2015)

These two biopics delve into the tortured careers of legendary jazz trumpet players whose artistic achievements were marred by addictions and personal tragedies. Writer-director Robert Budreau's **Born to be Blue** juggles between imagining the highs and lows of Chet Baker's career from his 1954 "Birdland" debut, to his travails as a junkie who abandons a wife and child, to his comeback following recovery from a brutal beating. Ethan Hawke is convincing as Baker who once played himself in a failed Dino de Laurentiis project, a misbegotten movie within a movie. In **Miles Ahead**, actor/director/co-writer Don Cheadle is equally good portraying the volatile character of Miles Davis (who had no time for Baker). The film mainly focuses on a five-year period in the 1970s when the erratic Davis quit performing, though pursued by a reporter claiming to be from Rolling Stone as well as by an impatient Columbia Records and an

unscrupulous promoter. More in a future column on movies about musicians.

**In a Valley of Violence** (U.S. 2016)

Ethan Hawke delivers another stirring star turn as Paul, an ex-soldier gunslinger, in writer-director Ti West's 1890s western. Accompanied by faithful canine companion Abby, Paul just wants to get away to Mexico until, stopping in a dusty frontier town, trouble finds him in the form of the hotheaded Gilly (James Ransone), son of the gruff marshal (John Travolta). Gilly's humiliation at Paul's hands leads to a savage nighttime attack that forces Paul to break his vow to give up killing, though in the final showdown it's a young woman who gives the saving coup de grace as witnessed by the bedraggled Irish priest Paul first encounters on the road.

**My Blind Brother** (U.S. 2016)

Winner of a "gamechanger" jury award, writer-director Sophie Goodheart's sprightly dramedy teases out the fraternal tension between Robbie (Adam Scott), who is legally blind but a star disabled athlete doted on by mom and dad, and brother Bill (Nick Kroll), his hapless sighted helper growing increasingly resentful in the shade of awesome Robbie's "Out of Sight" foundation triumphs. Robbie also claims the attentions of Rose (Jenny Slate) with whom Bill is in love. The triangle is an accident waiting to happen but, after averting disaster during a swimming marathon and suffering further mishap, it seems the bruises, physical and emotional, may heal.

**Jean of the Joneses** (Canada 2016)

In writer-director Stella Meghie's Brooklyn story, Jean (Taylour Paige) gets implicated in the secrets of her large multi-generational African-American family after breaking up with her white



followed by the North American premiere of Austin-based Jeff Nichols' **Midnight Special**. SXSW premiered two superb documentaries by Austin-based director Keith Maitland (**Tower, A Song For You: The Austin City Limits Story**) I'll discuss in a subsequent column. The festival also presented the Sundance documentary **Richard Linklater: Dream is Destiny**, co-directed by SXSW co-founder Louis Black, which I'll explore further in a column on Linklater's work.

I've previously reviewed Canadian Jean-Marc Vallée's just-released **Demolition** (<http://www.foxsearchlight.com/demolition/>), which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival last September. Notwithstanding the cool critical reception it received there, the movie's star Jake Gyllenhaal, who spoke at SXSW, delivers another excellent performance in the demanding role of an unhappy investment banker driven to deconstruct his life after the shock of losing his wife in a tragic accident. Indeed **Demolition** was chosen the audience favourite in the SXSW "Headliners" category.

The following highlight other

passage into adulthood that, for all its rowdy eruptions, brims with possibility.

**Bodkin Ras** (Netherlands 2016, <http://bodkinras.com/>)

I was really taken with this unusual and highly effective insertion of a fictional storyline into an arresting non-fiction setting. **Bodkin Ras** (Sohrab Bayat) is a young Dutch man, a fugitive from serious legal troubles at home, who arrives in the depressed northeastern Scots town of Forres. Bodkin forms an ill-fated relationship with Lily (Lily Szramko), the only other fictional element, a young woman as desperate to leave as he is to find temporary sanctuary. The townspeople Bodkin encounters play themselves, from "Red James," an ex-con philosopher reflecting on evil, to the alcoholic Eddie, tormented by the suicides of two sons, with whom Bodkin finds work building fences. Many gather daily at the local watering hole The Eagle ironically dubbed "The Chapel." Writer-director Kaweh Modiri spent years gaining their trust and the result is a brilliant

— OTHER FILMS, page 12



# We have conflicted feelings about celebrities

By Caitlin Ward

Many years ago I was watching a special live performance of The Doors on television. In retrospect, I'm not sure why that was happening. I was never pensive enough as a teenager to go through a phase where I loved Jim Morrison, and I was never patient enough to listen to The Doors' music. About 30 seconds into any of their songs, I'm thinking, "why is this organ intro so long?" or "do we really need this much in the way of ambient nature sounds?" or "FOR GOD'S SAKE, WHAT ARE WE DOING WHEN THE MUSIC'S OVER?"

For the record, we're turning out the lights. Why, I'm not sure. I've never gotten that far into the song.

However I personally feel about The Doors, though, the band clearly still has many fervent fans. They had more than enough to warrant a tribute on VH1, anyway, with surviving band members playing Doors classics, and a series of special guests covering Morrison's vocal duties.

I remember the show less because of the performance and more because of a question from the audience toward the end of the set. And again, I don't remember

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the question so much as I remember the statement that preceded it. This Doors fan, who was likely not even born when Jim Morrison died, began his question to keyboardist Ray Manzarek with this: "obviously you probably miss Jim as much as all of us do."

As a teenager, I cringed to watch Manzarek's vaguely sarcastic but still kind nod as he rearranged something on his keyboard and refused to make eye contact with the young man until the question was finished. It just seemed such a bizarre statement to make, and I could not believe this audience member did not have enough self-awareness to recognize that his sadness could in no way match the sadness of one of Morrison's best friends at losing him. Liking — even loving — someone's music is a bit different than co-founding a band with that person, touring with him for years, and asking him to act as best man at your wedding. Anyone can miss Jim, sure, but no Doors fans should rightfully think it was possible they would miss him more than Manzarek did in that moment. They didn't know him at all, let alone as well as Manzarek did.

I guess it's a tricky thing when a musician or actor whose work means a lot to you dies. It's easy to feel a close connection with a musician who speaks to you in a meaningful way, and to feel the loss of it when that person is gone.

It's something I've been thinking about recently when I read that Malik Izaak Taylor, a.k.a. the Five Foot Assassin, a.k.a. Phife

Dawg, had died of complications related to diabetes. He was a founding member of A Tribe Called Quest, one of my favourite groups. He was only 45.

It was a strange moment. I was at work, having a conversation with my officemate as we got ready to leave for the day. I glanced down at the computer to see that the news had come up on the screen: Phife Dawg, 1970-2016. Rest in Power.

So far as I know, my officemate has no particular affection for early '90s alternative hip hop, so I didn't say anything at the time. I didn't cry, and I wasn't depressed. But I wished that I had just taken the plunge and gone to see Tribe in 2013 when I had the chance. I listened to their first and second albums that night, and I communicated my distress via

Facebook, as one is wont to do in this age of social media. And then, I was distressed at how few of my friends seemed to care that he'd died. I realized they must have terrible taste in hip hop not to know this was a tragedy worth mourning. Where was the press's outpouring of grief for this deeply important actor in the evolution of hip hop?

Well, in Canada at least, the press were having mixed feelings about the death of Rob Ford, not sure how to address the death of a man to whom they'd shown little but contempt. Several newspapers did impressive if not slightly hypocritical about-faces, going from portraying him as a villainous buffoon in life to an endearing everyman in death. His reputation as a crack-smoking madman of a mayor took a back seat to this

new and heretofore unrealized image of him as a fixer who deeply cared about the taxpayers.

There's a strange irony in the way society treats the famous. On the one hand, people can be dreadfully dehumanized while they're alive, and the press can say all sorts of terrible things about them without reference to the fact that they're mocking or censoring or disempowering a real person with real feelings and a family. On the other hand, though, when that same person dies there will be an outpouring of grief and pain and feeling from the same papers who mocked and censured in the first place. How much we individuals get swept up in that is up to us, I guess. But either way, we're ambivalent about just how human we want our celebrities to be.

## Other films to watch for from SXSW festival

Continued from page 11

boyfriend and moving back among reluctant relatives. The biggest is triggered when a long-absent grandfather arrives on her grandmother's doorstep and promptly expires of a heart attack. It turns out he had another daughter besides Jean's mother and two aunts. A hesitant romance between Jean and the paramedic who comes for the body becomes the best thing about the ripples that ensue.

This domestic ensemble was more satisfying than the Canadian selection in competition, writer-director Joe Klein's **The Other Half** (<http://theotherhalfmovie.com/>), a brooding Montreal-based romance between a mournful man who's lost a brother and a bipolar woman, although the real-life couple of Tatiana Maslany and Welsh actor Tom Cullen do good work in the principal roles.

### The Arbalest (U.S. 2016)

The recipient of the jury prize among 10 narratives in competition is a controversial choice that definitely keeps it weird. In writer-director Adam Pinney's black comedy, Foster Kalt's innocent children's toy invention is merely the entrée to a spiral from falling for a woman, Sylvia, "who hates him," to a demented denouement of deadly conse-

quences. After a misappropriated "Kalt Cube" brings him the wages of unearned fortune, in which Sylvia shares, the reclusive Kalt is pursued by a media crew looking for a story while another game is afoot with Sylvia and her burly husband. Let's just say it ends with a mystery "toy" in a briefcase and a bang.

Violence was a troubling theme running through some other selections I saw: **I Am Not a Serial Killer** (Ireland/U.K.) about a death-obsessed teen who helps his undertaker mother; **Black** (Belgium) about interracial gang conflict in Brussels; **War on Everyone** (U.K.) about a pair of rogue New Mexico cops who emerge from a bloodbath to enjoy the spoils of their war; **The Trust** (U.S.) about another pair of corrupt cops whose big score proves to be fatal.

I wasn't able to get in to see **American Fable**, a surrealist story centred on the world of a young Midwestern farm girl. The film had a lot of buzz for its cinematography, not surprising considering that writer-director Anne Hamilton is a protégé of Texan master Terrence Malick (whose next feature *Weightless* is set in Austin). Fingers crossed that this and other SXSW selections will have life beyond the festival screens.



Sony Pictures Classics

**DAVIS BIOPIC** — Don Cheadle stars as jazz great Miles Davis in the film *Miles Ahead*, which offers an intimate snapshot of its subject's life by focusing on a specific period of Davis' legacy.

## Books

### Prepare for 'out-of-the-box thinking' with fascinating book

**MAKING ALL THINGS NEW:** Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness, by Ilia Delio, OSF. New York: Orbis Books, 2015. Softcover, 232 pages; \$25. Reviewed by Edwin Buettner.

This book takes the reader on a dizzying cosmological ride from the time of the "big bang" up to our current age, and then projects into the near and distant future, all solidly within the faith context of the Body of Christ. Those who undertake to read this fascinating work need to be prepared for some out-of-the-box thinking. For example, the scope of the book ranges from the macro (universal) to the micro (individual person) levels. Yet the author would be likely to question such a statement and remind the reader that consciousness is not so easily pigeonholed. She might suggest the possibility that every human's consciousness or mind has the potential to encompass the wholeness of the cosmos (i.e., a holon).

Ilia Delio is an American Franciscan Sister whose breadth and depth of academic credentials are singularly impressive. Her initial training is in pharmacology, including a doctoral degree in the area of neuroimmunology. Delio also holds a doctorate in historical theology. Small wonder that this author is equally capable of explicating complex scientific concepts as she is with exploring the depths of the human soul. Delio's bold and creative thinking integrates a variety of ways of knowing, inviting the reader to accompany her on exploring exciting possibilities, to "wake up, open (your) eyes and reach for the stars to create a new world."

The notion of "catholicity" is central to this book, though not only in the more circumscribed sense of the Catholic Church. In the first chapter, Delio delves into the deeper meanings of the term,

connecting it to the Greek idea of wholeness: "awareness of the one amid the many through the human person . . . (who) . . . unifies many parts." From this point of view, a truly "catholic" Christianity seeks to integrate its teachings with what science is learning about the cosmos, i.e., the "big picture" of how and why we came to be. Furthermore, the individual Christian must strive to live a life that is geared toward maximal integration with reality: "We are to focus our minds on the whole and choose the whole for the sake of abundant life."

Though the author draws on a wide range of sources to support her thinking, the work of the Jesuit paleontologist, Rev. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, figures prominently in this book. Delio's evolutionary perspective is heavily influenced by de Chardin's assertion that consciousness has been evolving over time, much as the cosmos itself. Delio sees Christ as present "in evolution . . . (and) . . . as the goal of evolution." For Christians, the universal "Christ consciousness" was revealed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Those unfamiliar with current developments in particle physics and cosmology may find the first few chapters somewhat daunting. However, when Delio begins to articulate relationships between Christianity and current scientific developments, a beautifully integrated picture of reality emerges. Perceived tensions between faith and reason give way to a sense of unity and "catholicity." For Delio, there cannot be real conflict between the two — truth is one.



# Resurrection stories shape who we are as a people

## Liturgy and Life

Gertrude Rompré



The stories we tell ourselves matter. Remember the old adage, “you are what you eat”? Well, an even truer phrase might be, “we are the stories we tell ourselves.” That’s why it’s so important for us to listen to the Scripture readings during this Easter season. These stories tell us who we are. And, if we truly are the stories we tell about ourselves, that means that we are an Easter people, formed by the cross, yes, but never defined by it.

In the liturgical year there are 50 days of Easter and one Good Friday. We tell ourselves the story of the Passion on two days — Passion Sunday and Good Friday — but proclaim the story of Christ’s triumph over death for over seven weeks! That’s because the stories of the resurrection

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are the stories that have shaped who we are as a people. Without the resurrection, the cross has no enduring meaning. It’s simply another stanza in the endless litany of human suffering and violence. It’s Easter that changes things and it’s Easter that shapes us a people. We are people infused with hope because we are assured that death (or suffering, or violence, or terror, or oppression) will never have the final say.

But I wonder if, as Christians, we fully grasp the radical nature of our Easter claims? Or, do we simply live as people of the cross, bearing the weight of our human condition without fully claiming the inheritance Easter promises us?

**Fifth Sunday  
of Easter  
April 24, 2016**

**Acts 14:21b-27  
Psalm 145  
Revelation 21:1-5a  
John 13:1, 31-33a, 34-35**

Is that why our churches are full on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday but half empty on Easter morning? Resurrection faith, Easter faith, is a hard sell. It’s hard to believe what Christ has revealed through his life, death and resurrection. It’s easier for us to believe in our nothingness (that we are dust) than to claim our birthright as sons and daughters of God. It’s easier to identify with the forces that lead to Jesus’ death on the cross. But truly believing in the resurrection, or in the words of the

Book of Revelation, that “death will be no more, and mourning and crying and pain will be no more,” that truly requires a leap of faith.

So we need to tell ourselves the stories of the resurrection over and over again. We need to proclaim our gladness and sing our songs and bless God’s name for God’s wondrous works. We need to remember that our focus is on the 50 days of Easter and that our hope outweighs the crosses we bear. Admittedly, that’s not easy. We know suffering all too well and evil provides ample evidence of its existence.

One of my favourite U2 songs is titled, *One*. Its refrain repeats the phrase, “We get to carry each other, we get to carry each other.” That’s how we keep the faith as Easter people. When we are in a place of suffering, we are not alone. Like the disciples in the Book of Acts, we “strengthen each other’s souls” and encourage each other to “continue in the faith.” We carry each other so that the sum total of our faith as a community outweighs the temptation to let death have the final word. We keep on telling each other the stories of our hope. We get to carry each other.

In this week’s liturgy, the collect pleads, “Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us.” Allowing the mystery of Christ’s life, death and resurrection to live in us is what defines us as a people. During this Easter season and beyond, may we continue to tell each other the stories of our hope and carry each other when needed. The stories we tell ourselves matter. They tell us who we are.

## The power of prayer and ritual inside our helplessness

### In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



In the movie based upon Jane Austen’s classic novel *Sense and Sensibility*, there’s a poignant scene where one of her young heroines, suffering from acute pneumonia, is lying in bed hovering between life and death. A young man, very

much in love with her, is pacing back and forth, highly agitated, frustrated by his helplessness to do anything of use, and literally jumping out of his skin. Unable to contain his agitation any longer, he goes to the girl’s mother and asks

what he might do to be helpful. She replies that there’s nothing he can do, the situation is beyond them. Unable to live with that response he says to her: “Give me some task to do, or I shall go mad!”

We’ve all had the feeling at times when in the face of a dire situation we need to do something, but there’s nothing we can do, no magic wand we can wave to make things better.

But there is something we can do.

I recall an event in my own life several years ago: I was teaching summer school in Belgium when, late one evening, just as I was get-

ting ready for bed, I received an email that a two friends of mine, a man and a woman recently engaged, had been involved that day in a fatal car accident. He was killed instantly and she was in serious condition in hospital.

I was living by myself in a university dorm, thousands of miles from where this all happened, and thousands of miles from anyone with whom I could share this sorrow. Alone, agitated, panicked and desperately needing to do something but being absolutely helpless to do anything, I was literally driven to my knees. Not being able to do anything else, I picked up the prayer book that contains the *Office of the Church* and prayed, by myself, the vespers prayer for the dead. When I’d finished, my sorrow hadn’t gone away, my friend was still dead, but my panic had subsided, as had my desperate need to do something (when there was nothing I could do).

