



A sacred place

Death is “a very sacred place,” according to a daughter who accompanied her mother on her final journey, but palliative care is surrounded by misconceptions. — page 3

Women deacons

Pope Francis has said he would set up a commission to study deaconesses and insists more can and should be done to involve lay and consecrated women in church decision-making at every level. Theologian Phyllis Zagano spoke recently on the subject in Toronto. — pages 2, 4

Education Week/Day

Catholic Education Week was celebrated throughout Saskatchewan May 1 - 7, including a special mass at St. George’s Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Saskatoon on World Catholic Education Day, May 5. — page 6

Crisis in Fort McMurray

The stories emerging from the Fort McMurray crisis are hope-affirming. From prayers and special collections, to offers of shelter and food, the tragedy is bringing people together. — pages 10-11

Saying yes

Yes is the word God speaks to us over and over again, writes Leah Perrault, and it is the dangerous word she wants to say more often too. — page 14

500th anniversary

The year 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the publication of Martin Luther’s 95 theses, writes Tom Ryan, CSP. It will be the first centenary commemoration that takes place in an ecumenical age and will include a year of events. — page 15



D&P calls attention to mining justice

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace urges Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to heed a letter from more than 160 Latin American organizations calling for mining justice.

Development and Peace and Mining Watch Canada released the open letter sent in late April from a range of *Caritas Internationalis* partners, human rights, environmental, legal, indigenous and farmer organizations from the Global South, raising continued concerns about Canadian mining.

“This document was delivered to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and to the Canadian Mission to the Organization of American States, the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Canadian embassies in countries where the 22 mining projects examined in the report operate, namely: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, and Peru,” said the April 25 letter to the prime minister. “This report recognizes the efforts of various Canadian parliamentarians, including members of the Liberal party, toward the adoption of a legislative framework that would hold Canadian mining companies accountable for their acts carried out overseas.”

The letter opens with an expression of “satisfaction at the change in the political landscape that has followed your election as leader of the Canadian government,” such as the creation of a diverse cabinet commitment to the rights of indigenous peoples; and a constructive approach to climate

change negotiations.

“As activists, Latin American organizations and networks, along with international groups and organizations that have partners in Latin America, we are aware of and concerned about the human rights violations committed by Canadian mining companies oper-

ating in the region,” the letter said.

“Several of the signatory organizations are partner organizations of Development and Peace whose work in the field has been directly affected by Canadian mining,” said Development and

— COMPANIES, page 6



CCN/Gyapong

MARCH FOR LIFE — A group of young people sing and dance to a popular praise tune at the end of the National March for Life on Parliament Hill in Ottawa May 12. See stories, pages 3 and 8.

Pope Francis has rebranded the church and the papacy

By Ed Wilkinson

BROOKLYN, N.Y. (CNS) — Pope Francis has rebranded the Catholic Church and the papacy, and the media have taken notice.

That was the message delivered by Basilian Father Thomas Rosica, who delivered the keynote address May 11 at the Brooklyn Diocese’s observance of World Communications Day.

Rosica, CEO of Canada’s Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation and the English-language attache to the Holy See Press Office at the Vatican, was presented with the Brooklyn Diocese’s St. Francis DeSales Distinguished Communicator Award by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio.

“Prior to Pope Francis, when many people on the street were asked: ‘What is the Catholic Church all about? What does the pope stand for?’ The response would often be, ‘Catholics, well they are against abortion, gay marriage and birth control. They are known for the sex abuse crisis that has terribly marred and weakened their moral authority and credibility,’ ” said Rosica.

“Today I dare say that the response is somewhat different. What do they say about us now? What do they say about the pope?

People are speaking about our leader who is unafraid to confront the sins and evils that have marred us,” he continued.

“We have a pope who is concerned about the environment, about mercy, compassion and love, and a deep passion, care and concern for the poor and for displaced peoples roaming the face of this earth,” he added. “Pope Francis has won over a great part of the media.”



CNS/Robert M. Longo

Rev. Thomas Rosica

The pontiff “has changed the image of the church so much that prestigious graduate schools of business and management are

now using him as a case study in rebranding,” the priest added.

— DIALOGUE, page 19

‘Listening’ is an instrument of peace, says Benedictine

By Paul Paproski, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — Benedictine spirituality has much to offer the world through its teaching of “listening,” Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, OSB, explained to a gathering May 5 at St. Peter’s Abbey. The first word of the Rule of St. Benedict, the guide for Benedictines, is “listen.” It begins the sentence, “Listen carefully, my son, to the master’s instructions and attend to them with the ear of your heart,” said Stasyszen of St. Gregory’s Abbey of Shawnee, Okla.

The Rule begins with an invitation to seek the peace of God’s kingdom by listening to what is written, not just in a physical sense, but with the ear of one’s heart, which is one’s complete being. The Rule was written in the sixth century in Italy with the intention of transforming the reader into a deeper relationship with God.

“I believe in the power of absorbing and listening. This is what Benedictine spirituality has to offer our institutions, our society and world,” Stasyszen remarked. The wisdom of listening comes to mind when Stasyszen hears of local and international conflicts. He remembers when the term “Balkanization” was used to describe the breakup of Yugoslavia into smaller countries in the 1990s. The same term described the disintegration of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires following the First World War. Many countries and empires collapsed, he said, because of ethnic tensions and intolerance. These problems have fuelled conflicts today in Africa and the Middle East.

The term Balkanization could apply to the social, economic and political divisions currently threatening unity within Europe and the

— RULE, page 4

Women religious warned about ‘entitlement-creep’

By Joshua McElwee

ROME (CNS) — The leaders of the world’s communities of Catholic women religious were warned against accepting an “entitlement creep” that numbs them from confronting poverty and environmental destruction.

At the opening session of a triennial assembly of the International Union of Superiors General in Rome, U.S. Sister Carol Zinn, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, told about 900 women religious representing nearly 500,000 sisters globally that religious life has widely been a “first-world lifestyle” marked by opportunities for higher education and job and housing security.

While Zinn said such education is important, she said it also “numbs our minds and blinds our heart.”

The gifts that women religious receive, she said May 9, “can create a numbness of consciences and a blindness of heart through which

we can easily see not the pain, but see what we want to see.”

During five days of plenary sessions and meetings, including a scheduled private audience with Pope Francis May 12, the community leaders were to tackle questions of the role of religious life in the world in the light of current global issues, particularly the continuing economic and environmental crises.

Zinn focused much of her remarks on spurring action to fight global climate change and degradation of the environment. She called on the women to undertake a conversion of mindset, heart and will to become “weavers of solidarity for the planet.”

She told the story of a young girl who was late coming home because she stopped to cry with another girl who had broken a favourite toy, adding that the story “captures the core of our vocation.”

“How can we be present enough to the reality of our Earth today so that our hearts are bro-

ken?” Zinn asked. “It’s so easy for us to avoid the reality . . . because the reality oftentimes stands before us, and we do not see it for what it is, and so we are unable to respond to it.”

“The entire world, the entire planet, every species on the planet needs you right now,” said Zinn, who laced her remarks with quotations from Pope Francis’ environmental encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, on Care for Our Common Home.