My prayer that night gave me some sense that the young man who’d died that day was all right, safe somewhere in a place beyond us, and it also relieved me of the agitation and panicked pressure of needing to do something in the face of agitated helplessness. I’d done the only thing I could do, the thing that’s been done in the face of helplessness and death since the beginning of time — I’d given myself over to prayer and to the rituals of the community and the faith of the community.

It’s these, prayer and ritual, which we have at our disposal at those times when, like the man in *Sense and Sensibility*, we need to do something or we will go mad. That’s not only true for heavy, sorrowful times when loved ones are

sick or dying or killed in accidents and we need to do something but there’s nothing we can do. We also need ritual to help us celebrate happy times properly. What should we do when our own children are getting married? Among other things, we need to celebrate the ritual of marriage because no wedding planner in the world can do for us what the ritual, especially the church ritual, of marriage can do. Weddings, just like funerals, are a prime example of where we need ritual to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Sadly, today, we are a culture that for the most part is ritually tone-deaf. We don’t understand ritual and therefore mostly don’t know what to do when we need to be doing something but we don’t know what to do. That’s a fault, a painful poverty, in our understanding.

The Trappist monks who were martyred in Algeria in 1996 were first visited by the Islamic extremists who would later kidnap and kill them, on Christmas Eve, just as the monks were preparing to celebrate Christmas mass. After some initial threats, their eventual murderers left. The monks were badly shaken. They huddled together as a group for a time to digest what had just happened. Then, not knowing what else to do in the face of this threat and their fear, they sang the Christmas mass. In the words of their abbot: “It’s what we had to do. It’s all we could do! It was the right thing.” He shared too, as did a number of the other monks (in their diaries), that they found this, celebrating the ritual of mass in the face of their fear and panic, something that calmed their fear and brought some steadiness and regularity back into their lives.

There’s a lesson to be learned here, one that can bring steadiness and calm into our lives at those times when we desperately need to do something, but there’s nothing to do.

Ritual: it’s what we have to do. It’s all we can do! It’s the right thing.



### St. Angela Merici Residence

in Saskatoon requires a permanent part-time

### Clinical Care Co-Ordinator

to begin as soon as possible 0.6 FTE (24 hours/week). There may be opportunity in future to increase hours. Salary to commensurate with skills and experience.

St. Angela Merici Residence is a retirement home for primarily, but not exclusively, members of the Ursuline Sisters. It provides care for Sisters who are elderly or infirm, recovery for those who need convalescing, and a centre of welcome for guests.

**General Description:** Reporting to the Administrator, and in communication with the Sister Co-ordinator, the Clinical Care Co-ordinator facilitates a caring, compassionate, community, in the tradition of the Ursuline Sisters. The Clinical Care Co-ordinator provides appropriate clinical interventions to residents, clinical leadership and direction to care staff and, working with the leadership team, facilitates appropriate resources and ensures that the processes required to provide care in a safe, effective, and efficient manner are in place.

#### Experience:

- Minimum five years experience in care of the elderly
- Minimum three years experience in management associated with care of the elderly

#### Required Qualifications:

- Current registration in good standing with SRNA
- Current certification in CPR, first aid and TLR
- Current criminal record check
- Valid driver’s licence

#### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Demonstrable skills in diplomacy, tact and leadership
- Highly effective communication and interpersonal skills
- An understanding of religious community life is an asset

Please reply in confidence to: Theresa Winterhalt, Administrator; St. Angela Merici Residence, 125 Cree Cres.; Saskatoon, SK S7K 7J1; with your resumé by **April 27, 2016**. email: stangmerici@sasktel.net

*We thank all who apply, but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.*

*Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website: [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com). Follow Father Ron on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser](http://www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser)*









CNS/Rich Kalonick, Catholic Extension

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS —** A religious sister dances and sings with children at a camp for migrant farmworkers in the Diocese of Kalamazoo, Mich. World Day of Prayer for Vocations is April 17, 2016.

## The Church, Mother of Vocations: a message from Pope Francis

*An excerpt from Pope Francis on the occasion of the 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations*

### Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is my great hope that, during the course of this Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, all the baptized may experience the joy of belonging to the church and rediscover that the Christian vocation, just like every particular vocation, is born from within the People of God, and is a gift of divine mercy. The church is the house of mercy, and it is the "soil" where vocations take root, mature and bear fruit.

For this reason, on the occasion of the 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations, I invite all of you to reflect upon the apostolic community, and to give thanks for the role of the community in each person's vocational journey. In the *Bull of Indiction for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy*, I recalled the words of the venerable Saint Bede, describing the call of Saint Matthew: "*Miserando atque eligendo*" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 8). The Lord's merciful action forgives our sins and opens us to the new life which takes shape in the call to discipleship and mission. Each vocation in the church has its origin in the compassionate gaze of Jesus. Conversion and vocation are two sides of the same coin, and continually remain interconnected throughout the whole of the missionary disciple's life.

Blessed Paul VI, in his exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, described various steps in the process of evangelization. One of these steps is belonging to the Christian community (cf. no. 23), that community from which we first received the witness of faith and the clear proclamation of the Lord's mercy.

This incorporation into the Christian community brings with it all the richness of ecclesial life, particularly the sacraments. Indeed, the church is not only a place in which we believe, but it is also an object of our faith; it is for this reason that we profess in the Credo: "I believe in the church."

The call of God comes to us by means of a mediation which is communal. God calls us to become a part of the church and, after we have reached a certain maturity within it, he bestows on us a specific vocation. The vocational journey is undertaken together with the brothers and sisters whom the Lord has given to us: it is a con-vocation. The ecclesial dynamism of the call is an antidote to indifference and to individualism. It establishes the communion in which indifference is vanquished by love, because it demands that we go beyond ourselves and place our lives at the service of God's plan, embracing the historical circumstances of his holy people.

On this day dedicated to prayer for vocations, I urge all the faithful to assume their responsibility for the care and discernment of vocations. . . . Vocations are born within the church. From the moment a vocation begins to become evident, it is necessary to have an adequate "sense" of the church. No one is called exclusively for a particular region, or for a group or for an ecclesial movement, but rather for the church and for the world. "A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God's holy and faithful people for the good of all." In responding to God's

call, young people see their own ecclesial horizon expand; they are able to consider various charisms and to undertake a more objective discernment. In this way, the community becomes the home and the family where vocations are born. Candidates gratefully contemplate this mediation of the community as an essential element for their future. They learn to know and to love their brothers and sisters who pursue paths different from their own; and these bonds strengthen in everyone the communion which they share.

Vocations grow within the church. In the course of formation, candidates for various vocations need to grow in their knowledge of the ecclesial community, overcoming the limited perspectives that we all have at the beginning. To that end, it is helpful to undertake some apostolic experience together with other members of the community, for example: in the company of a good catechist, to communicate the Christian message; together with a religious community, to experience the evangelization of the peripheries sharing in the life of the cloister, to discover the treasure of contemplation; in contact with missionaries, to know more closely the mission *ad gentes*; and in the company of diocesan priests, to deepen one's experience of pastoral life in the parish and in the diocese. For those who are already in formation, the ecclesial community always remains the fundamental formational environment, toward which one should feel a sense of gratitude.

Vocations are sustained by the church. After definitive commitment, our vocational journey within the church does not come to an end, but it continues in our willingness to serve, our perseverance

and our ongoing formation. The one who has consecrated his life to the Lord is willing to serve the church wherever it has need. . . .

Among those involved in pastoral activity, priests are especially important. In their ministry, they fulfil the words of Jesus, who said: "I am the gate of the sheepfold . . . I am the good shepherd" (Jn 10:7, 11). The pastoral care of vocations is a fundamental part of their ministry. Priests accompany those who are discerning a vocation, as well as those who have already dedicated their lives to the service of God and of the community.

All the faithful are called to appreciate the ecclesial dynamism of vocations, so that communities of faith can become, after the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, like a mother's womb which welcomes the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35-38). The motherhood of the church finds expression in constant prayer for vocations and in the work of educating and accompanying all those who perceive God's call. This motherhood is also expressed through a careful selection of candidates for the ordained ministry and for the consecrated life. Finally, the church is the mother of vocations in her continual support of those who have dedicated their lives to the service of others.

We ask the Lord to grant to all those who are on a vocational

journey a deep sense of belonging to the church; and that the Holy Spirit may strengthen among pastors, and all of the faithful, a deeper sense of communion, discernment and spiritual fatherhood and motherhood.

Father of mercy, who gave your Son for our salvation and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit, grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous, which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young the desire to consecrate themselves to



CNS/Paul Haring

you and to the work of evangelization. Sustain these communities in their commitment to offer appropriate vocational catechesis and ways of proceeding toward each one's particular consecration. Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment, so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth. May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus, intercede for each Christian community, so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God.



# Ursuline Sister finds home on The Home Quarter

By Marian Noll, OSU

WYNYARD, Sask. — The Home Quarter — the very words evoke a nostalgia for years past, when our forebears came from many lands to settle in Saskatchewan. Every adult male could file for a homestead, 160 acres of land, for \$10.

These prairie homesteads — home quarters — were settled by numerous farmers — the parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents of today's generation.

I currently live most of the year as a volunteer on a seven-quarter farm near Wynyard, Sask. This farm was made available to Farmland Legacies some 10 years ago. My congregation, the Ursulines of Bruno, along with the Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, United Church and Anglican dioceses of the province, was instrumental in founding Farmland Legacies, an ecumenical charitable organization, in 1996.

The quarter of land where the farmyard is (NW19-33-15W2nd) is called The Home Quarter.

The Home Quarter aims to be a model for sustainable land use and agriculture. Through a grant from Heifer International Canada, Farmland Legacies has developed a growing herd of beef cattle, some of which are used to support Saskatchewan food banks. As food costs soar and unemployment rises, more people find that

the only way to feed their families is by using the food banks.

Farmland Legacies is the only organization in Canada to grow and provide grass-fed, grass-finished beef to clients of the food banks. This charitable work follows closely the teachings of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*: protecting the environment, sustaining land and providing food for the hungry.

In his lenten message the Holy Father, emphasizing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, begs us to show mercy to others as God has shown mercy to us. "This will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty, and to enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy," he says.

As an Ursuline of Bruno, I was involved in education for much of my earlier life, whether in a public school classroom, in one of our private academies or as an associate editor of The Prairie Messenger. Congregational leadership added another element of experience. But, born and raised a farm kid, I find ministry at The Home Quarter most fulfilling in these days of my aging.

I don't help much any more raising and maintaining the cattle herd, but I do what I can in the garden. We have planted a fairly extensive orchard, just now in its

first years, for a U-pick and eventually food bank donations, and there is much room between the trees and between the rows for garden vegetables.

With little effort, I grew some 200 pounds of carrots for our local food bank, and could just as easily provide fresh vegetables like squash and potatoes in season.

Upon reflection, I find that living within the seasonal cycles mirrors for me the cycle of life itself. We are born, we grow, we do what we can, in myriad ways, to help others, and we die.

Every day in the growing season is a new miracle. We need the spring rains to stimulate grass growth to feed the cattle and to grow the winter hay crop. We need warmth so the cattle can birth and nourish their young in favourable weather. Sun, rain, wind — all are close to the heart of life on a farm.

Sunshine in blossom time will provide fruit crops, while rain in the wrong season can be devastating. And if the bees die off, so will many of the foods we take for granted.

I find great joy in welcoming visitors to The Home Quarter. Some come just to see, to look around; others come to do volunteer work or for a time of rest and reflection.

I receive intense spiritual nourishment here at the farm. Living in touch with nature creates in me a deepening awareness



Denise Durocher

**SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT** — Marian Noll, OSU, lives most of the year as a volunteer on a seven-quarter farm near Wynyard, Sask. Living in touch with nature is a source of great spiritual nourishment, says Noll.

of the presence of God. This is home. I find here a harmony and a simplicity of life that nurtures

body, mind and spirit.

Learn more at [farmlandlegacies.org](http://farmlandlegacies.org)

## Serra Foundation of Canada offers priests their day in the sun

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

God first taught humanity the importance of rest — when he created the universe, God rested on the seventh day and saw that it was all good.

Just as God needed time for rest, so must priests find the time to step back from their ministry and see the good.

This is why the Serra Foundation of Canada has launched a new program for priests in the Archdiocese of Toronto called the Serra Priests Florida Retreat Program.

George Damiani, chair of the program, said that Serra Canada has created a great opportunity through the program to give Toronto clergy their well-deserved rest.

"They're working day and night. They're working 24/7 and this is an opportunity for them to get some rest and retreat," he said.

For \$60 per night, the program provides Toronto priests access to two designated guest rooms in the St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Boynton Beach, Florida, at any time of the year, to spend a few days on vacation.

The St. Vincent de Paul Seminary is a newly renovated seminary owned by the seven dioceses in Florida. It is located on a private 28-hectare property near Florida's Atlantic coast with a private lake and a variety of amenities, including a gym and an Olympic-sized pool.

"It's a wonderful place," said

Rev. Peter Lackmanec, pastor at Our Lady of Annunciation Parish in Richmond Hill. "It's kind of like the Taj Mahal of seminaries."

Lackmanec was one the first priests to visit the seminary through the program. He said the program is "extremely important" because due to parish duties, not many priests can take a day off. For those that can get a day off, they are working in their ministry during all hours of the day, but it's still six days a week, with modest

pay. Because of the program, priests have an encouraging and affordable option for a holiday and much-needed rejuvenation.

"In order for us to do our ministry properly, we need to be rested up and we need to take our holidays," he said. "It's a great opportunity and it's a nice peaceful place, as well."


Though the program was created for rest and retreat for priests, it is not necessarily a program for spiritual retreat. Rev. Edwin Gonsalves, rector at Toronto's St.

Augustine's Seminary, said the program is a wonderful vacation place that is also within the context of prayer and reflection in a religious environment.


"You get to see Florida and you can enjoy the beaches, but you also have the wonderful grounds there just to get away and reflect on your ministry as a

priest," said Gonsalves. "Seeing where God is leading you or even what needs conversion, asking God to strengthen us and restore us."

The program officially launched in December. Damiani hopes priests take advantage of this program to renew themselves to better carry out their religious duties.



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# Father's faith spoke to Lougen about God's love

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Superior General of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Rev. Louis Lougen found himself drawn by the love of God the Father to become a missionary.

Lougen, who was in Ottawa March 15 to receive an honorary doctorate from Saint Paul University, said one of his first inklings of that love occurred when he was three or four years old, and walked into his father's room to kiss him goodnight.

He found his father, "a big, strong policeman who had been a Marine in World War II," kneeling at his bedside, saying his prayers. "That image touched me," he said. "It spoke to me of God, something about God in my life as a father."

Born in Buffalo, New York, in 1953, Lougen was one of five boys in a family of six children. His mother worked as a cook. Even though she was extremely busy working and raising her children, the "rosary was always in her hands."

But Lougen's vocation did not crystalize until he was in a high school run by the Oblates.

In May of 1969, at a school mass, an Oblate priest who had gone off to do a mission trip to Pennsylvania among the coal miners in Appalachia gave a homily in which he said, "These families need priests or brothers to walk with them, to remind them of God's love for them in their poverty and to help them have a better life."

After that homily Lougen realized, "That's what I want to do. I want to be a priest for the poor. That's how I want to give my life."

The desire was reinforced when he heard other Oblates' stories of the mission field in Brazil and Japan, he said. He also found himself attracted to the Oblates brotherly and family spirit.

Though he struggled with the usual adolescent "misgivings, and growing pains" and a lack of a good self-image, that "homily was the light bulb went on from God that is what I want you do."

In 1970, at age, 17, he entered the juniorate to start his college studies. In November of that year he had a profound experience he described as "a little supernatural."

It was a First Friday, and he had gone to the chapel to say his prayers. "There I had a very deep, personal experience of God's love



**HONORARY DOCTORATE** — Saint Paul University Chancellor Archbishop Terrence Prendergast (left) and Saint Paul University Rector Chantal Beauvais present Oblate Superior General Rev. Louis Lougen with an honorary doctorate in Ottawa in March.

for me, even though sometimes I didn't feel adequate, or I could do this." Even though he struggled with "feelings of insecurity," the experience of God's love made him realize "what was important in life, not so much what I can or can't do, or what I know or don't know but knowing God's love and being able to share that with other people. That was what being a missionary was all about." That powerful experience during the novitiate prompted him to develop a life of prayer and a relationship with God.

He then entered the novitiate in 1972, what he termed the "boot camp of religious life." He described it as "a wonderful year; a hard year."

During that time, they studied the documents of the Second Vatican Council. He recalled the hope and joy they reflected, especially in the universal call to holiness, and the hopes of the church to bring justice to the world.

Lougen then went on to study at the Oblate College of the Northeast in Washington, D.C., where he took two years of philosophy and four years of theology. At this time, however, people were beginning to leave religious life. By the time he finished his studies, the cohort he had started with had been reduced to four men. "People were not entering anymore but people were leaving," he said.

In 1976, in preparation for his final vows, he asked God for "the grace to be a missionary." After he was ordained a deacon in 1978, he had his first experience in the mission field, in the *favelas* of Brazil.

The culture shock he experienced had nothing to do with the food or the people he met. "It was the church that was so different," he said. He went to his first mass, which was celebrated in Portuguese. Right afterward, the people moved all the chairs into a circle. Some of the men were smoking in the church and talking about arranging a workers' strike. "I'm at this first mass and I'm shocked! What's going on here?" he said.

But he came to realize the church represented the only place where people were free to talk about Brazil's military dictatorship and how to change it.

"Little by little I began to see this wonderful church welcoming the poor, and supporting the poor on a journey looking for freedom for the people of the country," he said.

He was in São Paulo, a city of 18 million, where the poor lived on the margins, in *favelas* where there were no roads only dirt paths, no sewerage or running water. People were organizing to try to get better housing, electric lights and generally improve their lives, he said.

At the time the price of rice and beans was skyrocketing so a

group of mostly women organized a demonstration, taking their empty pots and spoons to the plaza by the cathedral, with plans to beat the pots at a prearranged time. This crowd of mostly women, with some men, encountered tanks, police with shields and hundreds of police dogs, he said. As the people entered the plaza, the police started throwing gas bombs into the crowd. The cathedral was normally closed at that time, but its doors were flung open and tens of thousands of people squeezed inside for protection from the police.

The first words that came from the cardinal were "The kingdom of God is our only hope," Lougen said.

"The church was an ark of salvation quite literally," he said. That image reinforced in his mind the notion that "the church is a church of the poor, with the poor, for the poor," he said.

Lougen returned to Washington, D.C., to be ordained a priest, and then returned to Brazil as a missionary in the São Paulo Oblate province.

He found himself inspired by the faith he discovered among the poor, even those with terribly broken lives.

Not long after his return to Brazil, police murdered 12 young men in the *favela*, but the families were too afraid to bury them, for fear the police would target them, too, he said. So a woman called Maria Baixinha, "Little Maria," went door to door collecting what little she could, and eventually was

able to buy the coffins for the men so Lougen could celebrate their funeral. It was an act of courage on her part and on the peoples' part to attend this funeral, he said.

I asked her, "How do you keep going?" considering she was living in dire poverty, with problems in her family, living surrounded by violence. "It's the Holy Spirit, don't you know!" she replied.

The people in the *favelas* "looked after us," he said. When he had problems with his back, they took over the house, cooking and cleaning. There were beautiful relationships among the people, even if by most standards they would not be considered good Catholics, not married in the church and so on. But there was something holy, and good in a human way about them, and in the way they helped each other in poverty, he said.

Every Sunday night, a group would gather to pray the rosary, and they would hear gun shots and screaming in the distance.

Pope Francis' image of the field hospital is apt, he said. It forces one to ask what the priorities are among people whose lives have been shattered, who are hurt, and wounded profoundly.

Yet at the same time, they have a faith that is "so deep and surprising," he said.

Lougen spent 17 years as a missionary priest in Brazil. In 2010, he was elected the 13th Superior General of the Congregation and is now based in Rome.

As for the future of the Oblates, Lougen said the days of armies of men marching out in their cassocks, carrying crosses are over. Instead, he has images of yeast, or the Spirit working through small groups, similar to that of Jesus and the 12 disciples, or Oblates founder Eugene de Mazenod's initial group of four.

"God has to keep it alive," he said. "I'm just working for him."

During the General Chapter that elected him in 2010, there was much talk about the call to personal conversion to Jesus Christ. "Now six years later there are signs of the Spirit popping up all over," he said.

In Ephesians, St. Paul writes "The Spirit working in us can do infinitely more than we ask or imagine," he said. "I don't think we believe it!"

Though there are fewer people, Lougen said it is important to stay hopeful, and express the joy of the Spirit. It might be a time of "letting go of the big numbers and the big institutions," he said. "But God is working in a different way."



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# Discernment House builds a culture of vocations

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — For more than 30 years, Discernment House has been building a culture of vocations, forming, mentoring and encouraging young adults to prayerfully consider their call in life.

Located near the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Discernment House is the home of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. It is also home base for active outreach to youth who are seeking a deeper relationship with God. Offerings include regular discernment retreats for both women and men, and a live-in opportunity for young women.

"We continue to offer the live-in program with community living and spiritual journeying with young ladies," says Sister Lucie Hamel, PM. "Again this year we offered two Personal History live-in weekends for both men and women: both were very appreciated and grace-filled times. We also offer a number of other retreat opportunities."

The young women who are presently living in community with the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary at Discernment House recently reflected on the joys and challenges of this unique experience, which offers them an affordable place to stay, a chance to experience Christian community life with the sisters and other residents, and opportunities for spiritual growth. Because of the Discernment House location, close to the university and downtown, the opportunity is particularly attractive to students.

Jessica Cornish of Calgary is in her first year of studies at the University of Saskatchewan, pursuing a degree in nursing. Originally from Austin, Texas, Cornish says that her experience at Discernment House has been extremely positive.

"Coming right out of high school it gave me some needed structure in my life as I entered into university living. It also provided me with a wonderful and joyful community that has challenged and helped me grow in my faith," she said.

"One of the biggest blessings about living in the house is that we celebrate daily mass every morning. This has been one of the most nurturing aspects of living here, because receiving the eucharist daily and having it be so easily accessed is such a gift," said Cornish.

Living in community does require a time commitment, she noted. "Although managing a busy school and social schedule with the Discernment House schedule can sometimes prove difficult, it is worth it to be a part of such an encouraging and strong community."

One highlight for Cornish this year was decorating for Christmas. "Before Christmas we spent our community night evening redecorating the house to be very festive and bright with Christmas lights, we did this while listening to carols on the old record player and eating gingerbread cookies that Mary (Deutscher) had made, and we had decorated together. It



Quynh Tram Nguyen

**DISCERNMENT HOUSE — A community evening at Discernment House — times of prayer and friendship are part of the live-in experience that young women are offered by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary.**

was a time where I experienced the warmth and joy of community even amidst the dreariness of finals," she said.

"Another highlight was the countless hours of watching Blue Jays baseball that was spent with Mary in the TV community room."

Quynh Tram Nguyen of Vietnam has also lived at Discernment House this year. "I am turning 26 this October and currently doing my master's degree in educational administration at the U of S," she said. "Living at Discernment House is a very new experience to me, since I have been living with my family for more than 25 years of my life."

Among the many advantages and blessings of Discernment House, Nguyen listed "the chapel, where I can shelter from this hustle and bustle life," as well as seeing a crucifix in every room "which grants me the feeling of being protected and safe."

The atmosphere at Discernment House is home-like, she described. "I like the rocking chairs with woolen blankets on, which always give me comfort and warmth during the winter," she said. She appreciates the library as a place to study "and get lost in the books," and the music room: "I can't play any instruments, but listening to people practising is also a kind of joy."

Nguyen noted that she did find it challenging to adjust to a new culture, including different kinds of food, and helping with the cooking. "I am getting used to walking around in the kitchen and preparing meals — and I do enjoy that," she said.

"Since I come from Asia, my language, mindset, and culture is totally different from Canadian people. Those things become barriers not only when I live here but also when I study at the university. Sometimes in the house I feel isolated, but this is just my personal limit. Hopefully as time goes by I will get used to Canadian lifestyle."

Time management is also a challenge, since residents are

committed to being home by 5:30 p.m. to pray and eat together. "This is a challenge, but to some extent, maybe because of Asian culture, I have no difficulty obeying that, since I also had to do the same thing when I was home. Like, you can skip breakfast and lunch time, but you have dinner with your family."

She enjoys morning mass, although "I have never thought of getting up at 7 a.m. for a mass in the past 25 years. This is also a challenge because I am not a 'morning person.' But thanks to

morning masses, I can start my day with prayers instead of worries."

The community spirit and relationships developed at Discernment House are precious, she said. "I like the way people care about one another here. We talk about work life, academic life, and sometimes personal life, to support and pray for one another. This makes me feel like home."

For the past two years, Discernment House has also been home to Mary Deutscher, a PhD student in public policy.

"I am from Saskatoon, but I

have also lived in Ottawa and Regina, and when I returned to Saskatoon I knew that I wanted to live in a different way during my studies," she said.

The spiritual enrichment and Christian community she has experienced at Discernment House has been a huge support, said Deutscher, who is also a member of the Justice and Peace Commission for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

"Over the past year I have been working with the Diocese of Saskatoon in the fight against euthanasia. This has been challenging for me as this issue can be draining to say the least, and I am grateful for the support the sisters and my housemates have given me. They have kept me grounded through their witness to our faith and by helping me to share in the small joys of life — nothing brings you down to earth quite like a chocolate cheesecake for your birthday!"

She added: "I will carry my experiences from my two years at the Discernment House with me wherever I go and would like to express my deepest appreciation for the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary for opening their home to me."

The Sisters of the Presentation are also grateful for the opportunity to walk with others, said Sister Lucie Hamel, PM. "We are blessed in this ministry."

The Sisters of the Presentation of Mary are now taking applications for September. For more information about the Live-in Experience for young women at Discernment House in Saskatoon, contact Hamel at (306) 244-0726 or email sk.dhouse@gmail.com



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# St. Vincent de Paul helps Arctic communities

By Thandiwe Konguavi  
Western Catholic Reporter

On a winter day in Tuktoyaktuk, everyone is gathered around a wood stove inside a Society of St. Vincent de Paul community food and clothing distribution centre.

Redemptorist Father Jon Hansen, new to the Arctic community, cannot help but smile when he sees one little boy with his brand new plush stuffed toy, holding it like his new best friend.

"Those little moments kind of make you smile, like you're making a difference," he said.

In Canada's North — an expensive place to live and at the same time plagued with poverty — sea containers shipped yearly from Edmonton containing food, household products and other items of necessity as part of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's (SSVP) North of 60 Project, are a crucial help to those living in Canadian Arctic communities who have less.

Hansen, pastor of Our Lady of Victory Parish in Inuvik, has been involved in the North of 60 program since he arrived in the North last year to find a sea can packed with goods waiting to be delivered to the parish for distribution.

This year, the program aims to ship nine six-metre sea containers north, supporting 10 Arctic communities. Each container is stocked with between 900 and 1,800 kilograms of food.

"It's really quite an amazing program, the amount of goods that they supply," said Hansen, who also looks after the missions of Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk and

Paulatuk. "They're really wide open to the needs of the community; we just write our list and Peter (Ouellette) and the parishes that supply the goods, they've just been really amazing."

Ouellette, president of the SSVP in Western Canada, said the North of 60 project has developed a principle of shipping only what the community asks for.

Food security is the primary focus, as food prices are high and selection is limited.

"The Society of St. Vincent de Paul helps those who are sort of on the margin of things, helps stretch their paycheques further," said Hansen. "In times of crisis, we could help somebody with a bag of groceries, a winter coat or pair of boots, so they don't have to worry about those basic necessities."

"In smaller missions like Paulatuk, Tuk, it becomes even more crucial because food in the North is so expensive. To be able to go to the neighbouring mission, get a bag of sugar, flour, pasta — it's just really a basic necessity that's being provided."

Most of the roughly 9,000 kilograms of food is donated from churches and community groups through the SSVP conferences in the Edmonton region. It is then sorted in a warehouse, repackaged and allocated to sea containers. Some items, including whole powder milk, is purchased directly in bulk.

"The Edmonton community is very generous with donations when they see a particular need being expressed," said Ouellette.

The cost of the program would be close to \$1 million

without the donations, he said. About \$10,000 cash is donated through private donors, SSVP conferences and organizations such as the Catholic Women's League.

Corporate sponsorship is crucial to the program, Ouellette said.

The project is made financially viable with corporate support from the Inuvialuit Corporation and its subsidiaries, as well as trucking industry support to get the sea cans to the barge.

The project started with the society supporting the community of Tuktoyaktuk, sending truckloads of supplies and a sea container to establish a SSVP community food and clothing distribution centre. Last year, the program expanded to eight sea cans shipped to support nine communities.

As well, other donations, such as food and arctic quality windows have come from corporations.

Ouellette said the program's growth is directly related to the need, as the North of 60 committee is introduced to people it could work with in other northern communities. "The needs in the Arctic are huge."

Through the sponsorship of Canadian North, SSVP co-ordinators fly into the communities for visits, develop a rapport and learn of the community's needs.

Relationship building is also done through parishes in the Edmonton region, with parishioners extending hospitality in their homes to northern community members who travel to Edmonton for medical treatment.



**NORTH OF 60** — A family in Gjoa Haven, including two elders, prepare food from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's North of 60 program for distribution to needy people in the community.

Through the project, parishes have gained intimate knowledge of the emotional and cultural needs of the communities, said Ouellette.

The SSVP model in Edmonton of working with the Mackenzie-Fort Smith communities is being picked up in other areas of Canada, said Ouellette.

As many as 40 communities in the Canadian Arctic may be in need of help, he said. In many cases, SSVP conferences in Ontario and Quebec would be close to the affected communities and thus better able to meet their needs.

In addition to clothing, bedding, household items and other necessities, the program ships items for special project building in the North.

This year, the project will help with refurbishing a mission house in Paulatuk. A company has been lined up to send windows this summer to replace all the broken windows.

"That will be a wonderful gift to the community to get that house back open again," said Hansen. "Generous donors in the South are making it possible for that to happen. It's quite exciting."

## Prejean recounts early years in fight against death penalty

By R.W. Dellinger

ANAHEIM, Calif. (CNS) — "They killed a man with fire one night. They strapped him in a wooden chair and pumped electricity through his body until he was dead," Sister Helen Prejean told an audience at the Religious Education Congress in Los Angeles in late February.

"His killing was a legal act because he had killed. No religious leaders protested his killing that night," she continued. "But I was there. I saw it with my own eyes. What I saw set my soul on fire, a fire that burns me still. And now here is an account of how I came to be and still am."

With these words from a new book she is in the progress of writing, Prejean began her keynote address on the second day of the 2016 LA Congress.

And for the next hour-plus, the author of the 1993 bestseller *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* explained how a shy self-spiritual-centred woman religious in her 40s became one of America's outspoken voices against the death penalty.

"And I want to tell you, Jesus is sneaky," she said in a Louisiana Cajun voice with a no-nonsense tone. But she still broke up the overflow crowd in the Anaheim

Convention centre's arena. "Jesus is sneaky," she declared. "Jesus is sneaky. Put it on a T-shirt. Stick in the Bible. Watch out."

The Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille said she'd been a comfortable suburban junior-high teacher when her community took a close look at its own mission in 1981. And the decision was to return to its French roots of ministering to society's down-and-out. So she somewhat reluctantly moved into a housing project in New Orleans. "And my African-

American neighbours began to teach me about the 'other' America," she recalled. "And their stories broke my heart."

Sticking with the new social justice line, the 40-something Prejean naively agreed to become the pen pal of a killer on Louisiana's infamous death row. And when he asked her to visit, she did. Soon she became his prison-registered "spiritual adviser." She also started learning about how capital punishment was mostly applied to poor black men who had killed whites in Louisiana.

The religious sister witnessed the April 5, 1984, electric-chair execution of her pen pal, who was white. "And watching his death, it changed my life," she confided in a quieter voice. "He had done an unspeakable terrible crime. And that's part of the spiritual journey, too. That's the reason why he made me struggle. Others would say, 'Look at what they did?'"

Patrick Sonnier, 27, and his younger

brother Eddie, 20, were found guilty of the rape and murder of Loretta Ann Bourque, 18, and the murder of David LeBlanc, 17, at a lover's lane Nov. 4, 1977, in St. Martin Parish, a Louisiana civil jurisdiction much like a county. Patrick got the death penalty and his brother was sentenced to life in prison; Eddie fell ill and died in prison Dec. 19, 2013, at age 57.

After Patrick's execution, a prison vehicle brought Prejean back to the gate where sisters from her religious community were waiting. "I was so cold, they put a coat around me," she said. "And I threw up. I'd never watched a human being get killed in front of my eyes. I don't know what I'm gonna do about all this. I just know I'm throwing up in the middle of the night, and they just killed a man."

But then she knew as clear as a bell. Most folks were never going to get close to a real execution. She had just witnessed one. So she had to tell the story. At first it was to any group that would listen. With a straight face, she talked about a nursing home where three brave seniors had shown up for her talk. But 10 minutes into her spiel, two were gone. Again the arena erupted in loud laughs.

Next Prejean started writing

about the post-midnight execution. Months later she had what she thought was a book, which an editor at Random House went about reshaping. Published in 1993, actress Susan Sarandon read *The New York Times* bestseller and really wanted to play her in a movie.

Working closely with Sarandon's husband, actor and director Tim Robbins, the script went through five drafts. The result was the popular film *Dead Man Walking*, nominated for four Academy Award categories, including best picture. And Sarandon took home best actress.

Prejean said the best part of doing the book and movie was meeting with both St. John Paul II and Pope Francis. She got their support against the death penalty as a crucial pro-life issue along with abortion and euthanasia.

"And we as Catholics now, we need to show our opposition to the death penalty," urged Prejean. "And we're gonna lead and help California in this initiative campaign that will be on the ballot Nov. 1. But we need a whole lot of signatures. So sign that petition today and get others to act."

"Annunciations are frequent," she added. "Inclinations are rare. God's seed will come soon enough, and we will act on what we know to be right."



CNS/Paul Haring

**PRISON MINISTRY** — St. Joseph Sister Helen Prejean, who has worked in prison ministry and against the death penalty for decades, is pictured in Rome Jan. 21.



# God has something important for you to do: Oblate

By Rev. Mark Blom, OMI

If there is one thing that we as a church have learned this year it is that mercy is more than forgiveness of sins. The covenants of the Old Testament reveal a technology for relationship.

Covenants were political and legal agreements that created peace between two parties. Each party to the covenant was required to keep the terms of the covenant otherwise they would suffer the penalties agreed upon. In the case of Israel and God, the terms of the covenant were summed up in the

Ten Commandments. Unlike the terms of treaties that nations made with each other, in those days the terms of their covenant with the Lord was to shape the people of Israel through a culture of thanksgiving to be a living sign of God's holiness and justice on earth.