Maltese Sister Carmen Sammut, president of the International Union of Superiors General and the general superior of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, opened the gathering May 9 by explaining the assembly’s theme was chosen because many are familiar with the “beautiful, complex, patient, creative, skilful work” of weaving.

“The commitment to global solidarity is also a most beautiful and complex enterprise which needs patience, solidarity and skill,” Sammut said. “And like all

weaving, it starts with one stitch and goes on.”

She said the meeting would be an opportunity for the leaders to come to know one another and how religious life is lived in their various contexts.

“It is a grace-filled time when the weaving can be advanced so that when we are far from each other, our network can become more efficient,” Sammut said. “Let us weave dreams that awaken what is truest in us.”

Sammut and Loreto Sister Patricia Murray, the union’s executive director, also updated members on initiatives taken by the group’s Rome headquarters since the last general meeting three years ago.

One particular initiative mentioned was the creation of a five-member Council of Canon Lawyers. The members, prominent canon lawyers who are women religious from five continents, are now advising the UISG on canonical matters and will also



CNS/Roberto Gonzalez

Sister Carol Zinn

offer advice to women’s congregations around the world.

Pope tells women religious Vatican will study women deacons

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis told the heads of women’s religious orders from around the world that he would set up a commission to study the New Testament deaconesses and he also insisted more can and should be done to involve lay and consecrated women in church decision-making at every level.

Asked if he would establish “an official commission to study the question” of whether women could be admitted to the diaconate, Pope Francis responded: “I accept. It would be useful for the church to clarify this question. I agree.”

The pope spent more than an hour May 12 responding to questions posed by members of the International Union of Superiors General, repeatedly asking if they wanted further clarification and making funny asides or rephrasing his responses when it was clear they were not hitting the mark.

“I like hearing your questions because they make me think,” the pope told close to 900 superiors general, representing almost 500,000 sisters around the world. “I feel like a goalie, who is standing there waiting for the ball and not knowing where it’s going to come from.”

Asked about deaconesses in the New Testament and the possibility of the modern church admitting women to the permanent diaconate, Pope Francis had said his understanding was that the women described as deaconesses in the Bible were not ordained like permanent deacons are. Mainly, he said, it appeared that they assisted with the baptism by immersion of other women and with the anointing of women.

However, he said, “I will ask the (Congregation for the) Doctrine of the Faith to tell me if there are studies on this.”

Pope Francis also promised to have the Congregation for Divine

Worship and the Sacraments send the UISG a full explanation of why women cannot give a homily at mass. While women can preach at a liturgy of the Word when there is not a celebration of the eucharist, he said, at mass the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the eucharist are parts of a whole and only one who is ordained can preside and preach.

The main part of the question was about the lack of influence women religious are given in church decision-making processes. Pope Francis said the obligation to listen to women in the parish, diocese and at the Vatican “is not a matter of feminism, but of right.”

All the baptized — women and men, lay or consecrated — have been given gifts by the Holy Spirit for the good of the entire church, he insisted. The entire church suffers when some voices are excluded from the conversation, he said. “Our desire is that the church

talk with us — like is happening now — and not about us,” one of the sisters told him.

“To talk about someone when they are absent is not evangelical,” the pope said. In the meetings of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, “you must be present and I will tell the prefect this,” he said.

“I never imagined there was such a disconnect, truly. Thank you for telling me so courageously and for doing so with that smile,” he said.

However, Pope Francis warned the sisters about the danger of clericalism, which he described as “a sinful attitude,” but one which is “like the tango, it takes two.” There are priests who see themselves as lords of the church, he said, but there also are women and laymen “who ask to be clericalized.”

On the other hand, the pope expressed concern about the number of consecrated women working as housekeepers for priests. Their work is that of “a servant, not of service,” he said, and that “undervalues their dignity.”

The sisters applauded when the pope suggested such priests pay local women in need of a job and let the sisters teach, care for the poor, heal the sick. “And when you superiors are asked (to assign a sister) for something that is more servanthood than service, be courageous and say ‘no.’ ”

While warning that “the devil enters through one’s pocket,” Pope Francis also urged the superiors to choose their treasurers well, be suspicious of “friends” who promise to invest and increase their money and to ensure that their evangelical poverty is a life of simplicity, not misery.

Vatican funds job-creation project for refugees in Jordan

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican is funding a job-creation program for Iraqi refugees in Jordan, a country that is hosting close to 1.5 million refugees, but is struggling to provide work for them.

With \$150,000 donated to the Vatican by visitors to its pavilion at the World’s Fair in Milan in 2015, the Vatican will provide the funding that *Caritas Jordan* needs to launch the project.

Fifteen Iraqi refugees will have full-time work cultivating, producing and selling vegetables and oil, said a communiqué May 10 from the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*, the Vatican office which promotes and distributes Catholic charity. The jobs will allow them to provide for their families and become self-supporting, the office said.

Another 200 Iraqi refugees will be given training in carpentry,

agriculture and the food industry, *Cor Unum* said, and an additional 500 will be given seasonal employment.

Jordan currently is hosting about 130,000 Iraqi refugees, *Cor Unum* said; many of the refugees fled their homes in Iraq after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of their country and the capture of Saddam Hussein. Jordan also is hosting more than 1.3 million Syrian refugees, making it even more difficult for any refugee to find work.

Many refugees look for work and often accept jobs without contracts, said Wael Suleiman, director of *Caritas Jordan*. “But the market does not offer many opportunities.”

The project, which will be based at *Caritas’* Our Lady of Peace Centre in Amman, was to be inaugurated May 12. After the initial funding by the Vatican, it was hoped the products produced would earn enough for both the workers’ salaries and future project costs.



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

WOMEN RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS MEET AT VATICAN — Pope Francis greets Sister Carmen Sammut, president of the International Union of Superiors General, during an audience with the heads of women’s religious orders in Paul VI hall at the Vatican May 12. During a question-and-answer session with members of the UISG, the pope said he was willing to establish a commission to study whether women could serve as deacons.

Thousands gather for National March for Life

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — As the Liberal government rushes a bill legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide through Parliament, thousands gathered here May 12 for the annual National March for Life.

The march's focal point has always been "the threat to life at its earliest stages through abortion," Toronto Cardinal Thomas Collins said in a homily at the annual pro-life mass at Notre Dame Cathedral. "These days we have witnessed a growing threat to life at the other end of the earthly journey, through the misguided decision of the Supreme Court and the preparation of legislation to implement that decision throughout our land."

"The scourge of euthanasia and assisted suicide is upon us, and we need only to look to countries of western Europe that have gone before us down this dark path to see what is in store," he said.

He urged Catholics to seek holiness, to keep God at the centre of their lives, to communicate more effectively and to build bridges by creating trust before conveying our messages.

"The building of the bridge of trust brings us back to the need for a repentant heart: if our lives contradict the message, then we will convince no one."

The cardinal carried his message to Parliament Hill where he encouraged marchers to act, to join the Coalition for HealthCARE, and to promote both palliative care and pregnancy care centres.

Montreal Archbishop Christian Lépine told the crowd, estimated



CCN/D. Gyapong

NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE — Thousands marched through the streets of Ottawa at the National March for Life May 12 as an assisted suicide bill gets pushed through Parliament.

by RCMP at 3,000 - 5,000, our personal life is a "gift from God," no matter how fragile or weak it is.

Papal Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi brought the blessing and greeting of Pope Francis to the crowd.

He quoted St. Clare of Assisi who once said, "I thank God for having created me." He said it was his wish we would all be able to "be thanking God for the life he has given us."

"In our country, the sanctity of life is being challenged on both ends of the spectrum, both in the womb and at the end of life," said Conservative MP Ted Falk, vice

co-chair of the Justice Committee that just sent euthanasia and assisted suicide Bill C-14 back to the House of Commons. "We have

to stand up to it," Falk said, encouraging the crowd to continue their support. "Science is on your side."

The Justice Committee rejected the proposed amendments Falk and other Tory MPs put forth to strengthen safeguards for vulnerable mentally ill and disabled Canadians.

Falk was one of a dozen pro-life MPs who spoke on the Hill, as did several pro-life senators.

"Laws come and go, but universal truths remain," said Culture of Life Africa founder and president Obianuju Ekeocha, this year's Rose Dinner keynote speaker. "It is a universal truth that life begins at conception, without exceptions." (See related story, page 8.)

"We need to stand up for the doctors, nurses and pharmacists who want to say no to euthanasia and assisted suicide," said Conservative MP Mark Warawa, who tried to get a conscience protection amendment into Bill C-14. He has also introduced a private member's bill to make it an offence to coerce or threaten or withdraw employment from health care professionals who refuse to participate in assisted suicide or euthanasia on the basis of conscientious objection.

— SECURITY, page 5

Death is 'a very sacred place'

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — Physician-assisted death being a reality in Canada brings renewed urgency to the need for expanded palliative care, which is available to only one in three Canadians.

But palliative care is surrounded by misconceptions, according

to a Winnipeg palliative care doctor. Some people believe it actually hastens death, others think it is only for the very old or only for cancer sufferers. Others believe palliative care means that nothing more can be done.

"There is always something we can do," said Dr. Chantale Demers, about pain and symptoms and bringing comfort to the dying.

Demers was part of a panel dubbed Life is for Living, Stories of Compassion, May 11 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Winnipeg, with loved ones and caregivers of those who have died in palliative care sharing what it has meant for them to be part of an end-of-life experience.

The evening was among other events marking the National Week for Life and The Family in Manitoba. The week is an initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and sponsored in

Manitoba by the Tri-Diocesan Committee for Life and the Family made up of the archdioceses of Winnipeg and St. Boniface and the Ukrainian Archeparchy of Winnipeg, and led by the dioceses' three bishops.

"Palliative care is an approach to care which focuses on comfort, quality of life and support for those afflicted by a life-limiting illness," Demers said. The aim of palliative care, she said, is to "add life to days, not just days to life."

Palliative care addresses all sources of suffering, be it physical, emotional, psychosocial or spiritual, and requires more than just a physician. "It is a huge team" of health workers, social workers and therapists, said Demers, and palliative care is never a "one-size fits all."

"The philosophy of palliative care affirms life and regards dying

— PALLIATIVE, page 7

Key amendments to C-14 defeated

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Several opposition amendments intended to inject safeguards into the federal government's assisted-suicide legislation, including a proposal to explicitly limit doctor-assisted death to the terminally ill, were defeated as Liberal-dominated committee hearings began.

Members of the Justice Committee who are undertaking a clause-by-clause review of Bill C-14 on assisted suicide made it apparent that the legislation is unlikely to see significant amendments before it is returned to Parliament for final reading and vote.

About 100 requests for amendments have been submitted. The Supreme Court has given Parliament until June 6 to amend the criminal code to legalize assisted suicide.

In addition to voting down an amendment on May 9 to restrict assisted suicide to the terminally ill, the committee also rejected significant amendments from Conservative MPs that would: require a judicial review of all assisted-suicide requests; require patients who can self-administer a suicide drug do so in the presence of a health professional; ensure those with underlying psychiatric conditions receive a psychiatric evalua-

tion; ensure people have proper information about palliative care and pain-management options; require ministerial sign-off for every assisted suicide.

New Democratic Justice Committee co-chair Murray Rankin met with similar defeat when he introduced an amendment to allow advanced directives for those diagnosed with dementia. However, the Liberals suggested they would be open to reviewing the matter later this year.

Conservative MP Mark Warawa, who introduced a private member's bill on May 5 to protect conscience rights of medical professionals, is also pushing for an amendment to Bill C-14 that would allow doctors to refuse to participate directly or indirectly in assisted suicide.

Conservative MP Ted Falk, a committee co-chair, said he was concerned the bill made no statement with respect to the "sanctity of life," and that it has insufficient safeguards. The Supreme Court never stated that people had an absolute right to assisted suicide, but ruled that exemptions to the law be permitted in certain cases, he stressed.

Falk said in an interview he put forward the amendment to require judicial review prior to all assisted suicides so that "a judge will take a look and make sure all the boxes are checked, that witnesses are eli-

gible to be witnesses and the individual has met all the conditions."

A prior judicial review has been called for by disability advocates and groups such as the Canadian Association for Community Living, L'Arche Canada and the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada.

Having an assisted-suicide request go before a judge would make sure "psychological evaluations are happening and people receiving physician-assisted suicide are doing it with a clear mind," Falk said.

"I think when it comes to this piece of legislation, if I'm going to err on anything, I'm going to err on the side of caution," Falk said.

In opposing the amendment, Liberal MP Chris Bittle argued it would "make a lot of lawyers rich" and make medically assisted dying "only available for the rich."

The Justice Committee scheduled extended hours to expedite the passage of Bill C-14, which could go to the House of Commons for a free vote before May 21, before being sent to the Senate.

Despite howls of protest from the opposition, the Liberal majority government shut down debate on Bill C-14 on May 4, sending it to committee for amendments following a second reading vote of 235 - 75.



J. Buchok

LIFE IS FOR LIVING — A panel dubbed Life is for Living: Stories of Compassion, met on May 11 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Winnipeg. Back row, from left: Andre Brunet, Dr. Chantale Demers and Deacon Stepan Bilynsky. Front row: Cathy Lentz, Sister Jo-Ann Duggan, SGM, and Patti Fitzmaurice.

Pray for future of female diaconate: theologian

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — One solution to the shortage of clergy available to serve Canadian Catholics starts with the ordination of women into the diaconate, according to a prominent American theologian.

"In the days and weeks ahead, think and pray about women, the diaconate and the future of ministry," said Phyllis Zagano, a Catholic theologian and American author, in a presentation May 6 at Toronto's University of St. Michael's College. Her lecture kicked off a two-day conference titled "Women, the Diaconate and the Future of Ministry." (See related story, page 2: on May 12 Pope Francis told the heads of women's religious orders from around the world that he would set up a commission to study the New Testament deaconesses and he also insisted more can and should be done to involve lay and consecrated women in church decision-making at every level.)