Israel's vocation was to live in human terms the holiness of the creator of the universe and the Lord of history. Living according to these terms deepened relationships among people, with the land and between the community and God. In the New Covenant we have received a degree of friendship with God that is without parallel through Jesus Christ.

In contrast with this glorious invitation to share divine life and purpose, sometimes women and men in ministry, religious life and priesthood lament that we have never had better theology, better spiritual formation and better understanding of culture and society, and yet we have so few candidates for full-time ministry and service in the church.

"If young adults only knew what a tremendous life of service and meaning lies before them not to mention job security . . ." I often experience a deep inner dismay when this contradiction hits home. I and many other ministers, priests and religious sisters and brothers feel both frustrated and a deep sense of loss for the young people who are not discovering the call to total discipleship in the



Tim Yaworski

Rev. Mark Blom, OMI

Catholic tradition.

We recognize that young people have entered a world that has suffered the deconstruction of a large number of social and religious institutions that provided communal and familial stability. This has left families and individuals lacking interior confidence, or could we say, faith. The good news is that there is an inner kingdom within and among us that cannot suffer deconstruction. Our dissatisfaction with the superficiality of contemporary life testifies to the soul's deep remembrance of God. Now is the time to find your way back to the kingdom.

When I visit schools or parishes I give this advice to the parish as a whole. To recover our identity and purpose as Catholics we need to cultivate a new culture within our communities. The culture that we need to create is a culture of vocation. This implies an open-ended adventure of growth and maturity that has the risen Jesus as its source and the Eternal Father at its end. The path between is life with the Holy Spirit through our wonderful hurting world.

The creation of this new culture begins with first believing that God has something very important for you to do and only you can realize what it is. So you have to pray and listen so that you will find out what it is. Second, we need to keep telling this to one

another. The young in our lives especially need to hear this message over and over again in different ways. "God has something very important for you to do, now you have to pray so that you will find what it is and do it."

Another way of stirring up vocational reflection is by challenging questions that provoke a manifestation of a sacrificial love. "Would you become a priest or a religious sister or brother if by doing so you could bring 10 people to receive eternal life in heaven?" "Would you become a priest, sister or brother if you knew that you could initiate 100 people into the Catholic faith and they would remain faithful Catholics their whole lives and that all their children would remain faithful Catholics." "Would you choose such a vocation if you knew that you could influence 7,000 different people over the course of your life to experience the treasures of Christian community, mystical prayer and ministry to the poor." "Would you give your life as priest or religious if you knew that by

doing so you could teach 10,000 people the skills of interpreting Scripture and theology to meet modern needs?" "Would you choose such a vocation if you knew that you could counsel 200 couples to avoid breakup and toward deeper love?"

"Or could you accept such a vocation if Jesus simply asked you?"

If you suddenly feel a reluctant draft it could be that in the first series of questions was a target or prize that you could focus on and it really made the consideration meaningful and thoughtful. What this exercise teaches you is this: when you are not focused so much on yourself you make more kingdom-oriented choices. When there is not a clear target or prize you naturally focus more on yourself and you make shallower choices. So the story of Easter calls us in the mercy that Jesus showed Peter to have no other target or prize in mind other than following the risen Jesus and this is your way of contributing to the salvation of the whole world.



Geraldine Rohling

**THE GOOD SHEPHERD** — Good Shepherd detail from the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.

## Permanent diaconate a lifelong dream

By Deacon Ghislain Bellavance

For most of my life I have been involved in service, to my country and to my community. The idea of becoming a permanent deacon had come to me from time to time after my retirement. I was then very involved in parish ministry, as a reader, serving at mass when necessary, as a communion minister, presiding at lay services, prayer vigils and involved in general parish administration.

I had read about other dioceses in Canada and the U.S. that had started diaconate programs and had active permanent deacons serving in some dioceses, but our diocese had no such program. At that time, both my wife and I were attracted to the idea but we

thought we might be too old to be accepted. However, my wife's terminal illness then became my priority and I did my best to care for her until her death in 2012. We had been married 55 years.

The idea of being a deacon remained strong and when our diocese announced such a program I continued to feel a call to be part of it, yet hesitated because I felt my age would now be a definite barrier. In discussions with my pastor, I was encouraged to write to the bishop and ask for special consideration. Still I was hesitant, but the strong urge to serve would not leave me alone. At the very last moment before the start of the program I applied and Bishop Albert Thénvenot accepted me in the discernment phase of the program. From then on I no longer hesitated and felt sure God was giving me the time to serve him and the church.



Deacon Gil Bellavance

I am very happy to have been ordained and be able to serve in the diaconal ministries of Word, sacrament and charity for as long as God gives me.

*Bellavance is a deacon in the Diocese of Prince Albert.*

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# Sulpicians reinvigorated Edmonton seminary

By Ramon Gonzalez  
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — The Sulpician Fathers are the cream of the cream in seminary formation. They run seminaries in several countries and are known for forming well-rounded priests. Many of their pupils and professors have gone on to become bishops and cardinals.

The Sulpicians have been in Edmonton for 25 years and under their watch St. Joseph Seminary has turned into a solid, stable institution.

In addition to stability, the Sulpicians brought a collegial and holistic approach to priestly formation at St. Joseph, says Archbishop emeritus Joseph MacNeil. He invited the priests to Edmonton.

"It was an inspired move to invite the Sulpicians to come," said Rev. Shayne Craig, former seminary rector and member of the current six-member team that runs the seminary.

"We have a long tradition of working in priestly formation and certainly are known throughout the world for that ministry."

The Sulpicians are not a religious order, but a society of apostolic life founded in France in 1641 and dedicated to the formation of priests. All its members are seasoned diocesan priests with a penchant for teaching.

The society runs seminaries in Edmonton, Montreal, the United States, Latin America, France and Japan. Society members met at St. Joseph Seminary for a mass and a banquet to celebrate their 25th anniversary in Edmonton last fall.

To mark their quarter century, the priests held a special blessing of an icon of the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple, which is dear to the Sulpicians. They donated the icon to the seminary and placed it on a chapel wall.

Prior to the Sulpicians' arrival, the archdiocese had difficulty staffing the seminary. Rectors were priests of the Edmonton

archdiocese, such as Revs. Martin Carroll, Don MacDonald and Karl Raab, who all served for a limited time and then moved on.

When MacNeil couldn't find a rector in Edmonton, he turned to the Calgary diocese for help. He was given Rev. Eugene Cooney, later named bishop of Nelson, who ran the seminary until the Sulpicians were asked to come.

MacNeil had been concerned about the stability of the seminary for a number of years. In 1989 he met with the provincial superior of the Sulpicians and asked for the society's help.

The Sulpicians agreed to come and in August 1990 they sent three priests: Lionel Gendron, now bishop of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Que., David Brabant, now retired, and Luc Buchard, who later became bishop of St. Paul and is now bishop of Trois-Rivières, Que.

The team approach was perhaps one of the biggest changes introduced by the Sulpicians.

"That's part of our Sulpician methodology because we work as a team and model that collegiality for the seminarians," Craig explained.

For example, he said, the formation team does not have a table set apart for itself at meals. "We eat with the seminarians. We socialize with them; we participate in community nights."

The transition to "collegial direction" had a major impact on the seminary. "We weren't used to having that collegial approach and having so many priests," recalled Craig, who was in his last year of seminary when the Sulpicians arrived.

"Before, we had just Father Cooney so it was a very different

approach to formation. I marvel when I think of Father Cooney. He was here all alone as rector. That's very difficult. They certainly didn't have the integrated and holistic approach we have now. We do a lot more in priestly formation than Father Cooney would have been able to do just with himself as rector."

The arrival of the Sulpicians was a great gift to the seminary and to the church in Western Canada, said Rev. Stephen Hero, the current rector. "I'm not a Sulpician, but I was formed by them, and I have worked with them over the years."

Hero maintains the seminary has always been strong and has had good rectors, but he likes the Sulpician approach. "They never work just alone; they work as a team and that's certainly something that we want to model to seminarians — that priests work collegially with each other, in communion with each other and with their bishop."

MacNeil is greatly impressed. "(Thanks to the Sulpicians) a good number of the seminarians now come from outside of Alberta; in the past, practically all the seminarians came from Alberta or close to Alberta," he said.



WCR/Gonzalez

**SEMINARY FORMATION** — Rev. Shayne Craig is seen with the icon of the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple, a gift to St. Joseph Seminary from the Sulpician Fathers.

"Secondly, there is no doubt that there are more priests on the staff of the seminary now. At one point, there was one priest on staff and he did all the formation. The seminarians took all their courses at Newman Theological College.

"The positive thing is that we now have this society of priests who are professionals in the formation and training of seminarians."

Over the years, the seminary has had a number of rectors, including Cardinal Marc Ouellet, who served in the mid-1990s along with Craig and Rev. Paul Terrio, now bishop of St. Paul.

One thing that struck the Sulpicians when they arrived was the way in which the archbishop of Edmonton has associated his brother bishops across Western Canada in governing the seminary. That relationship continues with an annual meeting between the seminary formation team and the bishops.

"We have had 25 years of slow but steady growth and certainly the bishops have been very supportive," said Craig, who served as rector from 2005 to 2012.

Currently, the seminary has 49 seminarians from about a dozen dioceses, including eight each from Edmonton and Calgary, and seven from Regina. Last year it had 50 seminarians.

"Even though it's still the seminary of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, St. Joseph's is a seminary that serves the whole region of Western Canada," Craig explained.

Under the Sulpicians, he said, every seminarian has a spiritual director, chosen from among the six priests on the formation team.

"We always see ourselves primarily as spiritual directors. We are called directors because of that special focus on spiritual direction which is the place where everything gets integrated for the sake of the candidate."

The Sulpicians also introduced pastoral internship to the seminary, where a seminarian spends a full year in a parish in his home diocese, sharing the life of the pastor and working alongside him to learn the ropes while discerning the call to serve.

The Sulpician approach to formation is based on Vatican stipulations that call for seminarians to be formed in four dimensions: human, spiritual, academic and pastoral.

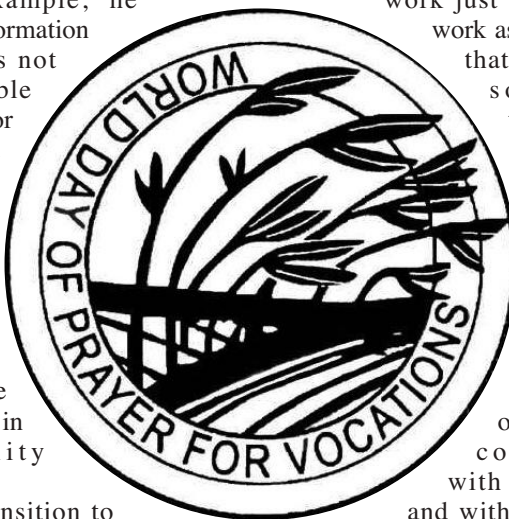
The academic part is done in partnership with Newman Theological College, where members of the formation team also serve as professors.

The pastoral dimension is done on an ongoing basis. It involves having seminarians doing ministry in parishes, schools and hospitals.

Not everybody who enters the seminary is eventually ordained. "Obviously over the years I would say that most seminarians do (get ordained), but we wouldn't be doing our job if everybody that came was ordained," said Craig. "There would be no discernment then."

There is a place and space in the formation process where a seminarian can address difficult issues in his own discernment and work through them, he said.

The seminarian, said Craig, must "really be open and honest before God and before himself about what his heart's desire is so he really does the Lord's will."



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# Online videos tell stories of priestly vocations

By Ramon Gonzalez  
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — Rev. Jim Corrigan never thought he had what it takes to become a priest. But when he asked God what he wanted for him, the Lord showed him the way.

Corrigan thought he wasn't worthy. He had struggled with alcohol and, after working 24 years in the building trades, he was pretty sure he couldn't stop swearing. As for celibacy, he

didn't even know how to spell it.

When he entered the seminary at age 42 he didn't expect to become a priest. In fact, he didn't know how to pray properly. But as he inched forward, it became clear God was calling him.

"I don't know what his will is for me but I do trust that if I co-operate with it, it will be good," he told himself.

Corrigan was ordained in June 2004 before some 1,400 of his closest friends eager to see a miracle. He is currently the pastor at

Edmonton's St. Theresa Parish, one of the largest parishes in the archdiocese.

Corrigan's vocation story is told in *Called by Name*, a new video series that tells the stories of six men who took different paths to the priesthood.

The series is presented by the Vocations Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton and was produced by Matthew Bodnarek of Folsom '55 Productions.

Each of the featured priests speaks candidly about his personal journey "and the different pieces of their lives that led them to the priesthood," explains Rev. Marc Cramer, archdiocesan vocations director.

Cramer said the purpose is to reach out to young people in a medium they understand. "Our hope is that this would be something that will inspire young men (who are thinking about the priesthood)."

A three-member committee that included Cramer picked several priests they thought would be representative of archdiocesan clergy: senior priests, junior ones and priests from different ethnic backgrounds. They selected six.

Apart from Corrigan and Cramer, the series features Fathers Kris Schmidt, Carlos Nunez, Matthew Hysell and Michael Schumacher. Each video is from

five to six minutes long and contains interesting footage of the subjects' background as well as their actual work.

The videographer interviewed each of the featured priests in advance to find the right hook for each of them. Cramer, for example, came from the Mormon faith. Schmidt told of his passion for hockey.

"What I find really powerful about the videos is they really capture us," Cramer said. He thinks the videos "humanize" the priesthood.

The videos have been well received. The series trailer, for instance, had close to a 1,000 views as of Feb. 25. "People have said they really enjoy them," the director of vocations commented. "They find them really touching and many have said the quality is amazing."

Cramer wants to see the videos used as a resource in Edmonton



WCR/Gonzalez

Rev. Marc Cramer

Catholic Schools. It cost about \$6,000 to produce the series.

The videos are available online at <https://vimeo.com/album/3640479>



F. Flegel

**REWARDING VOCATION** — Jean Vanier School's external appearance is little different than most schools of the Regina Catholic School Division, but it's what's inside that makes a big difference for the children and their families.

## Jean Vanier School a special place

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Jean Vanier School's external appearance is little different than most schools of the Regina Catholic School Division, but it's what's inside that makes a big difference for the children of this school and their families. There are only 28 in the current student body and, according to Principal Rolande Burant-Maher, "there are only three that we can consider verbal."

The children have varying degrees of challenges but staff members see them first as children, children who can in some ways learn. It's a difficult challenge but the staff wouldn't be anywhere else.

"It's a very humbling place to work. It puts life into perspective. If I look at the challenges that our students face and how they face them with joy and with courage. They don't get down by what life has thrown them. They're a happy, joyful bunch and so when I go home at the end of the day I can say 'wow I was a part of that,'" said Burant-Maher. She was a teacher in the division and over the course of her vocation became special education consultant where she probably could have stayed until retirement, but she requested a move to Jean Vanier's administrative position when it became vacant. She's not alone to make that choice.

Michelle Jones has been at the school for 17 years. She began as a part-time teacher and requested to stay when it became full time. "It's very rewarding. I see them as children first," said Jones. She told the story of one little girl frustrated

and vocal because she couldn't communicate. She and Tammy Rose, the RN who works as a medical assistant, taught her to use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and now she can communicate with staff.

"That's very rewarding, letting someone communicate with you." It's two-fold rewarding, said Jones. "Working with the kids but also working with the staff. It feels like this is home away from home."

Rose's association with the school dates back to her high school when she came as a volunteer and worked in the school's swimming program. She returned as a medical assistant as soon as she became a registered nurse.

"I support the medical needs of the student so that they have the opportunity to learn." She quoted the school's mission statement that speaks to providing a Catholic education wherein the whole child is nurtured and individual growth is encouraged in a caring and supportive environment. "And that is absolutely true. That's what we do every day and we feel so passionate about this place," at which point she, Jones and Burant-Maher all teared up.

"We can hardly put into words how fulfilling this work is," said Rose. "There have been many highlights," and she told the story of one child who after months of hard work, encouragement and praise, finally took a few steps on her own. And she giggled. "Our eyes filled with tears of pride and joy and they still do thinking back on that moment."

All have varying amounts of special education training.

Does it take a special type of

person to work with such severely challenged children? No, they all replied emphatically. "We are not special people," said Burant-Maher, "we become special because we work here," reversing the usual meaning of the phrase.

*I am  
the Good Shepherd  
John 10:11*

## Not to be Served, but to Serve

A vocation is the call that God makes to each person to be holy in a particular way or form of life. But there are some things about this call that many people do not know. For one thing, God calls everyone. It is not that some are favoured and others rejected. Every human person upon the earth is the product and target of God's love. Each one of us has a specific purpose. That purpose is important to God and it's important to us. For most, the call brings them to marriage and family. A number of persons find themselves called to dedicate themselves more totally and deeply to Christ by responding to a vocation to priesthood or to religious life.

Because of the pressing needs of the Church, the Knights of Columbus has taken as a special project the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and to religious life. Through the Refund Support Vocations Program, councils receive incentives for providing an individual seminarian or postulant with meaningful financial or moral support. This encourages direct interaction and gives Brother Knights a better understanding of men and women who pursue religious vocations.

The entire church urges us all to pray, frequently and deeply, to the Lord of the harvest that he send labourers into the vineyard as together, we "Lift High the Cross for Christ."

May the Lord bring to completion in you the good work that he has begun!



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# Sister brings light and peace through creativity

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Sister Helen Kluge doesn't believe in mistakes, only in new creations.