"Pray about this triangulation of subjects because they frame both the church's problems and the solution to those problems."

Ordaining women would address a chronic shortage of clergy to serve many of the rural and remote areas of the country, said Zagano.

"In its rural territories Canada suffers a dire clergy shortage," she told the audience of about 80 people.



FEMALE DIACONATE — Phyllis Zagano is author of numerous articles and reviews on the question of Catholic women deacons. The prominent American theologian spoke at Toronto's University of St. Michael's College recently.

Women deacons should be given authority to properly administer a parish, including signing off on official documents that lay people are unable to do.

Zagano, author of the 2000 book *Holy Saturday* which outlines her argument, said 95 per cent of Canada's religious are over the age of 60 with about half of those beyond the age of 80. Those figures show the need to start the conversation "about restoring women to the ordained diaconate," she said.

The call for the ordination of women to the diaconate is anything but new. Zagano noted that of the almost 280 who voted during the synod on the family held last

October, none were female. Yet ordaining women into the diaconate made the synod rounds through Gatineau Archbishop Paul-André Durocher, who on the synod's first day raised the question of ordaining women as deacons.

Since the Second Vatican Council, many have pondered the possibility.

"There was intense discussion about the diaconate at the Second Vatican Council and two fathers brought the question of women deacons to the floor," said Zagano. "During the 1960s theological debate about women deacons continued, even as the cries for women priests sounded, mostly in developed countries."

Rule of St. Benedict embraces all

Continued from page 1

United States, he commented. The European Union is in danger of collapsing and political infighting in the United States has become so entrenched that Congress has failed to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court. Balkanization has

personal communication.

The world of St. Benedict in the sixth century faced economic and social upheaval following the collapse of the Roman Empire. St. Benedict knew that, within the turmoil, he was part of something much greater than himself, and sought to embrace his Christian faith in a much deeper way. St. Benedict entered a life of solitude and prayer and later became a leader in monasticism. He eventually composed a Rule for community life which takes into consideration the "other."

The Rule of St. Benedict embraces people of all ages, backgrounds and classes. It makes provisions for the sick and the weak and encourages strangers to be welcomed as one would welcome Christ. St. Benedict wanted his followers to greet everyone as a person made in the image of God and to see Christ in the other.

One of the great barriers to building up a sense of community and solidarity among nations is what Pope Francis has referred to as the "unholy axis" of relativism, secularism and materialism, Stasyszen commented.

Relativism holds that each person can define the ultimate reality of the universe because there is no objective reality. Secularism focuses on the time in which we live, ignoring the wisdom of preceding generations and disregarding the generations that will follow. Materialism holds to the belief that the ultimate solutions to the problems of this age are to be found in

material progress or power.

"This axis of true evil has become more predominant, and it should not surprise us that true dialogue, true conversation, true life-giving consensus, has become more difficult to achieve among nations, ethnic groups and families," Stasyszen said.

The Rule of St. Benedict emphasizes listening both to God and to others, acknowledging that everyone has opinions to share. Human fulfillment is found in authentic listening and by coming to know and recognize the other. The other is a member of my family, my community and the stranger as well. God can be seen in the other. This notion of being present to the other through authentic listening is the most profound truth that the Benedictine tradition can offer the world today. Opening the ears of our hearts to intentional listening is to open it to the other.

There are many thousands of people fleeing war, famine and gang violence. They are so desperate for help that they have left their homes without adequate water and food, Stasyszen said. Many refugees die each year before reaching safety. Nations in Europe and Asia seem overwhelmed by recent waves of immigration. Some countries have responded generously while others are confining migrants in encampments or have begun building walls to keep people out. The United States enjoys lower retail prices because of the work of foreigners, he said, but the country does not welcome them as refugees.



P. Paproski

Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, OSB

even affected the U.S. media, which are divided along political lines. The electronic devices of the social media have encouraged further alienation by discouraging

Paproski is a Benedictine monk of St. Peter's Abbey and pastor of St. Peter's Parish, Muenster.

Between 1992 and 1997 the International Theological Commission studied the concept with another report, 78 pages in length, released in 2002 exploring the history of deacons, the distinction between the diaconate and the priesthood as well as the possibility of readmitting women as ordained deacons as in the early days of the church.

Traditionally women deacons ministered to other females, performing sacraments such as baptism and anointing the sick while also serving as "the symbolic bridge between the celebrant and the people," she said.

While many resist reverting to this historical tradition, 28-year-old Tashia Toupin is all for it, not only as a solution to the clergy shortage, but as a means of balancing the input in church decision-making.

"Fifty per cent of our population is women and so if we don't have women involved in the decision-making process, if you don't give them a way for their voice to be heard, then it is not only unfair but

it is intrinsically wrong because we are not hearing all of the voices we need to," said the masters of divinity student. "That's the kind of conversation that is so desperately waiting to happen and there hasn't been adequate platforms for that to happen. We need to engage in that kind of dialogue."

Brian Butcher, a professor of theology at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, also supports Zagano's solution.

"I become more and more convinced of her case every time I hear her," said Butcher, who gave his own lecture on day two of the conference. "Her scholarship is impeccable and she really approaches the issue from every angle. We need more like her who are willing to look at the whole tradition and, as the Gospel says, bring out those treasures old and new."

Zagano is realistic, though. "It's not going to happen soon," she said. "Patriarchy is embedded in our religion and in our Scripture."

"These are the hierarchies who support the patriarchy . . . and still consider women inferior."

Queen's House

Retreat and Renewal Centre

Retreats & Workshops

Iconography Retreat — Anna Mycyk and Gisele Bauche.
Monday, May 23, 9 a.m. - Friday, May 27, 4 p.m.
Cost: Commuter \$450 (includes lunch); Live-in \$760 (includes accommodation and meals).

Spiritual Formation Days — Saturdays 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
May 28, Eco Spirituality and the Cosmos — Sr. Maureen Wild, SC
June 18, Monastic Way: Benedictine Spirituality for Today — Sr. Mary Coswin, OSB
July 9, Biblical Spirituality: Spirituality of the Psalms — Bp. Wiesner & G. Bauche
Cost: \$40 per session (includes registration, refreshments and lunch)

Knights of Columbus Brothers Keeper Breakfast
June 7, 7 a.m. - 8 a.m., followed by breakfast and fellowship.

Transitions: Transformation Through Grief & Loss
Sarah Donnelly. Thursday, June 16, 7 p.m. to Sunday, June 19, 1 p.m.
Cost: \$390 live-in (includes program, bedroom and meals)

Sacred in the City — Margaret Siff
Thursday, June 30, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Cost: \$65 commuter; + \$85, \$135 live-in

The Other Side of Chaos: Breaking Through When Life is Breaking Down! — Margaret Siff Friday, July 1, 7 p.m. to Sunday, July 3 after lunch. Cost: \$130 commuter; + \$165; \$275 live-in

Moral Loneliness — The Congenital Ache of a Soulmate
Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI Monday, July 11, 7 - 9 p.m.
Cost: \$30 with supper; \$15 presentation only.

Celebrating the Year of Mercy — From Paranoia to Metanoia
Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI Tuesday, July 12, 9 a.m. - Thursday, July 14 lunch.
Cost: \$200 commuter; \$260 commuter plus; \$400 live-in.

Iconography Retreat — Anne Mycyk and Gisele Bauche
Monday, July 18 through Friday, July 22, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Cost: \$450 commuter (includes lunch); \$760 live-in (includes accommodation & meals).

Triumph: Freedom Through Healing — Jerry and Donna Kristian
Friday, July 29, 6 p.m. - Sunday, August 7, 3 p.m.
Registration: Call or email Queen's House. Please check our website.

5-Day Silent Directed Retreat — Bishop Gerry Wiesner, OMI & Dianne Mantyka. Sunday, August 14, 4 p.m. - Thursday, August 19, 2:30 p.m.
Cost: \$715 live-in only. (Registration, meals, room & spiritual direction.)

Ongoing Events at Queen's House

Centering Prayer: Monday evenings 7 p.m.
Holy Eucharist: Wednesdays, 3 p.m. (call to confirm time — all are welcome!)

Journey with Scripture: Fr. Paul Facht. \$25 w/lunch. First Wed. of the month.
Taizé Prayer for Christian Unity: Second Tuesday of the month, 8 p.m.
Day Away: Gisele Bauche. Second Wed. of the month. Cost: \$25 w/lunch.
24-Hour Eucharistic Adoration: Fourth Monday of the month, 12 p.m. - Tuesday, 12 p.m.
Personal Day(s) of Private Prayer: Book anytime.

For program details visit www.queenshouse.org
To register please call 306-242-1916
or email: receptionist@queenshouse.org

601 Taylor Street West, Saskatoon, SK S7M 0C9
tel: (306) 242-1916 fax: (306) 653-5941

DO YOU NEED A FACILITY FOR:
Inservices, seminars, workshops, retreats, or any occasion? **BOOK QUEEN'S HOUSE TODAY!**
(306) 242-1925 or bookings@queenshouse.org

Theology forum challenges Catholics across Canada

By Nancy Fornasiero

OAKVILLE, Ont. — They arrived from Vancouver, Cape Breton and everywhere in-between. A few even came from the U.S. Most, but not all, were Roman Catholic, and about half were educators. For some it was a first-time experience; for others it was an annual tradition going back decades. All in all, it was an eclectic group that gathered to enjoy a plentiful two-day helping of spiritual nourishment at the 2016 Canadian Forum on Theology and Education (CFOTAE).

"The Forum," as it's often simply called, was initiated in the 1970s as a small professional development workshop for Catholic teachers, and has grown over the years into a much larger national conference. This year's event, held April 1-2 at St. Joseph's Catholic Ukrainian Conference Centre in Oakville, Ont., boasted more than 450 attendees, making it the largest to date.

The popularity of the conference this year was in large part thanks to the two well-known presenters, Diarmuid O'Murchu and Joan Chittister, OSB, both prolific spiritual writers and sought-after international speakers.

O'Murchu, a member of the Sacred Heart Missionary Order and graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, is a social psychologist who has worked in hands-on ministry throughout his life: he has counselled couples, the bereaved, AIDS-HIV patients, the homeless, and refugees. A sought-after workshop leader and international speaker, his best-known book is *Quantum Theology*.

Chittister's books number more than 50 and her influence has recently spilled over into the mainstream, attracting attention from television personalities such as Oprah Winfrey and Charlie Rose. The American sister is an author, columnist, commentator, speaker, and impassioned activist who advocates for justice, peace, and equality, especially for women in the church and in society.

CFOTAE organizer John Quinn, a retired religious education teacher, felt that his choice of pre-

senters this year attracted an "excellent group" of attendees, whom he referred to as "committed, open, and searching." Thought-provoking questions were raised, and the dialogue that took place among participants during the breakout sessions was both lively and profound. Chittister echoed Quinn's remarks, calling the event "honest, exciting, open, and very church-changing."

This year's theme was "Evolution and Spiritual Life: Exploring changing images of God and the implications for daily life and spirituality." Sub-topics addressed included feminist spirituality, the relationship between science and theology, evolving human consciousness, religious ecology, and the proper place and role of humans in the plan of creation. Both speakers encouraged all in attendance to accept new scientific knowledge and "use it to develop a more mature understanding of what lies at the core of your beliefs."

Chittister began her talk by cautioning that "we must not think that scientific evolution happens in a vacuum." She reminded participants that the church has had a long tradition of revising and shifting when it comes to theology: the Age of Enlightenment brought to an end to mainly mythological understandings of God, and Galileo's findings caused a shift in beliefs around the cosmology of the universe itself. "So too," she continued, "are we forced, in this modern evolutionary world, to rethink even the very nature of God." She expanded on this theme throughout the conference, offering up more questions than answers, while encouraging participants to keep "hearts and minds open" to the possibilities of "new interpretations of the Divine presence in our world."

A new interpretation she explored at length was that of the "divine feminine." Chittister discussed the implications of a gender-neutral understanding of God, and its importance to the church, to society at large, and to individuals seeking a deeper sense of their own spirituality. "If we see God only as 'maleness,' males becomes more God-like than females," she explained, "and 'maleness' becomes the nature of God and the norm of humankind

rather than simply one of its manifestations. If we limit ourselves to the divine masculine we will never see the divine feminine in God or in ourselves."

Jeanné Morson noted that Chittister was expanding on themes from her books, which Morson often uses in her chaplaincy work with youth at St. Jean de Brebeuf High School in Vaughan, Ont. "Sister Joan says that it's only 'by applying the Word of God to the issues of the day that we can ever claim to be disciples now,'" said Morson.

"This is a challenge I see our church facing, especially with our young adults: to be relevant, open to meaningful and heartfelt dialogue, and affirming of the unique dignity of each person, without exception."

Like Chittister, O'Murchu also explored new paradigms for understanding church and faith, with his main discussion concerning our human role in the plan of creation. "It is abundantly clear that we are not in charge, that we are not the ultimate species in any sense," he said. "We rely on many other aspects of creation to survive on earth, and we are but one small organism among so many others." He explored at length the idea of the divine existing in every natural thing, and fully developed the idea that Chittister introduced when she informed attendees: "You are what God put here to complete creation."

"I find it inspiring to think that we are creation becoming aware of itself," enthused O'Murchu. "Our unique vocation, and contribution to creation, is to enhance the growth in consciousness." He offered academic and theological supports, as well as humorous and personal anecdotes, to explain how we humans are part of the divine evolutionary process.

"Did you know that 'energy,' the fundamental matter of all creation, has not been defined pre-



Nancy Fornasiero

GUEST SPEAKERS — Canadian Forum on Theology and Education organizer John Quinn, left, is seen with this year's guest speakers, Joan Chittister, OSB, and Rev. Diarmuid O'Murchu. The theme was "Evolution and Spiritual Life: Exploring changing images of God and the implications for daily life and spirituality."

cisely by science? Why do you think that is?" challenged O'Murchu. He went on to explain how it's at this point, where science leaves off, that spiritual understandings of the universe take over.