Pottery has taught Kluge to accept life's surprises and see how God can work through these new creations.

For 30 years, Kluge has been running a pottery studio as her chosen ministry as a Sister of St. Joseph. When she took her first pottery class in 1985, she never thought it would turn into a new ministry.

At her Toronto-based Studio on the Hill she teaches pottery classes to children, adults and adults with special needs.

"My purpose to be here is not just to make money," said Kluge. "It's partly the creative, but it's also to bring light and peace to people."

What Kluge loves about the art of pottery is that it brings people peace. It allows people to escape the busyness of their lives and just have fun with their art.

"I teach them basic techniques and if it doesn't turn out the way they think, it's OK. They are new creations," she said. "I've had pieces that collapse during presentations . . . but I'm OK with that now and some of them have become my favourite pieces."

Over the years she has had pots collapse on the pottery wheel that are repurposed as decorative candle holders. Broken figurines are turned into unique sculptures.

Like all Sisters of St. Joseph, she serves where there is the greatest need. This led her to many different ministries throughout her 53 years in service — including as a home economics teacher at St. Joseph Morrow Park High School and then director of food services at the Morrow Park convent.

"They were both very controlled types of ministries," said Kluge. "I had to be very exacting when I was teaching home ec . . . and in food services, it was diet control. Having worked with clay, it has opened me up to

be free, to be relaxed and to allow others to do the same."

During a year off from ministry work, Kluge decided to take a few courses here and there, including a course in pottery. She said there is something about the creative process and working with her hands that was very calming. When combined with prayer, Kluge said it becomes a whole new way to encounter God.

"It was the turning point for me in terms of eventually making another decision about ministry and where I would like to serve," said Kluge. "It opened up a freedom within me that I had never experienced before."

She pursued a Studio Arts degree at Emmanuel College in Boston. In 1988, she graduated and came back to Toronto where she began to teach pottery classes at Providence Healthcare. After a few years, she opened her own studio so she could offer classes to children and adults. But, in 1996, her landlord sold the property and she was forced to move out. Even-

tually, she found a nice storefront in East York.

"I started as an incorporated business," said Kluge. "Down the road, if anything ever happened to me, the business is under my name then the community won't be able to continue my work . . . so I started to work on that change and then, I became part of Fontbonne Ministries."

In 2000, the Sisters of St. Joseph created Fontbonne Ministries to restructure their new mission to work in communities of greatest need. Through this non-profit organization, Kluge was again able to expand her art program. She was able to take on more clients, especially underprivileged families and community members that would not normally be able to afford an art program.

"It's wonderful having support. Financially, if I was on my own, I wouldn't be able to continue," said Kluge. "A number of people in this particular area

are very poor and marginalized. I have children who are in families who are very stressed. We can talk about it and (money is) not a roadblock."

Not only can Fontbonne subsidize costs for her clients, it allows her to do more outside of her studio, where Kluge also facilitates retreats and conferences. The potter and the clay is one of the most familiar analogies in the Bible and she uses these to have people reflect on their art work and how it represents the idea of being shaped and transformed in the hands of God.

When Kluge is not teaching classes or facilitating retreats, she is working on her own art. Her studio also acts as a storefront that showcases this work.

"I'm 72, but I work a full schedule . . . and I'm totally committed to this," said Kluge. "As long as I have the help and the energy and the enthusiasm to do this, I'm here to do it. I love being with the people."



Tim Yaworski

**OBLATES HONOURED** — During the Chrism Mass banquet March 21 in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were recognized for their contributions and their service during this 200th anniversary of the founding of the Order by St. Eugene De Mazenod. A mosaic of images of Oblate priests, brothers and missions adjusted to create a large image of the Oblate cross was unveiled, and the Oblates in attendance came forward to a standing ovation: (from left) Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, Rev. Nestor Gregoire, Rev. Bill Stang, Rev. Mark Blom, Rev. Michael Dechant, Brother Walter DeMong, Rev. Richard Doll, Rev. Paul Fachet and Rev. Nestor Silva.

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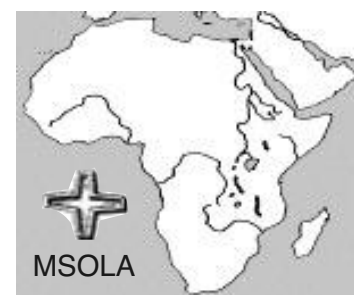
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# Precious Blood Missionaries use powerful language

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

If you're going to preach in the modern world you need powerful language. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood have had that power incorporated into their very name for the last 200 years. From "blood brothers" to "Bloody Sunday," "the blood of the Lamb" to "blood libel," the 600 priests and brothers who call themselves Precious Bloods have the most arresting imagery in the entire story of human salvation as their calling card.

"Blood is all over the daily newspaper," said Rev. John Colacino, Missionary of the Precious Blood professor of religious studies at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, N.Y. "Blood is a human reality, whether it's shed in violence, whether it's given in transfusion to save lives. According to the Bible, life is in the blood. Lifeblood, blood transfusions, bloodshed in violence — I could go on."

The Precious Bloods were established 200 years ago by St. Gaspar del Bufalo working in the papal states of northern Italy. The society came to North America in 1844 to minister to Italian immigrants in the American midwest. Today the Precious Bloods are

attracting a new generation of vocations in Tanzania and India, and still ordaining steady numbers of Canadians, Americans, Mexicans and Italians.

Though primarily priests, the Precious Bloods include a strong contingent of lay brothers.

The society takes pride in its multiculturalism. The 25 members of the Atlantic Province of the Precious Bloods include Mexicans, a Korean, a Tanzanian, a Filipino, Italians, Canadians and Americans. Rev. William Nordenbrock, the society's elected Moderator General, calls the Precious Bloods' multiculturalism a tool in the society's prophetic mission "to live the charism of reconciliation."

The Precious Bloods were created by and for preaching the Good News. St. Gaspar del Bufalo spent some of his first years as a priest in exile and then as a prisoner in northern Italy, courtesy of Napoleon Bonaparte's new empire. Bonaparte had annexed the papal states in 1809, the year after St. Gaspar was ordained. St. Gaspar twice refused to swear an oath of fidelity to the emperor. Released from prison, he went to work preaching in communities that had, before Napoleon, been under the direct authority of the pope. After Napoleon's declaration of a republic, the papal states had fallen into



the hands of "briganti" — bandits.

Advisers to Pope Pius VII wanted to go into the papal states with an army to clear out the bandits, but St. Gaspar went in armed with a cross, preaching about the precious blood of Jesus. It worked.

The Precious Bloods' devotion to the blood of Christ wasn't something they invented or anything new. It had a long history in the church and the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood already existed when St. Gaspar was elect-

ed the movements' First Promotor and Missionary in 1817.

Nor is it a spirituality that the men could keep to themselves. By 1834 St. Maria de Mattias was sharing her devotion to the blood of Christ with other young women and in a few short years this community of women became known as the Adorers of the Blood of Christ and sent themselves on mission to Brazil, China, Australia and elsewhere.

The Adorers have lived their lives engaged in the Gospel and the world. In 1992 five Adorer sisters in Liberia were killed by warlord Charles Taylor's soldiers in the midst of that country's civil war.

These days the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood no longer exists, but both the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the Adorers of the Blood of Christ work extensively with lay associates who share their spirituality and sense of mission.

"What holds it all together? The blood of Christ," said

Colacino. "What does Paul say? Our blessing cup is a communion in the blood of Christ. This is the source of our connection to each other. It is a spirituality that looks straight in the face at human discord, humans at war, at violence, at the calls for human solidarity, inclusion and justice."

On the men's side, the priests of the society are secular rather than religious. They make religious promises to live in and dedicate themselves to the community, but not the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience taken by Dominicans, Benedictines, Jesuits and Franciscans. In canon law they are classed as a society of apostolic life. When the Missionaries of the Precious Blood talk about mission they're not necessarily talking about going to foreign lands. Rather their mission is to preach in some particular context.

Precious Bloods can be found pastoring parishes, teaching in universities, working as hospital and prison chaplains, leading youth groups and even as traditional missionaries. The Adorers today work as social workers, artists, pharmacists, paralegals and community organizers.

The sources for Precious Blood ministry are endless, said Colacino.

"You can't really escape blood, can you, if you're a Catholic Christian? The key words in the New Testament — justification, redemption, reconciliation, making peace — are all referred to in light of the blood of Christ," he said. "We were founded primarily to preach. Insofar as the Word of God makes frequent reference to the blood of Christ and those words I just mentioned — justification, redemption, reconciliation, making peace — we have ready at hand the great themes for our ministry of the Word."



Kip Yaworski

**COMBINED MINISTRIES** — Co-ordinator of Youth Ministry and Vocations, Colm Leyne (second from left) recently hosted a meeting of youth ministry leaders from parishes and organizations in the diocese to discuss plans and priorities. The part-time office of Vocations was recently combined with Youth Ministry, while Justice and Peace became a full-time office in the diocese. All three ministries — Youth Ministry, Vocations, and Justice and Peace — are funded by the Bishop's Annual Appeal.

## Vocations and youth ministry combine

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

**SASKATOON** — This year the offices of Vocations and Youth Ministry have been combined in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. As of Jan. 1, 2016, Youth Ministry Co-ordinator Colm Leyne has taken on the double portfolio, adding vocations to his responsibilities.

Myron Rogal, who was co-ordinating vocations part time, is now assigned full time to the diocese's expanded Office of Justice and Peace.

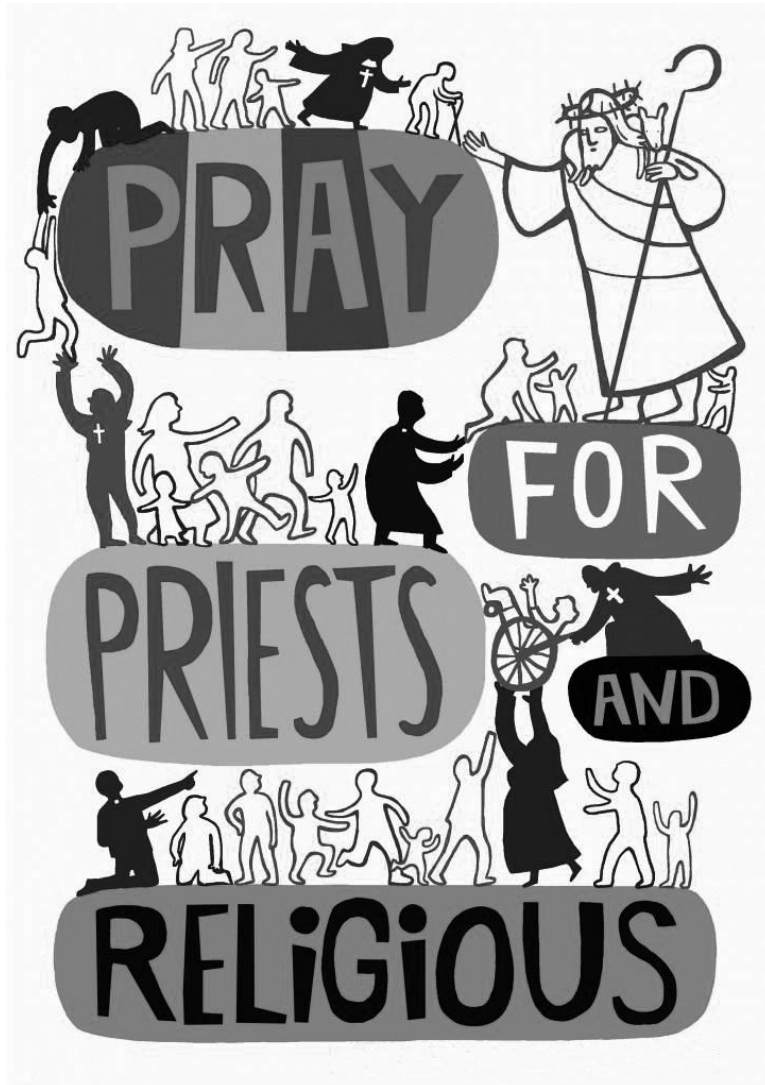
"Youth Ministry and Vocations promotion are a natural fit," says Leyne of the change, noting that he will be supported in the vocations work by an active and engaged Vocations Commission, made up of volunteers from every vocational walk of life — single, married, religious and ordained.

As well, Rev. Daniel Yasinski and Rev. Colin Roy will continue to serve as vocations directors for men who are discerning a call to the priesthood.

"I see myself as a co-ordinator

and facilitator of efforts across our diocese to build a culture of vocations," said Leyne. "That includes fostering an understanding of all vocations: marriage, single life, religious life and priesthood. I hope to engage others in promoting vocations in a creative and collaborative way."

For more information about youth ministry or vocations in the Diocese of Saskatoon contact Leyne at 306-659-5843 or: youthmin@saskatoonrcdiocese.com or vocations@saskatoonrcdiocese.com





# National vocations conference to be held in Winnipeg

By James Buchok

Those who have an interest in nurturing a vocation culture in the church, be they laypersons, religious or priests, young or experienced, are welcome to attend the National Association of Vocation/Formation Directors conference in Winnipeg, April 25 to 28.

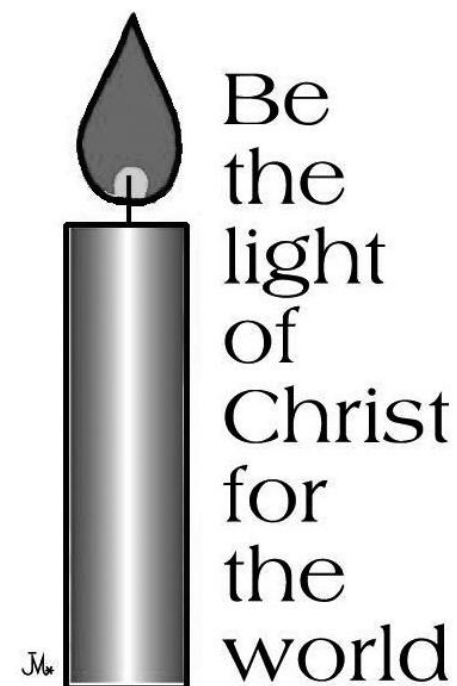
"They will be enriched," said Sister Mary Coswin, one of the planners of the event entitled *Live the Word Courageously: New Voices in Vocation Culture*.

as a disappearing way of life, the NAVFD website lists a surprising number of groups devoted to vocations. "The large groups of the 1940s and '50s was a blip," said Coswin. "Religious communities were never before so numerous. What we see now is more normal. And with the advance of women in professional work there are many alternatives for living a committed Christian life as a single or married person. We also don't have large families as we once did and many families do not aspire to have a son or daughter in religious life. Much of this is mystery, the mystery of God's unfolding plan and the Holy Spirit is still at work among us."

Coswin said there are several communities that have "lively and growing numbers of associates, or Oblates as Benedictines refer to them. This is evidence that the spirit of those communities is alive and growing. The charism of the communities can be lived outside the community to a large extent and associates and community mutually enrich each other."

The conference lineup reads like a vocations mini-university beginning with keynote speakers Rev. Scott Lewis, SJ, and Sister Amy Hereford, CSJ.

Lewis, academic dean of Regis College, Toronto School of Theology, will speak on *God is Really among You! Recovering the Transcendent in Religious Communities*.



Coswin, who has been part of the community of the Sisters of St. Benedict in Winnipeg since 1963, said the conference is held every two years and after 2014 in Toronto a group of Winnipeggers offered to be the next hosts.

While society in general sees religious orders and communities



J. Buchok

**VOCATIONS FAIR** — At left, Rev. David Purcell, Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and from right Sister Virginia Evard and Sister Mary Coswin, Sisters of St. Benedict, with special guest Pope Francis in the form of a cardboard cutout.

"One of the problems facing religious communities today is that they have become virtually invisible and in many ways indistinguishable from the culture in which they dwell," writes Lewis. "In a series of short biblical reflections, I will explore the attraction of the community of the People of God over the centuries. Recent studies of religious culture in Canada indicate that many people, especially the young, hunger for both religious experience and a sense of genuine community."

Hereford is an Attorney Canonist based in St. Louis, Missouri. Her presentation is *Nurturing Mystics and Prophets*.

"Vocation and formation for religious life, taken together, are the process by which men and women encounter and join a religious congregation, are initiated

into its spirituality, life and mission, and gradually become members of our communities," writes Hereford. "It is a process, not a program. The programmatic elements play an important role in the process. They facilitate discernment. They help candidates to grow in knowledge and wisdom about God, spirituality, community and charism."

Workshops include *New Wine, New Wineskins* — Social Media Strategies, demonstrating how what is rooted in time and tradition can be enhanced by the blessings of the digital age. "Social media challenges us to new and creative ways to share our lives, build communities, grow in faith and provide formation resources."

Other workshop titles are: *Vocation Discernment In The*

*Ignatian Style; Eastern Spirituality And The New Evangelization; Clearness Committee Discernment Process; Ministry 2021: Where Are You?; Sharing Our Wisdom As Church; I'm No Priest, So What Now?; and The Enneagram Symbol: A Challenge To Religious Complacency.*

A group presentation will be offered by gospel communities including *Chemin Neuf*, House Blend Ministries and Christian Life Communities, with representatives reflecting on how the Gospel continues to inspire new expressions of community today, and how society's social and spiritual needs are being met by these communities.