George Dolak, who has attended CFOTAE almost since its inception, found O'Murchu especially compelling. "I was first introduced to him through his book *Quantum Theology*," commented Dolak, who was most influenced by the author's theories around relational theology. "I like the idea that because everything is believed to be created by one God, everything is truly, spiritually, quantumly, energetically, as well as physically, connected to God and, hence, to each and every created thing."

"I feel I'm among kindred spirits, open and receptive," said O'Murchu. "We're all seeking to discern the call of the Gospel and the call of our times amid spiritual challenges that invite us into expanded, enlarged horizons. I know many participants are feeling stretched by the material I've presented, but I, too, am experiencing an expanded consciousness thanks to the enriching interaction of the overall group."

Quinn praised the speakers for questioning the status quo. "I think the findings of the new cosmologists will prove the greatest challenge to Christianity," he said. "Not a challenge to our belief in God (that is, faith) but a challenge to our understanding of God (that is, theology). Some may try to ignore what we're learning here and claim everything we need is in Scriptures . . . but both Diarmuid and Joan invite us to 'do' theology." By this, Quinn means that during the forum, participants do not passively receive information. Rather, they are invited to actively seek a deeper understanding of their faith by questioning and exploring new ideas. "This fits well with what I was taught in high school by the Jesuits," adds Quinn. "Being Catholic doesn't mean putting your brain in park."

For 37 years CFOTAE has

been welcoming attendees with a faith-filled atmosphere and a broad range of Catholic thinkers. Forum-goers have had the opportunity to listen to, and question, such distinguished guests as Wilf Murchland, CSC, Frank Morrissey, OMI, Andre Guindon, OMI, Michael Czerny, SJ, Dr. Mary Malone, Christine Schenk, CSJ, Paul Hansen, CSSR, Mary Boys, SNJM, and Roy Bourgeois, to name but a few.

Next year's forum will be no exception, promises Quinn. "We are thrilled that Sister Teresa Forcades has agreed to be with us in 2017," he said. The Catalan Benedictine nun, also a physician, feminist, and prominent social activist, is sure to provoke continued discussion and exploration next spring.

Security tight for march

Continued from page 3

The Justice Committee did amend Bill C-14's preamble to note that the Charter's protection of freedom of conscience and religion states, "nothing in this Act affects the guarantee of freedom of conscience and religion."

Security was extremely tight on Parliament Hill to prevent half-naked Femen protesters from storming the steps while the bishops were speaking as they have done the previous two years. When a counter demonstration of from 50 - 150 people tried to confront the march on Elgin Street near the Human Rights Monument, police changed the route, shortening it by two blocks, to prevent any incidents, said Campaign Life Coalition president Jim Hughes.

On the eve of the march, however, protesters interrupted the annual vigil by the Human Rights Monument, Hughes said. About 30 protesters stood in front of the pro-life speakers, blew whistles and shouted obscenities. "There was a lot of cursing and profanity in front of the children and the nuns," he said.



Nancy Fornasiero

FORUM ON THEOLOGY — More than 450 attended the 2016 Canadian Forum on Theology and Education in Oakville, Ont., in April. Guest speakers at this year's annual event were Joan Chittister, OSB, and Rev. Diarmuid O'Murchu.

Saskatoon celebrates Catholic Education Week

By Derrick Kunz

SASKATOON — Minister of Education Don Morgan recognized the start of Catholic Education Week May 2 with staff and students at St. Mark School in Saskatoon.

At a school assembly in the gymnasium, Morgan was introduced to the diverse student body of approximately 390 by principal Owen Fortosky. Fortosky mentioned that students come from 50 different countries, 108 students are learning English as an additional language (EAL), and about 40 per cent are First Nations or Métis.

After thanking the students for gathering, Morgan said that Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) is one of the best school divisions in the province. He also

challenged staff and students to “reflect on the Catholic and Christian values needed to be good citizens and love those around you.”

GSCS board chair Diane Boyko said, “It’s important that the government recognizes how important Catholic education is.” She noted that the week’s celebration of Catholic education around the world is a good opportunity to focus on the GSCS division’s mission: being rooted in faith, growing in knowledge, and reaching out to transform the world.

Grade 2 students welcomed Morgan in a special way, showing him the buddy bench in the school playground. The bench is a sign of the welcoming and an inclusive community. Whenever students feel left out or lonely, they take a

seat on the bench. Other students take notice and join that person.

Morgan then took time to read to pre-kindergarten students and visit the EAL and Grade 8 classrooms.

Catholic Education Week was celebrated May 1 to 7 by over 38,000 students throughout Saskatchewan — 17,000 with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. The week coincides with World Catholic Education Day on May 5, Ascension Thursday.

Under the theme Opening Doors of Mercy, the week is promoted as a time to give thanks for the gift of Catholic faith-based education in the province, and reflect on God’s mercy and how all can answer the call to be merciful through service to others.



D. Kunz

Sikh community celebrates Vaisakhi

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — It couldn’t have been a nicer day: bright sunshine, warm temperature and little wind as more than 1,000 Sikhs, almost all dressed in traditional orange clothing, paraded two kilometres from the gurdwara (temple/place of worship) to the Saskatchewan Legislative Building where they covered the grounds for a big party celebrating the birth of their religion.

“It’s called Vaisakhi and is part of a big celebration of Sikhism,”

explained one of the celebrants. Sikhism originated sometime in the 1500s, but it wasn’t until 1699 that it became established in what is now Punjab state, India.

The parade began at the temple, not far from Regina International Airport. Led by a few members of the Regina Police Pipe Band, followed by four RCMP members in red serge, it made its way down Regina Avenue, a major gateway to the airport, to Albert Street, one of the city’s main thoroughfares, and on to the Wascana Park grounds by the Legislative Building.

Musicians playing traditional instruments and drums played from a colourful float that also contained their holy book, *Guru Granth Sahib*, and several *Baba Ji* (priests). Participants frequently joined in the singing, led by the musicians. An honour guard of Sikhs with swords held upright walked alongside the float and stood behind it when it was parked on the road in front of the Legislative Building.

Tent pavilions were set up on the grounds offering free pizza and traditional foods, while others

water, chocolate milk and tetra packs of juices to all they encountered. Sharing with others is one of the three basic rules of Sikhism according to a pamphlet being handed out. The others are: earn an honest living and meditate on the essence of the eternal. The pamphlet also described that an initiated Sikh is required to wear five *kakaar* (articles of faith): long unshorn hair as an act of commitment to and acceptance of God’s will; a *kangha* (comb) to keep hair well groomed; the *kara*, an iron bangle, a reminder of the unbroken circle of truth; the *kachhera*, an undergarment, for self control and chastity; and the *kirpan*, a sword for upholding dignity and freedom from oppression. Men and women both wear a *dastaar* (turban) as a crown signifying sovereignty.

The Sikh community is one of the more rapidly growing communities in Regina. It has grown from a few in the 1970s to more than 3,000 today, with most of that occurring in the past five years. The former Athabasca Public School was purchased by the Sikh community in 2013 and serves as its place of worship.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION DAY — Student and staff representatives from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools walk through the Doors of Mercy at St. George’s Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral May 5 during a prayer service to mark World Catholic Education Day. Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Eparchy of Saskatoon presided at the celebration.