The conference takes place at the Clarion Hotel, 10 minutes west of downtown Winnipeg. For complete details go to [www.vocations.ca](http://www.vocations.ca)



Lynda Putzlocher

**CANDIDATE FOR HOLY ORDERS** — At a celebration at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome Nov. 17, diocesan seminarian Edward Gibney (left) was enrolled as a candidate for holy orders with 10 other candidates, one more step on his discernment of the priesthood. Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was in Rome at the time working on an ecumenical dialogue, and was able to attend the celebration. Potentially, Gibney could be ordained to the transitional diaconate this June, at another celebration in Rome. Among the Diocese of Saskatoon's other seminarians, Michael Yaremko is serving a pastoral internship year at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, while Andrew Young is doing the same at St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Saskatoon. Yaremko could also potentially be ordained to the transitional diaconate this year.

## Look to the sisters in terror-driven world

*This column, titled "Look to the sisters in an increasingly terror-driven world," was posted March 29 on the website of Global Sisters Report, a project of the National Catholic Reporter, based in Kansas City, Missouri. It was written by Dan Stockman, GSR national correspondent.*

The terror attacks March 22 in Brussels had many people asking: Why Belgium?

The answer given over and over is that unlike many countries in Europe, Belgium has large neighbourhoods of disaffected youth who are ripe for radical Islamic recruitment.

If, as experts say, radicalism is embraced by those who have been victimized and left at the fringes of society because they see it as a way to fight back against a faceless, monolithic oppressor, then the West's usual response to terrorism only feeds the cycle: massive military responses become further "evidence" of oppression and thus become recruiting tools for even more radicals.

What is the answer? More women religious — or at least more people doing the kind of work women religious do.

The people who experts say are ripe for terrorist recruitment are at

the margins — exactly the people sisters serve day in and day out. Sisters' missions of feeding and clothing the poor, caring for the sick, being present and praying for the spiritually bereft are all tonics for the ills that lead to people being susceptible to radicalism, whether it is the perversion of a peaceful religion, the embrace of racial and ethnic hatred we're seeing rise in North America, or the adoption of violence as the answer to any problem.

More importantly, sisters' work advocating for change and an end to systems that cause marginalization and disaffection sends another important signal to those they serve that it doesn't take violence to effect change.

Imagine if instead of deploying drones, we deployed the hands and feet of Christ — either the hands and feet of religious sisters or of ourselves, following their example.

Imagine if instead of sending

missiles, we sent hope.

Imagine if instead of closing borders and building walls, we opened our arms and showed how opportunity and freedom can change lives.

Imagine if instead of letting terror divide us, we let love unite us.

During Holy Week, most of us were awash in the glow of Easter, thinking about resurrection and new life. But for the disaffected, whether in a slum in Brussels, a refugee camp in the Middle East, a desperately poor rural community in the U.S. South or a prison-like public housing complex in a big city, it is still Holy Thursday. Shackled by poverty and policy, many are looking for someone to blame, and there are too many recruiters of all stripes willing to give them a sacrificial lamb.

We are left with several choices: we can join the crowd, shouting to crucify an innocent. We can stand on the sidelines and do nothing. Or we can begin working to change the conditions that led to the situation we find ourselves in.

And if we're not sure where to start, simply look to a sister for the example.



# Dream fulfilled in ordination to priesthood at age 71

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Rev. Michael Hartney, ordained to the priesthood Oct. 18 at the age of 71, had originally hoped to be a priest as a young man, but his early sense of vocation was not fulfilled.

He grew up in a “standard, traditional Catholic family of the 1940s and 50s” in Ottawa’s Sandy Hill neighbourhood, son of an Irish father and French-Canadian mother. Baptized at St. Joseph’s, active as an altar boy through his teen years, he expected to become a priest as a young man. He entered the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at age 19 and “enjoyed it very much.” These were the years of the Second Vatican Council, and “among the most important years for my spiritual development,” he said.

“I was in my 20s when the Oblates told me they thought I wasn’t suited for the priesthood,” Hartney said. “It was a big let-down, but I took that as a definitive answer: this was God’s answer to my decision to be a priest.”

“I was never given any explanation,” he said. “That’s the way things happened in those days.”

Hartney then pursued a career as a university professor, teaching philosophy at Western, McMaster and Ottawa universities. He also participated in church life as an organist and choral singer, including the Cantata Singers of Ottawa, Seventeen Voyces and the National Arts Centre. He served as president of the Royal Canadian College of Organists for three years.

Hartney remained active in parishes serving on parish committees, in addition to playing organ and singing in church choirs. “There was not a falling away, or moment of conversion,” he said.

He put aside the idea of the priesthood until he had a conversation with a friend in 2006. He even recalls the date: March 24. “My sense of a call came very suddenly.”

His friend asked him how his life was going and said, “You once wanted to be a priest. Have you ever thought of that?”

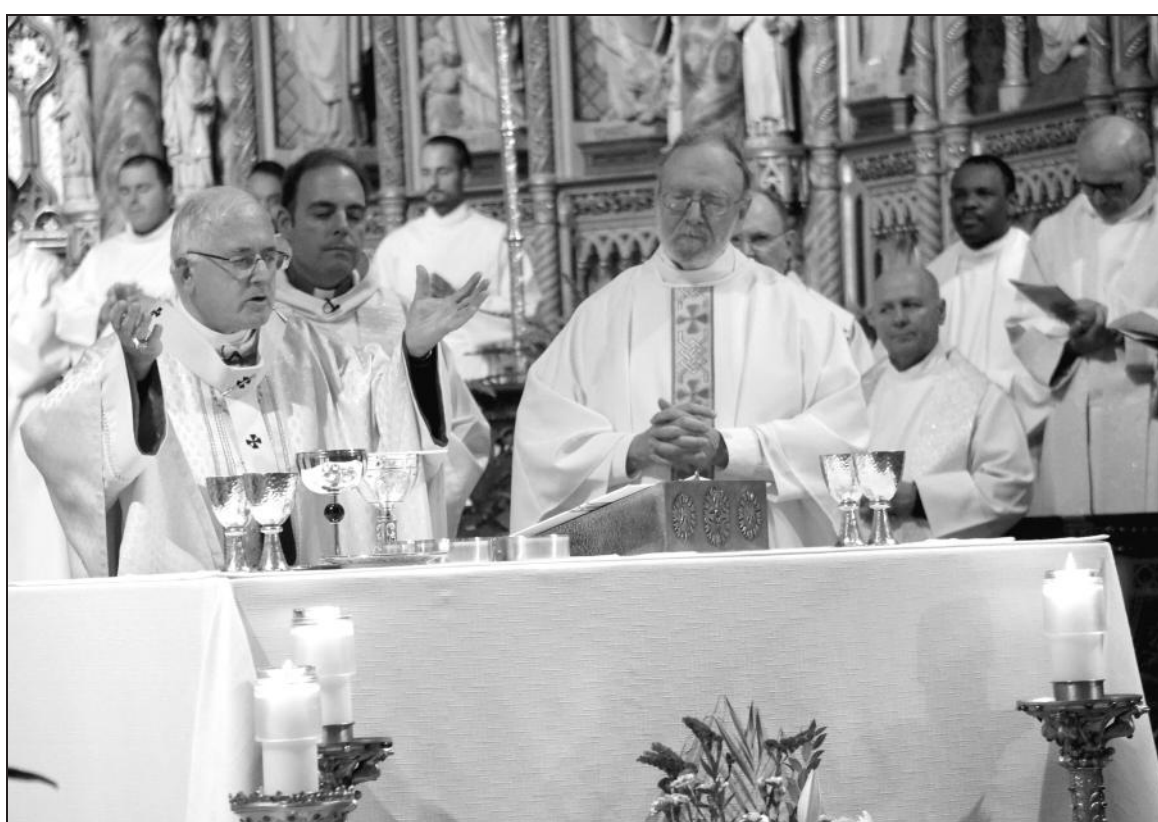
“The answer was no,” Hartney said. But the question opened his mind again to the priesthood, something he hadn’t thought of in 40 years.

“It was almost as if the heavens opened, and I heard God telling me, ‘I want you,’” he said. “It was as sudden and as certain and definitive as that. From that moment I was convinced and I’ve never doubted it since.”

Hartney spent a few months talking to priests, asking them about their ministry, what it is like being a priest today and whether they found it difficult. “The answers I got were encouraging,” he said.

Because then-Archbishop Marcel Gervais was retiring, Hartney had to wait until the summer of 2007 to speak with Archbishop Terrence Prendergast.

The archbishop “was somewhat wary,” Hartney recalled. But the archbishop decided to put him in a parish as a pastoral associate



CCN/D. Gyapong

**FIRST MASS** — Rev. Michael Hartney, who was ordained a priest at age 71, prays as he concelebrates his first mass with Archbishop Terrence Prendergast.

to see how it would work out.

“I loved everything about it,” he said. The pastor seemed happy with what he did and at the end of a year wrote a letter recommending he be ordained soon.

Hartney already had the theology courses and other academic requirements, so the diocese looked at what other training he would need. He continued to get involved in various parish activities, including youth ministry. He

did an internship at St. Joseph’s in Orleans, where he started a youth group and conducted an Alpha Course in French.

“It’s so obvious in today’s church, what we need to do is reach out,” he said. “We can’t just wait in church for people to come. The same people are going to come. We have to reach the people who aren’t there.”

“If (an Alpha) program is done well, it should lead to a personal

relationship with Jesus,” Hartney said. He admitted that as a young person, a conventional Catholic, the faith was more a matter of engaging in certain practices. “You were a good Catholic if you did certain things and went to mass.”

“It’s only later that it became a serious matter to have a personal relationship to Jesus,” he said. “It’s very difficult to pinpoint one moment it happened to me. It developed, through taking part in various events, through prayer, both collective and individual.”

“I can point to a moment with a sort of boost to this,” he said. “Surprisingly it came through youth movement. I was far from youthful. It’s when I discovered praise and worship music, something to which I had a disdainful attitude at first. Musically it’s pretty simple, for a trained musician, simple-minded. Nevertheless, it is music we pray.”

“I could say it just goes to show even at my age one can develop and grow,” he said.

Prendergast ordained Hartney at Notre Dame Cathedral, where he has been assigned to serve.

## Mireau commissioned as Missionary of Mercy

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Rev. Marc Mireau of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was recently commissioned by Pope Francis to serve as a Missionary of Mercy during this jubilee year.

Only about 1,100 priests worldwide have been designated for the special role during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy,

declared from Dec. 8, 2015, to Nov. 20, 2016.

Priests designated as Missionaries of Mercy are called to be “a sign of the church’s maternal solicitude for the People of God,” said Pope Francis in declaring the jubilee year. Granted the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See, the missionaries are asked to facilitate the sacrament of reconciliation as a “truly human encounter, a source of liberation,” said the pontiff.

Mireau travelled to Rome in February and celebrated Ash Wednesday mass with the pope at St. Peter’s Basilica before being sent forth to be “persuasive preachers of mercy” with a special role as welcoming, loving and compassionate confessors.

Although retired from full-time ministry, Mireau still assists at the Trinity parishes of Vonda, St. Denis and Prud’homme, which are served by parish life director Louise Bussiere and priest moderator Rev. Steve Morrissey, CSsR. Bishop Donald Bolen submitted Mireau’s name to the Vatican for the role of Mis-

sionary of Mercy in the jubilee year.

Mireau said that he hopes to provide a special focus on the sacrament of reconciliation in the months ahead. Those who wish to contact him can email [abbe-marc@gmail.com](mailto:abbe-marc@gmail.com) or call (306) 258-4888.

“I’d like to say to everyone: ‘This is a Year of Mercy — why aren’t you going to the sacrament of reconciliation?’ It is a sacrament of joy. It is a sacrament that takes all the stuff that we have held in — and maybe didn’t ever think we could be forgiven for — and gives us forgiveness, and freedom and joy,” said Mireau.

Pope Francis spoke to the Missionaries of Mercy about their role as living signs of the Father’s mercy, Mireau said. “Pope Francis talked to us about mercy, expressed his appreciation to us, and told us how we must love the sacrament of reconciliation, and share that love and mercy with the people.”

Mireau described the powerful experience of processing from Castel Sant’Angelo to St. Peter’s Basilica with more than 700 priests and bishops from around the globe, and of being in the presence of the incorrupt body of St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887 - 1968) and relics of St. Leopold Mandic (1866 - 1942), two Capuchin friars who were known as saintly confessors.

Born in Quebec, Mireau was ordained in 1970 at Peterborough, Ont. During his years of ministry in the Diocese of Saskatoon, Mireau

served in a number of parishes, as a chaplain to several Catholic high schools and with Catholic Christian Outreach on the University of Saskatchewan campus. He also served as vocation director for a number of years, a ministry that is still dear to his heart.

Mireau noted that the experience of God’s mercy is closely connected to vocation discernment. Some of those who are discerning a call to the priesthood feel they are not worthy, others are unsure about their call, Mireau described. “It involves a lot of trust, and of opening themselves to God’s mercy.”

### WELCOME TO CARMEL

*Having received a letter of permission from Archbishop Daniel Bohan, (who passed away in January 2016), I am presently working on this project with the chancery office.*

*A community of Carmelite monastic sisters is being formed in Southern Saskatchewan as a way of evangelizing through the apostolate of prayer.*

*If you are a young woman interested in a life dedicated to prayer in the Carmelite tradition of St. Teresa of Jesus, and her foundations, (as St. Teresa says, “For the style of life we aim to follow is not just that of nuns, but of hermits”) and would like to live a monastic way of life with silence, solitude and a strong community joined by charity and the spirit and joy of the Gospels, contact us at:*

**Monastery of the Transfiguration**  
tel: 306-694-0618  
email: [carmst@sasktel.net](mailto:carmst@sasktel.net)  
website: [www.carmelitemonasticsisters.org](http://www.carmelitemonasticsisters.org)

*1 Way of Perfection 13.6*

*Anyone wishing to donate to the building of a monastery wing in order to provide for aspirants to this monastic community, please contact the above or donate on the website contact page. As a registered charity, receipts are available for income tax purposes.*



K. Yaworski

**MISSIONARY OF MERCY** — Rev. Marc Mireau of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was recently commissioned by Pope Francis to serve as a Missionary of Mercy during this jubilee year.



# Church urges nations to address issues related to drugs

By Ezra Fieser

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (CNS) — Heroin and painkillers plague the streets of U.S. cities and small towns. Mexican drug cartels have turned swaths of that country into battle zones. In South Africa, young people are getting hooked on a drug made from a medication meant to fight HIV.

Around the globe, a worldwide addiction to illicit drugs is fuelling violence, human trafficking, a proliferation of guns, organized crime and terrorism, the Vatican has said.

Now, as the UN General Assembly prepares to meet April 19 - 21 for a special session on the issue, the church is calling on governments and civil society groups to address a problem that has existed for decades but continues to morph and pose new threats.

"From poor rural workers in wartorn zones of production to affluent metropolitan end-users, the illicit trade in drugs is no respecter of national boundaries or of socioeconomic status," Msgr. Janusz Urbanczyk, Vatican observer to UN agencies in Vienna, wrote in the statement. "International solutions require



CNS/Oscar Rivera, EPA

**DRUG TRADE** — Barrio 18 gang members accused of killing a bus driver in San Salvador, El Salvador, are presented to media July 29, 2015.

taken," said Coletta Youngers, a former church worker in Latin America and senior fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America, which is in favour of reforming drug policy. "At the same time, I find a lot of the language inflammatory, particularly that it still maintains support for

groups have gotten smaller as their leaders are captured or killed and such groups subsequently have taken up activities such as extortion and kidnapping.

The groups also get into small-time drug dealing, another source of violence as they dispute territories. Rev. Robert Coogan, prison chaplain in the city of Saltillo, a northeastern Mexican city near Monterrey, recalls having a stream of new inmates, previously involved in small-time drug dealing, arrive in the late 2000s with stories of the police raiding their homes and planting evidence.

Drug use increased in Mexico at around the same time, he said. Analysts attribute that to cartels paying their underlings in drugs to be resold.

"I wish people would look more at the society that makes people want to do drugs," Coogan said. "Rather than try to prohibit from doing certain things, I would want a society where people wouldn't feel the urge to do these self-destructive things."

## A world addicted

Governments and civil society groups are grappling how to deal with the scourge: from Argentina to Afghanistan, where poppy, the heroin opium precursor, has become a cash crop for the Taliban; from South Africa to Lake Orion, Michigan, where Robert Koval runs Guest House, a residential rehabilitation facility that has been treating clergy and men and women religious for 60 years.

"I think attention to the issue has spiked in recent years because there's this question on how to get your arms around a problem that is so rampant," said Koval, the facility's president and CEO. Guest House treats about 70 people a year.

Koval said the problem has morphed in recent years as more people have become addicted to opioids, including prescription painkillers, which the centres for Disease Control and Prevention says has led to an epidemic of drug overdoses. In 2014, more than 28,600 deaths were caused

by opioid overdoses, triple the number from 2000, according to CDC figures.

Those being treated are also becoming younger, Koval said. "It's what you see in the general population, with drug abuse increasing among young adults."

Drug addiction among young adults is a problem Cardinal Wilfrid Napier of Durban sees across South Africa, where HIV patients are being robbed of their medications, which are used to make an addictive drug called whoonga.

"The brokenness of the people I saw recently in an outreach clinic and the fact that most of them were teenagers or in their 20s hit me hard," Napier said of a trip to the coastal city of Durban, where drug abuse is the largest problem after disease related to malnutrition and HIV.

The Vatican's call to improve health care services would help in places like Kenya, where there are too few practitioners to serve the country of 44 million, particularly in rural areas, said Bishop Emanuel Barbara of Malindi.

"Kenyans have become obsessive about taking drugs as the only way to heal," he said. That's a problem because medication widely banned in other countries is fully available in Kenya and many "fake drugs" can be found on drugstore shelves.

Luis Lora said there were few treatment options in Ozama, a hardscrabble neighbourhood in

Santo Domingo, when his alcoholism gave way to a crack cocaine addiction that cost him his marriage and his job as a bus driver.

"There was nowhere to go for help, and it was an embarrassment for me to talk about it with the people I knew," he said.

Lora, who eventually entered a rehab facility, said that others he knew, "never got help."

## Calls to legalize

While countries such as Portugal and the Netherlands have long since decriminalized drug use, the debate has only more recently come to the Americas. In recent years, nearly half of U.S. states have passed laws legalizing marijuana use in some form, predominantly for medical use. And Mexico, Uruguay, Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala and Honduras have debated liberalizing drug laws or decriminalizing drug use.

When the Mexican Supreme Court ruled in November in favour of four petitioners seeking an injunction to grow and consume marijuana for recreational reasons, Catholic leaders condemned the decision as putting Mexico on the path to legalization. An editorial in the Archdiocese of Mexico's weekly magazine said it would move the country "toward individual destruction."

Pope Francis has taken a hard-line approach against any forms of drug legalization, including recreational drugs.

"Drug addiction is an evil, and with evil there can be no yielding or compromise," he said at the International Drug Enforcement Conference in Rome in 2014.

In the pope's home country, Argentina, Rev. Jose Maria di Paola, who works with drug addicts in the shanties of Buenos Aires, said drug legalization would do further harm to the poor.

"Why is this our position on legalization? Because we live in marginal and poor environments impacted by drugs. In these places, it's synonymous with death. It has nothing to do with recreation," he said in a 2015 interview. "It has nothing to do with morality. It has to do with an analysis of the reality."

*Contributing to this story were David Agren in Mexico City and Bronwen Dachs in Cape Town, South Africa.*



CNS/Jonathan Ernst, Reuters

**DRUG-DEPENDENT NEWBORNS** — In this Oct. 19, 2015, file photo, a sign marks the entrance to the Neonatal Therapeutic Unit at Cabell Huntington Hospital in West Virginia, where staff members have acted to treat an increasing number of drug-dependent newborns.

therefore, that effective efforts be indeed focused in zones of production but must also address the underlying causes for the demand in illegal drugs."

The Vatican position puts it at the centre of a tense policy that will play out at the highest levels of the United Nations.

On one side, governments like Guatemala, Colombia and Mexico, which requested the UN session, are pushing for new policies, such as improved treatment, providing assistance to grow different crops for farmers who cultivate illicit drugs and alternatives to incarceration for drug users. On the other hand, powerful UN members, including China, Russia and Egypt, remain in favour of the prohibitionist war on drugs.

"The Catholic Church is clearly calling for a public health approach, which is similar to the position the U.S. government has

criminalizing drug use."

On March 29, U.S. President Barack Obama reiterated that his administration wants more treatment options.

"The most important thing to do is reduce demand. And the only way to do that is to provide treatment — to see it as public health problem and not a criminal problem," he said.

## Rising homicide rates

Meanwhile, drug addiction and violence related to drug trafficking is affecting nearly every area of the world, including Central America and Mexico, where spiking homicide rates are pushing residents to flee to the United States.

Mexico launched a crackdown on drug cartels and organized crime 10 years ago but has been plagued by violence ever since, with more than 100,000 dead and 20,000 people missing. Criminal



CNS/Jeffrey Arguedas, EPA

**DRUG USE** — In this file photo, a drug addict smokes drugs in the city of San Jose, Costa Rica.



# Seeds put us in touch with our own goodness



## Everyday Theology

Louise McEwan

"Look, Granny. Basil sprouting!" exclaimed my granddaughter as she took me to see the tiny seedlings on the table in her playroom. Earlier that day, we had wandered around my yard, hand in hand, looking for sprouting things. We marvelled at the tulips poking through the leaf mulch, the buds forming on the lilacs, and the hellebore lenten rose blooming on the sunny south side of the house. The hellebore is the first thing to bloom in my garden and I am always tickled when it blooms before Easter.

A few days later, my husband and I took our granddaughter to Seedy Saturday, a nationwide movement that promotes the cultivation and preservation of heirloom and endangered varieties of food crops. Our local event had a kids' planting table, and before our granddaughter planted her seed in the Styrofoam cup that she had filled with soil, she cradled it gently in her tiny hand as if she were in the presence of something holy.

*Trail, B.C., resident Louise McEwan is a freelance writer, religion columnist and catechist. She has degrees in English and theology and is a former teacher. She blogs at [www.faithcolouredglass.blogspot.ca](http://www.faithcolouredglass.blogspot.ca). Reach her at [louisemcewan@telus.net](mailto:louisemcewan@telus.net)*

I have a healthy respect for seeds. Coming from an Italian background, I grew up with a vegetable garden in the backyard. It was a riot of plants that produced abundant crops, many of which my father planted from the seeds he saved annually. Tomato seeds germinated in little pots by the basement window; others we sowed directly into the ground. From seed to table, I grew up with crunchy carrots, juicy tomatoes, meaty roman beans, tender lettuce and bitter radicchio that tantalized (or tortured) my taste buds and nourished my body.

I used to wonder why my father kept seeds when it would have been so much simpler and tidier to buy them. But, keeping the seeds was a symbolic way for my father to stay connected with the land that his family had farmed for generations in the old country. My father's method of gardening, including his insistence on planting according to the phases of the moon, kept us rooted with our past.

I shared some of this with Mohawk seed keeper Terrylynn Brant, who sees an intimate connection between the seed, ancestors and land, and who, like my father plants her crops based on the moon.

Brant grew up in a family that was able to maintain its agricul-



Design Pics

**NOURISHING THE SPIRIT** — "There is a genius to a seed that we miss when we lose contact with the soil and the source of the food on our table," writes Louise McEwan. "Sowing a seed, nurturing its growth, and plucking its fruit off the vine does more than feed our bodies; it nourishes our spirit."

tural practices despite government policies that threatened the traditional agricultural way of life of the communities of the Haudenosaunee. From an early age, she had a passion for gardening, which she believes is her gift from the Creator, and she has always been mindful of the importance of keeping the seeds of her ancestors, some of which, she told me, go back to time immemorial. For Brant, a seed is a sacred thing and a metaphor for the innate dignity and goodness of the individual.

"Seeds have their own inherent responsibility given to them by Creator. It's basically to grow and to reproduce themselves.

That's the duty and responsibility they've been given . . . to continue who they are and what they are" and the seed will always do its best to honour the task creation had in mind for it.

Brant applies this concept to people. "The Creator sent us here as beautiful, perfect beings. He intended us to grow beautiful, to be compassionate with our fellow man, to share everything we have, to love one another. And yet, we are the ones who mess that up. . . . We should look at the seed, and we should be reminded every time we hold it in our hands what is pure, what is good, what is right, but we do not."

There is a genius to a seed that we miss when we lose contact with the soil and the source of the food on our table. Sowing a seed, nurturing its growth, and plucking its fruit off the vine does more than feed our bodies; it nourishes our spirit. When we wonder at basil sprouting or feel our heart leap up at the blooming of the lenten rose after a dark winter, we touch the goodness inherent in our selves, and intuit the possibility for our own transformation and that of the world. The seed helps us get back to the garden where we glimpse the perfection and harmony for which we long.

## Emotions have a role to play in our spiritual growth

### Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



*"All emotions are pure which gather you and lift you up; that emotion is impure which seizes only one side of your being and so distorts you."* — Rainer Maria Rilke

*"This being human is a guest house/every morning a new arrival/A joy, a depression, a meanness . . . Welcome and entertain them all! . . . Be grateful for whatever comes/because each has been sent as a guide from beyond."* — Rumi

What is the role of the emotions in spiritual growth? We have been given so many reasons to dis-

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trust emotions, from early childhood templates of good and bad feelings, to cultural conditioning in the western world, to religious splits of our "higher" and "lower" natures in dealing with the *passions*. Then there's our individual experience of negative emotions threatening to get us into endless trouble, inside and out, when those emotions take over.

For religious or spiritual people, unprocessed emotion or neglected "unfinished business," to use therapy-speak, can lead to premature transcendence, spiritual bypass, or high-level denial of

emotional wounds. Yet unintegrated feelings are notorious back-seat drivers, with the disastrous consequences we see in crashes of the unbalanced psyche at the weak links in society. Where there's a lack of integration, there's also a lot of bad advice.

I've never understood the "how to" of just *let go* when it comes to feelings that don't naturally take the high road, as if they are glitches in our operating system which can simply be deleted, if not reprogrammed. On the other hand, the self-preoccupied, thin-skinned, endless processing of hurt or offended feelings has been the demise of many relationships, which lose sight of the bright side of life.

Fortunately, to be a godly man or woman, though it does imply being emotionally mature, doesn't mean pitting higher consciousness against the burden of

emotional baggage, trigger points, and the general muckiness of negative feelings. That's where it helps to know Jesus didn't come to redeem the righteous and doesn't expect to find us in any kind of pristine state. Starting right where we are, there's a third alternative to repressing or indulging emotions. It's welcoming them as messengers and allies of the inner life, bringing surprising gifts.

In order not to "shoot the messenger" one need only ask of a prevailing emotion, "If this feeling could speak (kindly), what would it say to me?" Where there's a feeling, there's a need if we pay attention to where the feeling is pointing and the constructive attention summoned. Where there's a need, there's an underlying value — something that matters to us. Where there's a value, there's a purpose and an intention which, when unearthed,

can honour the energy of the original emotion. There are good instincts beneath fear, potential restoration of boundaries within resentment, ground-clearing heralded by depression. For example, ask of anger, "What must be protected?" and "What must be restored?" Ask of fear, "What action must be taken?" Treat each emotion with honour and respect in your interior guest house. Similarly, ask questions of sadness: "What must be released?" and "What must be rejuvenated?" If sadness has a deeper job to do, it can become depression, the stop sign of the soul. Bless the depression and ask the questions: "What must end now?" and "What can no longer be sustained in my soul?" When you approach painful emotions with empathy and understanding, instead of getting burned by them, they can fuel a fire of purification.

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# Lack of spring seems to be debt for mild winter

## Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



I've been feeling a little discouraged lately by Mother Nature's insistence that winter stay around for as long as it can. We were given an unseasonably mild winter this year, but maybe nature is recalling the loan for the mildness we experienced. Now we're paying the debt back.

Does it seem as if spring arrives later and later each year? The Canada geese usually arrive at the same time, and their arrival has always been a mood booster for

me, yet for a few years now, it feels as if we're being robbed of spring and cheated out of what would normally be moderate and mild temperatures at this time of year.

The weather has been terribly inconsistent. Just this morning we awoke to freezing rain, followed by a snow squall of fist-sized, fat flakes. By lunch time it was a balmy plus nine degrees, albeit with gale-force winds. And there it is: in the morning we're given polar-cold wind blasts, and in the afternoon we bask in balmy temperatures.

Have you ever been asked questions such as, "Cold enough for 'ya?" or "Wet enough for 'ya?" "Is it getting any warmer

out there?" Or even, "Do you think it'll warm up soon?" These questions can easily get two strangers talking, as weather is the safest topic of conversation that can exist between two people.

I've been a weather watcher forever, and I've always enjoyed meteorological conversations. My mood, unfortunately, can be dictated by the forecast. I curse the Weather Network and lose patience with meteorologists when the weather is bad . . . as if bad weather is their fault! It gives me a perverse sense of satisfaction to do this. *Someone* has to take the blame. It can't be God.

I gave up praying for favourable or good weather long ago. It's an exercise in futility. It's not like God mixes up the highs and lows in order to give some areas rain and others dry conditions. God doesn't adjust the jet stream to bring in warm air from the south, and God doesn't push cold Arctic air over us giving us these chilling conditions for this time of year. The laws of nature do that for us, and God does not manipulate the laws of nature. Having said that, I

appreciate the need to pray for good weather because it proves that our reliance is upon God.

We can't do anything about weather. We can curse it all we want but, ultimately, it's not in our hands. And so we surrender it to God's hands. Prayer, in this way, is never in vain.

In order to understand the coming of God's kingdom, Jesus says we have to look for the signs. He says that when you see people treating others kindly and compassionately you know that God is near, much in the same way that

the leaves on the trees tell us that summer is here. There hasn't been much to indicate that spring is even here, let alone summer, but even though we haven't seen the signs, we believe spring will eventually come: "Happy are those who have not seen, but yet believe."

Our spirits easily droop with the continual onslaught of cold winds and cold temperatures. May God thaw the despair in our hearts and summon nature's Lazarus to come forth from its icy tomb to replenish the earth with greenery, warmth and new life.



**WHOSE FAULT IS THIS?** — A pair of Canada geese stand on a pond instead of swimming in it, wondering when the ice will finally thaw. It seems, writes Tom Saretsky, that spring arrives later every year.

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## Thoughts on The Joy of Love

The papal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) was released shortly before the Prairie Messenger went to press. Stories in this issue give a glimpse into its contents, but varied initial reactions from around the world have been raised. Here are some, to give us some insights into the document:

The bishops of Canada joyfully welcomed the exhortation. They said in a media release, “As the national assembly of the Catholic bishops of this country, we encourage its prayerful reception among all the faithful, and recommend its careful study to married couples and families, and to those agencies and organizations working with them, as well as to pastors and those in consecrated life who are called to be at the service of family life.”

Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston commented: “*Amoris Laetitia* is a joyful invitation for families to live the works of mercy and to receive the gift of God’s healing where there is sin and brokenness. As he has done time and again, Pope Francis challenges us to approach the weak with compassion, to ‘enter into the reality of other people’s lives and to know the power of tenderness.’”

Archbishop José H. Gómez of Los Angeles said, “Personally, I was encouraged by what the pope has to say about preparing men and women for marriage and about our need to accompany couples, especially during those early years when they are just starting

out on the path of their life together. I was also touched by our Holy Father’s call for all of us in the church to reach out with compassion to wounded families and persons living in difficult situations.”

Archbishop Blase J. Cupich of Chicago said, “The Holy Father says some things that might surprise you — he is complimentary of the women’s movement and tells us we can learn from Eastern-rite married priests. His language is sometimes colourful and highly expressive — he warns us not to ‘simply apply moral laws to those living in “irregular” situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives.’ Aside from this, my first impression is that this very readable text reveals a true pastor, someone who has honed a pastoral sensitivity as a priest for more than half a century.”

Bishop Peter A. Libasci of Manchester, New Hampshire said, “The church feels the challenge of a changing culture and must reassess its efforts in helping those who, for example, are divorced and remarried to know that they are welcome. Sometimes what the church actually teaches and why it holds these teachings is not communicated as effectively as others’ perceptions of who and what we are about. That is exactly why Pope Francis calls upon us to make a bold effort: so that all Catholics — indeed all people of goodwill — will see the effort that the church is making to be close to them, regardless of what their situation might be or how alienated from the church they may feel.”

Other commentators pointed out how the exhortation fell short of their expectations.

Candida R. Moss, professor of New Testament and early Christianity at the University of Notre Dame, said, “He (Pope Francis) demonstrates exquisite sensitivity to the way that poverty, housing problems, violence, drugs, migration, arranged marriages, abandonment and persecution affect the family. Indeed, part of his rationale for pastoral sensitivity toward the divorced and remarried is his recognition that financial pressures often lead to remarriage. Francis’ compassion runs out when it comes to the kinds of marital problems associated with the wealthy. No compassionate caveats are offered for those using contraception or reproductive technology. Surrogacy is denounced in scathing terms and contraception (is) tied to greed and consumerism.”

Women’s Ordination Worldwide commented: “The Vatican offers seeds of hope for a church moving away from general and strict doctrinal rules to one of grace and growth. This challenging, and at times poetic document exhibits highs and lows, both championing pastoral discernment, the primacy of conscience, and even ‘the women’s movement,’ but is riddled with an incomplete and painful understanding of feminism, reproductive health, gender, and sexual identity.”

The pope’s positive exhortation on marriage and family life is a far cry from an earlier negative theology of marriage and sexuality exemplified by St. Augustine, for example. We hope it will support a healthy understanding and practice of family life today. — PWN

## Advanced directives for assisted-dying a risky and dangerous step

By Harvey Chochinov,  
Winnipeg, Troy Media

The moment we are born, our lives take flight; and the longer we are airborne, the greater the chance of encountering turbulence along the way. While every flight is destined to land, some landings are harder to contemplate than others.

The parliamentary committee tasked with advising the federal government on how to roll out physician-hastened death must have struggled with the prospect of dying with dementia. Their advice to lawmakers was anyone with a condition likely to cause a loss of competence should be able to complete an advance directive any time after their diagnosis, directing that they should be euthanized.

This recommendation goes well beyond anything the Supreme Court of Canada — which stipulated physician-hastened death must only be considered for competent adults, in the circumstances of their current condition — intended. The idea that Canada would make it lawful for people to consider a future version of themselves unacceptable and sign off on an order to have their lives ended was not something the court contemplated.

After all, in any assisted-dying regime, a competent patient is free to change their mind or express their ambivalence by withdrawing a request or postponing an assisted death. To permit an assisted death to proceed on the basis of an advance directive effectively denies this protection to persons who are no longer capable of making or expressing health care decisions.

Chochinov is a distinguished professor of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba and an expert adviser with Evidence Network.ca. He holds the only Canada research chair in palliative care. [www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)

That is a risky proposition.