Hold companies to account for mining abuses: letter

Continued from page 1

Peace’s Latin American program officer Mary Durran in a news release. “We support their demands for improved oversight by Ottawa of Canadian companies in their overseas operations.”

Development and Peace called attention to the letter’s observation that “Canada’s human rights performance deteriorated considerably, not only in the eyes of the international community, but also from the perspective of the individuals, peoples and communities that live with the negative impacts of Canadian extractive projects” under previous governments.

The letter praised Liberal MP John McKay’s Bill C-300 calling for a legislative regime that would

hold Canadian mining companies accountable for environmental and human rights abuses abroad, a private member’s bill those signing the letter noted Trudeau supported. This bill failed to pass by only six votes in 2010.

The signatories said they hoped the Liberal government would adopt “a legislative framework that would hold state agencies and companies to account for abuses related to Canadian mining companies’ overseas operations.”

“Over the past few years, Honduras have suffered negative impacts of Canadian mining, including pollution of our environment and of our water supplies by heavy metals, and communities’ rights to free, prior and informed consent have been ignored,” said Honduran activist Pedro Landa, whose Jesuit-run organization, Fundacion ERIC, is a signatory of the letter.

“A response to this letter is urgently needed from the Canadian government, given heightened repression of mining-affected communities in the region defending their land, water and well-being,” said Latin America Co-ordinator for MiningWatch Jen Moore. “Not only are Latin organizations insisting on accountability for harms, but that harms be prevented in the first place.”

Among the letter’s recommendations are respecting the rights of indigenous communities to “free, prior and informed consent” for any mining activities on their territories; an end to Canadian government trade, diplomatic or aid pressures in modifying regulatory regimes for mining and extractive projects; access to Canadian courts for those seeking justice or reparations for abuses; and the “creation of objective and impartial means to effectively monitor and investigate complaints of abuses in connection with Canadian mining companies abroad.”



F. Flegel

YOM HASHOAH — There were seven candles instead of six lit at the annual Yom HaShoah commemoration held May 5 at Beth Jacob Synagogue in Regina. “Today we will light a seventh candle in memory of the more than five million others who died during the Holocaust,” said Rabbi Jeremy Parnes as he began the evening service. The Megillat HaShoah, a scroll and liturgical reading, was read by six individuals who came to the lectern, lit one of the candles, each representing one million Jews killed, and read one chapter. Each chapter contained a graphic, first-person description of someone who was imprisoned in the infamous ghetto in Warsaw, Poland. Parnes lit the seventh candle.

Family Services opens new location

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Catholic Family Services Society (CFSS) has a new location in Regina, the fifth time it has moved since its founding in 1936. The facilities offered in the new location and the space it provides may just be the final move for many years.

The address is 160 McIntosh Street, a residential area in north-west Regina in a building that sits by itself surrounded by grass and open space. A service station sits on the corner and across from it is Holy Trinity Church.

The building is U-shaped, with one side holding CFSS offices and the other containing Roots and Wings Child Care Centre. “We felt a child care centre was something we lacked,” said executive director David Sax, speaking with people at the May 4 official opening. It had 12 children on opening day; Sax expects it to grow to 30 by the end of the year, and ultimately to 50.

It was built in 1966 as a reception centre for children coming into care. It morphed into a home for troubled teens, but has stood empty for about two years because the government ended the program.

The transition for CFSS began in May 2015 and was a collaborative effort between real estate firm Avison Young, ISLA Ventures Inc., the government of Saskatchewan and CFSS.

“The government wanted this to be repurposed to mean something for the community,” said Sax in an interview with the PM. The building was in good shape but needed some renovations and paint to accommodate the needs of both CFSS and the child care centre. ISLA Ventures Inc., was tasked with finding investors to help purchase the building — “investors with a conscience,” as one visitor put it.

Guest speakers at the event included Education Minister Don

Morgan, representing the provincial government; City of Regina councillor Bob Hawkins, representing the city; Richard Jankowski, president of ISLA Ventures Inc.; board chair Adrian Fuchs; Frank Dornstauder, chair of the CFSS Foundation; and archdiocesan administrator Rev. Lorne Crozon.

Jankowski described how the deal came together with the government, CFSS, Avison Young and ISLA Ventures working together to meet everyone’s needs. Dornstauder gave a brief history of the building, formerly known as Dale’s House, named after Alice Dale, a former social worker, and Crozon said as a parish priest he was always appreciative of the services provided by CFSS. Crozon, along with Deacon Joe Lang, blessed the main entrance to the building as part of its official opening.

Guests then took a tour of the facility, followed by a reception on the concrete patio behind the building.

Concert promotes vocations in Prince Albert

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — The hope for the Catholic Idol concert held April 16 at St. Mark Parish in Prince Albert was to inspire young people toward a discussion on religious vocation, said director of vocations Rev. Jim Kaptein.

“A vocation, then, is our response to God’s call. Living our

vocation is how we manifest God’s love to the world.”

He added that as the concert was such a success, the Vocations Commission may be looking at creating an annual event.

Commission member Janice Trudel said the idea of putting on a Catholic Idol came about as their group brainstormed ideas to get people to begin talking

about vocations.

Following the format of the popular show, American Idol, three judges were chosen: Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., Kaptein and a layperson from Prince Albert. Their roles were not to choose a winner or judge the event as a contest, but to converse with the musicians before and after each performance, focusing

on some aspect of vocations and how it affected their lives.

Performers came from various parts of Saskatchewan. Danielle Weiler from Meota said she hears many grumblings about the Catholic Church’s stance on birth control and family planning, and the burden it can be. While reflecting on those views, her song *Beautiful Burden* was born.

“I view my family as an amazing blessing and I am very thankful for them. There are many times that family life, especially raising children, can feel like a burden. I wanted to express that it is in these moments that we have the opportunity to grow in love. I view vocations as a huge part of our path to heaven, how we can each best learn to give of ourselves and love others.”

Claire and Charles Schira from Spiritwood were special country music guests. Claire has received numerous awards from the Country Gospel Music Association, and recorded two Gospel albums.

“The Holy Spirit was definitely part of the event,” said Kaptein. “There was a smooth flow and a great spirit of joy, sharing and fellowship. People loved it. There were twice as many people as we expected.”

He voiced his thanks to all the performers who travelled to share their gifts and to those who worked behind the scenes, as well as those who came to support the effort.

The Diocese of Prince Albert Vocations Commission is a group of priests, religious sisters and laypeople who meet regularly to discuss and create new ideas to promote vocations. Those feeling called to a vocation can contact Kaptein at 306-764-4367 or Sister Rose-Marie Sanche, PM, at 306-764-3445.

Triumph retreat moves to Queen’s House

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Queen’s House of Retreat and Renewal in Saskatoon is the new setting for a nine-day facilitated program of inner healing and spiritual growth that originated at St. Therese Institute in Bruno, Sask.