Research shows people are not very good at predicting what they would want and what they might need and feel in circumstances they have not yet confronted. The farther removed those circumstances are from today’s reality, the more difficult it is to imagine the response.

So why did the Canadian committee go as far as it did?

Fear is seldom a reliable guide to good social policy. But like most of us, parliamentary committee members must have found the prospect of turning into an altered version of their former selves terrifying. They likely did not appreciate that dementia is a progressive terminal illness — the seventh-leading cause of death in Canada. They probably did not appreciate the suffering they imagined was due to lack of adequate or appropriate end-of-life care these patients receive — despite ample

evidence that the symptom burden can be comparable to cancer.

Patients with dementia are less likely to be referred for palliative care, have family caregiver

involvement in decision-making or receive palliative medication, including pain medication.

Dutch legislators included a euthanasia advance-directive pro

vision for patients anticipating a cognitive decline. While their rationale likely mirrored the

— DEMENTIA, page 31

## Doctors over-prescribe for ‘superbugs’

By Colleen M. Flood and Bryan  
Thomas, Ottawa, Troy Media

In 1928, a Petri dish in Alexander Fleming’s lab was accidentally contaminated by a mould spore, leading to the discovery of penicillin and, in time,

Flood is a professor at the University of Ottawa and a university research chair in health law and policy. Thomas is a research associate with the Centre for Health Law, Policy and Ethics, University of Ottawa. [www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)

a revolution in medicine. Almost a century later, that revolution faces a menacing challenge.

With the discovery of penicillin, deadly infectious diseases like pneumonia, meningitis and tuberculosis could be reliably treated. Everything from childbirth to transplant surgery to chemotherapy was made safer through the use of antimicrobials to prevent infection.

However, bacteria and other pathogens are constantly evolving into “superbugs,” capable of resisting our cache of antimicrobials, which include antibiotics like penicillin as well as antifun-

gals, antiparasitics and antivirals. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that “a post-antibiotic era — in which common infections and minor injuries can kill — is a very real possibility for the 21st century.”

Studies predict that by 2050 antimicrobial resistance will claim more lives annually than cancer, dragging down the global economy by as much as 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product. Even now, as many as 18,000 patients are infected with superbugs every year in Canada, adding \$1 billion to health care costs.

In the arms race between germs and medicine, the global community has two complementary strategies: develop new antimicrobials, and slow the emergence of resistant strains through judicious use of current antimicrobials.

Neither strategy is being executed effectively. Very few antimicrobials have been brought to market over the past 30 years — they are unprofitable for drug companies. As well, we continue to squander the available cache through overuse and misuse in health care and animal agriculture.

The bulk of antimicrobial prescribing is done by general practitioners for outpatient treatment of things like coughs and sore throats. Although there is an element of guesswork in treating these symptoms, there appears to be a great deal of overprescribing. GPs admit to prescribing antibiotics to placate pushy patients — two-thirds of

— REGULATORY, page 31



CNS/Roch Bouka, Reuters

**VIOLENCE IN REPUBLIC OF CONGO** — People fleeing violence gather outside a Catholic church in the Republic of Congo’s capital, Brazzaville, April 5. The previous day, three police officers and two gunmen were killed in heavy fighting touched off by President Denis Sassou Nguesso’s disputed re-election.



## Dialogue needed to address thorny issue of assisted suicide

**The Editor:** In response to an article which appeared in the Feb. 24 PM “Clergy face moral issues on assisted suicide,” it is indeed a thorny issue but not for bishops and priests alone. The title of this article seems to give “ownership” of the sacraments to the clergy and therefore gives them the right to dispense the sacrament as they see fit.

The sacraments are for the Christian (Catholic) community. They are not favours for good behaviour but an experience of the saving work of God in our lives.

I would hope that bishops and priests would invite the faithful to dialogue with them on this matter. Dialogue brings people together. In these turbulent times, we need

more dialogue to promote unity and understanding.

During this year of mercy and in the midst of this controversy, what an opportunity to witness the mercy of God to those in the midst of crisis. As Pope Francis stated in his recent letter, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), “no one can be condemned forever.” Who knows the mind of the person asking for assisted death? Only God does. Who knows the mind of God? Only God does.

To condemn people even before they depart this world seems to go against everything the Gospel teaches. Did Jesus not eat, talk to and touch those condemned by the religious leaders

of his time? Jesus witnessed mercy and justice in the true sense of Scripture. It was justice which restored people to wholeness. It was not punitive justice which made people cringe and fear God. The sacrament of the sick in this situation may be a lifeline someone is desperately looking for. Let’s hope the church can extend that lifeline.

As I said in the beginning, this is a thorny issue with no easy solution but if we dialogue, speak our thoughts, express our feeling, share our experiences, and listen, perhaps together, as the whole people of God, we can be led by the Holy Spirit to a true pastoral solution. — **Anthony Chezzi, Sudbury, Ont.**



### Changing of the Guard

In the beauty of the crocus  
Crowning morning’s fresh snowfall,  
In the chirping of the robin  
Sprightly spring has come to call!

For the air has a sweet freshness  
As the Earth begins to preen,  
’Tis the changing of the guard now . . .  
Winter white for springtime green!

By Jeanette Martino Land

## Small gestures nourish family spirituality

Continued from page 1

domination that ultimately makes spouses use “sex as a form of escapism and renounce the beauty of conjugal union.”

“We need to remember that au-

thentic love also needs to be able to receive the other, to accept one’s own vulnerability and needs, and to welcome with sincere and joyful gratitude the physical expressions of love found in a caress, an embrace, a kiss and sexual union,” he wrote.

Moreover, the pope stressed the importance of the spirituality of the family which “is made up of small but real gestures” that manifest God’s presence in “real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes.”

Family life doesn’t detract from spiritual life, he explained, but is rather a path that leads married couples and families “to lead them to the heights of mystical union.”

“The fraternal and communal demands of family life are an incentive to growth in openness

of heart and thus to an ever fuller encounter with the Lord,” he wrote.

Family prayer, the pope wrote, is a way of strengthening “the hidden presence of the risen Lord” by taking a few minutes of each day to pray or give thanks and “to come together before the living God.”

“With a few simple words, this moment of prayer can do immense good for our families,” he wrote.

Pope Francis also emphasized the importance of the eucharist, the sacrament of the new covenant, that offers “spouses the strength and incentive needed to live the marriage covenant each day as a ‘domestic church.’”

Spirituality in family life can help married couples and families rediscover the meaning of their mission in “transforming the world” as a domestic church and “strive toward something greater than ourselves” with all of life’s ups and downs.

“No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love,” he wrote. “May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us.”



CNS/Paul Haring

**THE JOY OF LOVE — Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, general secretary of the synod of bishops, and Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn pose with Francesco Miano and Pina De Simone, a married couple who participated in the synod of bishops on the family, during a news conference for the release of Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), at the Vatican April 8. Francesco said the pope’s tone and style made it feel like he was taking people “by the hand to discover the beauty of our families — imperfect, fragile, but extraordinary because they are supported in their daily journey by the love of the Lord who never tires, doesn’t renege, and makes everything new.”**

## Dementia patients become different persons

Continued from page 30

Canadian parliamentary committee, the idea has turned out to be completely untenable. Despite requests occasionally being made, they are rarely adhered to.

In the vast majority of instances, physicians find it “inconceivable” to comply with the requests, given the patient with dementia has become a psychologically different person than the one who made the original request; physicians are no longer able to determine the patient’s current wishes, feel the patient is not suffering or believe that they no longer want to die.

While family members were supportive of not including life-prolonging treatment, they asked that the euthanasia advance directive not be followed because of uncertainty about the person’s current wishes, not being ready for the person to die or not sensing that the person is suffering.

As for planning a good death with dementia, end-of-life discussions need to start sooner rather than later. Patients must have the opportunity to express their wishes and preferences for care. Their pain and symptoms need to be well-managed. Advanced-care planning can ensure unwanted treatments —

which may prolong the length of life without sustaining or improving the quality of life — are not imposed. Such planning can also reduce the likelihood of unnecessary hospitalizations and increase the chances of dying where people choose.

There is good data to demonstrate that compassion, a gentle touch, respect, and patience can benefit even those patients with moderate to severe dementia. Granted, this approach is not the quick and efficient landing the parliamentary committee members may have had in mind. But for now, it is the very best we can do.

## Regulatory pressure needed to ensure careful stewardship

Continued from page 30

whom wrongly believe that antibiotics are effective in treating colds and flu. That physicians bow to patients in this way is understandable because there is little regulatory pressure pushing them to be careful stewards.

Other countries have more rigorous national strategies that require accountability. Last year, U.S. President Barack Obama announced a system of monitoring and incentives to reduce inappropriate use of antibiotics in outpatient settings by 50 per cent by 2020. In England, the National Health Service has set targets for reduced outpatient prescribing of antimicrobials, backed by financial incentives. Senior officials with the country’s National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) have mused that doctors who overprescribe antibiotics may face disciplinary action.

Where is Canada on this issue?

There is consensus that the federal government must play a leadership role on antimicrobial stewardship, co-ordinating efforts by provinces and health professionals. Yet according to a 2015 report by the auditor general of Canada, nearly two decades of study and consultation have yielded little by way of actual targets and deadlines.

Instead, we see heavy empha-

sis on information gathering and awareness-raising. For example, the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Framework for Action on antimicrobial resistance, released in 2014, acknowledges the problem of over-prescribing, but the only concrete proposal mentioned is an annual Antibiotic Awareness Week. A bewildering array of initiatives by the provinces and non-governmental agencies is also engaged in surveying and raising awareness about antimicrobial resistance.

There appear to be no firm Canadian targets for reduced antimicrobial prescribing, let alone clear lines of accountability for their achievement.

A key challenge is that responsibility for health is shared between the federal government and the provinces, with the further wrinkle that physicians are self-regulated by the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons. Unsurprisingly, a search of the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons’ database turned up zero cases of doctors investigated for poor antimicrobial stewardship.

The federal government needs to ensure that the provinces and in turn physicians make tangible progress.

The most straightforward path through this jurisdictional morass would be for Ottawa to offer the provinces financial incentives for targeted reductions in antibiotic use.



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# Mercy and patience strengthen family, says pope

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The same mercy and patience that are essential for building a strong family must be shown to those whose families are in trouble or have broken up, Pope Francis said in his highly anticipated postsynodal apostolic exhortation.

The document, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), on Love in the Family, released April 8, contains no new rules or norms. However, it encourages careful review of everything related to family ministry and, particularly, much greater attention to the language and attitude used when explaining church teaching and ministering to those who do not fully live that teaching.

"No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love," Pope Francis wrote. People grow in holiness, and the church must be there to give them a helping hand rather than turn them away because they have not attained some degree of perfection.

The exhortation was Pope Francis' reflection on the discussion, debate and suggestions raised during the 2014 and 2015 meetings of the Synod of Bishops on the family. Like synod members did, the pope insisted that God's plan for the family is that it be built on the lifelong union of one man and one woman open to having children.

Synod members, including priests, religious and laypeople serving as experts and observers, talked about everything from varied cultural forms of courtship to marriage preparation and from the impact of migration on fami-

lies to care for elderly parents.

Pope Francis' document touches on all the issues raised at the synods and gives practical advice on raising children, urges a revision of sex-education programs and decries the many ways the "disposable culture" has infiltrated family life and sexuality to the point that many people feel free to use and then walk away from others.

"Everyone uses and throws away, takes and breaks, exploits and squeezes to the last drop. Then, goodbye," he wrote.

Much of the document is tied to the theme of God's mercy, including Pope Francis' discussion of welcoming the vulnerable.

"Dedication and concern shown to migrants and to persons with special needs alike is a sign of the Spirit," he wrote. Both are "a test of our commitment to show mercy in welcoming others and to help the vulnerable to be fully a part of our communities."

The synod issues that garnered the most headlines revolved around the question of communion for the divorced and civilly remarried, as well as Catholic attitudes toward homosexuality.

"In no way must the church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage, God's plan in all its grandeur," Pope Francis said.

He repeated his and the synod's insistence that the church cannot consider same-sex unions to be a marriage, but also insisted, "every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity."

On the question of families experiencing difficulties, separation or even divorce and remarriage, Pope Francis said responses

to the questionnaires sent around the world before the synod "showed that most people in difficult or critical situations do not seek pastoral assistance, since they do not find it sympathetic, realistic or concerned for individual cases."

The responses, he wrote, call on the church "to try to approach marriage crises with greater sensitivity to their burden of hurt and anxiety."

Particularly in ministry to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, Pope Francis said, pastors must help each couple look at their actions and circumstances, recognize their share of responsibility for the breakup of their marriage, acknowledge church teaching that marriage is indissoluble and prayerfully discern what God is calling them to.

Pope Francis said it would be a "grave danger" to give people the impression that "any priest can quickly grant 'exceptions' or that some people can obtain sacramental privileges in exchange for favours."

At the same time, he insisted, "the way of the church is not to condemn anyone forever; it is to pour out the balm of God's mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart."

Divorced and civilly remarried couples, especially those with children, must be welcomed in Catholic parishes and supported in efforts to raise their children in the faith.

Generally, without an annulment of their sacramental marriage, such a couple would not be able to receive communion or absolution of their sins unless they promised to live as "brother and sister." But every situation is

different, the pope said, which is why the church does not need new rules, but a new commitment on the part of pastors to provide spiritual guidance and assistance with discernment.

The diversity of situations — for example, that of a spouse who was abandoned versus being the one who left — makes it unwise to issue "a new set of general rules, canonical in nature and applicable to all cases," the pope wrote. Quoting St. John Paul II, he said, "since the degree of responsibility is not equal in all cases, the consequences or effects of a rule need not necessarily always be the same."

Pope Francis used the document's footnotes to specify that the consequences include whether or not the couple might eventually be able to receive communion: "This is also the case with regard



CNS/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters

**FAMILY EXHORTATION —** A man reads a newspaper in front of St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 8. In his postsynodal apostolic exhortation released that day, Pope Francis said the same mercy and patience that are essential for building a strong family must be shown to those whose families are in trouble or have broken up.

to sacramental discipline, since discernment can recognize that in a particular situation no grave fault exists," he wrote. Those who are in a state of serious sin are not to receive communion.

Another footnote commented on the church's request that remarried couples who had not received an annulment and who want to receive the sacraments forgo sexual relations. "In such situations, many people, knowing and accepting the possibility of living 'as brothers and sisters' which the church offers them, point out that if certain expressions of intimacy are lacking, 'it often happens that faithfulness is endangered and the good of the children suffers,' " he wrote.

Pope Francis wrote that he understood those "who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion. But I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness, a mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching, always does what good she can, even if in the process, her shoes get soiled by the mud of the street."

Turning to those who believe allowing divorced and remarried Catholics to receive communion waters down church teaching on the indissolubility of marriage, the pope said, "we put so many conditions on mercy that we empty it of its concrete meaning and real significance. That is the worst way of watering down the Gospel."

The role of an individual's conscience made frequent appearances in the document, not only regarding the situation of those who may determine their new union is best for their family, but also regarding decisions over how many children to have.

## Commitment to family is a risk and a bold gamble

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis' hymn to love and family life is more like a country song than a Disney tune.

In *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), Pope Francis' postsynodal apostolic exhortation on the fami-

ly, there is passion and devotion, but also heartache and sweat. The "magic" he wrote about is not momentarily sparkly, but the result of prayer, grace, hard work and a willingness to apologize — time and time again.

"Committing oneself exclusively and definitively to another

person always involves a risk and a bold gamble," he wrote. But the payoff is huge.

The papal reflection on love, family life and the importance of marriage and child-rearing has sections that are deeply theological, pristinely poetic or even homiletic, like his reflection on the meaning of each line of the passage from the First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13, used at millions of weddings each year: "Love is patient, love is kind. . . ."

But it also got into the nitty-gritty business of life when a man and a woman leave their parents' home and try to make one of their own. However, while it quoted from some of his past speeches on family life, it did not include references to "plates flying" during arguments and refrained from making mother-in-law jokes, as he has been known to do.

Pope Francis reviewed the whole arc of married life from new and exciting young love to old age, sitting on the porch watching the grandkids play.

"Young love needs to keep dancing toward the future with immense hope," he wrote. "Hope is the leaven that, in those first years of engagement and marriage, makes it possible to look beyond arguments, conflicts and problems and to see things in a

broader perspective."

While realistic about late nights and colic, the papal document is lyrical in its reflections on the blessings and challenges of welcoming children into families. He invited readers to join him standing in awe of God's gift of children, marvelling that "God allows parents to choose the name by which he himself will call their child for all eternity."

Running after toddlers, supervising homework, trying to figure out how to be close to adolescents without smothering them and, finally, negotiating the "empty nest" syndrome all feature in the papal text.

Reaching together the later stage of family life, he insisted, is possible and beautiful.

"Although the body ages," he said, "it still expresses that personal identity that first won our heart. Even if others can no longer see the beauty of that identity, a spouse continues to see it with the eyes of love and so his or her affection does not diminish."

The path to the porch won't be easy, the pope wrote. But "each crisis has a lesson to teach us; we need to learn how to listen for it with the ear of the heart."



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

**POPE BLESSES NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES —** Pope Francis greets newly married couples during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in this Sept. 30, 2015, file photo. In his postsynodal apostolic exhortation on the family, Pope Francis says committing oneself exclusively and definitively to another person "always involves a risk and a bold gamble." But the payoff is huge.

Mistakes are the portal to discovery

— James Joyce