The “triumph: Freedom through Healing” retreat was developed by Jerry and Donna Kristian as a way to answer a profound need in every human heart to heal past hurts and find meaning through a deeper connection with God.

As one of the founders of St. Therese Institute and a former executive director and board chair, retired Saskatchewan business executive Jerry Kristian initiated the triumph program in partnership with his wife Donna, who served as director of healing and growth at the Bruno institute. Donna drew upon some 30 years of ministry experience, including parish and diocesan ministry, teaching, and leading Ignatian discernment.

“When we established the mission of St. Therese 10 years ago, God impressed on us the importance of healing in our spiritual growth and our relationship to others,” said Jerry. “To be formed as disciples of Christ we must deal with the hurts of the past and misconceptions we have picked up along the way about God, about ourselves — about everything.”

The triumph retreat was conceived and developed as a way to answer that basic need.

Queen’s House provides an ideal location for the retreat, says Donna, noting the greater accessibility of the Saskatoon location and how the atmosphere of the retreat house will support and enhance the live-in experience.

Dates for the retreat at Queen’s House have been set for the next 18 months, being offered there for the first time July 29 to August 7, and then again in February, July and November of 2017.

The retreat is beneficial to all; it offers healing and spiritual growth to adults of every age and background, and in any state of life, say the Kristians. “It works for everyone at every level because the main encounter is to go deep into your heart and get rid of the junk, and rebuild that central relationship with Christ,” said Jerry. “That’s something everyone needs, including those who are offering ministry to others.”

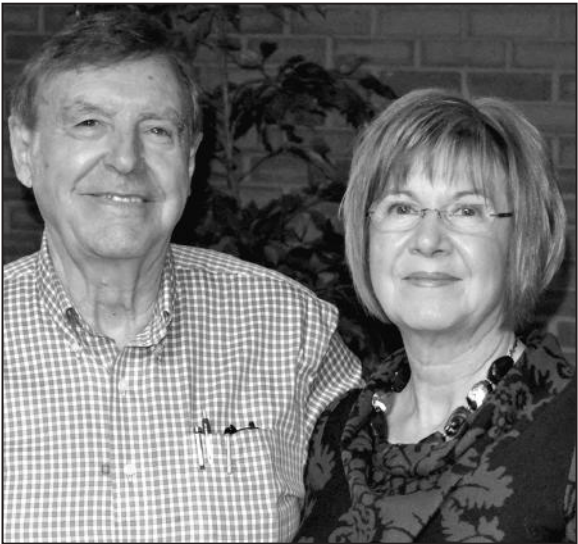
The nine-day retreat includes facilitated teaching and spiritual direction, with two introductory days transitioning into five core days that are silent, before transitioning back out again, said Donna. “There is time for one-on-one; people are accompanied on their journey.”

The length of the retreat has been set to ensure that there is adequate time for the interior

work that is needed to experience healing, according to the Kristians.

“It is not just about learning something new,” said Donna. “Nine days is long enough that people can go deep on the interior journey; long enough for people to begin to recognize patterns, their own inner movements and triggers, and take responsibility for those.”

Pointing to dozens of stories



Jerry and Donna Kristian

K. Yaworski

and testimonies from participants on the website, www.triumphretreat.com, Donna says it is a privilege to share in that process.

Palliative care ‘made all the difference’

Continued from page 3

as a normal process,” Demers said. “But our death-denying culture thinks of death as losing the battle.” Demers said patients who receive palliative care report improvements in pain and symptom management, and emotional and psychological well-being.

The first palliative care unit in Canada was opened in 1974 at

Winnipeg’s St. Boniface Hospital. Today palliative care is provided by a variety of organizations, often with the indispensable help of volunteers, in hospitals, hospices, personal care homes and private homes.

Andre Brunet is a palliative care nurse who visits people’s homes to help and accompany them on their final journey. The people Brunet serves have been diagnosed with having six months to live and have chosen to discontinue aggressive treatment for their illness. Aside from providing care including pain management and any special equipment to make a person’s final days as comfortable as possible, he is there to listen. “They will go through a lot of emotions and it’s important to talk about it. We talk about depression and you’d be surprised how often they are not depressed.”

Brunet said there is often humour and laughter shared with his clients and their family members, who are usually the prime caregivers. “Being part of it is a real privilege. We all know what’s going to happen.”

Deacon Stepan Bilynskyy, director of Spiritual Care at Misericordia Health Centre in Winnipeg, said the idea of dying with dignity is popular with those who believe in the right to choose to die. “But to die with dignity is not very clear,” Bilynskyy said. “We all must accept our own limitations. To be dependent on those we love most is a gift. Humans are not self-sufficient. A common symptom of our ‘throw-away culture,’ as Pope Francis put it, is to pretend that death doesn’t

exist.”

Sister Jo-Ann Duggan, SGM, manager of Spiritual Care and Volunteer Services at Jocelyn House Hospice in Winnipeg, said the mission of the hospice is to accompany persons, to help residents focus on care while respecting their social and cultural needs. “I am blessed in my role as coordinator of 43 committed and compassionate volunteers,” said Duggan. At Jocelyn House they celebrate birthdays and all special days. The kitchen is a centre of joy and sharing.

“This spiritual journey is sacred,” she said. “It is one of peace, harmony and reconciliation, to give meaning and purpose to the end of life.”

Duggan said she has seen people “transformed” from being filled with fear to no longer fearing death. “We all are in need of more palliative care services in Manitoba,” she said.

Cathy Lentz spoke of her mother’s palliative care at Holy Family Home, a personal care home in Winnipeg. She said being able to access all aspects of hospice care without going to hospital was a gift for her mother.

“That spiritual journey is what brought greatest comfort in the last months, weeks and days. How I experienced my mother’s palliative care had a profound effect on me. Experiencing the reality of death helped me renew my own spiritual journey,” Lentz said. “It’s a very sacred place. One can sense God touching each person every day. Excellent palliative care made all the difference in the end of her life on earth.”



K. Yaworski

DAY OF PRAYER — Eileen Materi, spiritual development chair for the Catholic Women’s League at the Cathedral of the Holy Family Parish in Saskatoon, spoke about the importance of advocating for palliative care for all Canadians during a national day of prayer May 4. Across the country CWL members were encouraged to sign up for “12 Hours for Palliative Care” on that day, as a witness to the sanctity of human life and a way to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation for palliative care. Mass and prayer services for the CWL day of prayer were also held in other parishes in the diocese, including St. Patrick’s in Saskatoon and St. Joseph’s in Kindersley. The CWL was also circulating a petition to government urging recognition and funding for hospice palliative care across Canada.

Resist imposing abortion on African nations: Ekeocha

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Nigerian biomedical scientist Obianuju Ekeocha urged Canadian parliamentarians May 10 to resist imposing abortion on African nations.

The founder and president of Culture of Life Africa said in an interview she told a breakfast for about 20 - 30 MPs, senators and staff the issue of abortion “has already been decided by many African countries.”

“They have decided that abortion is an attack on human life at its earliest stages,” she said. “For a more developed country and a clearly wealthier nation bringing to us funding for abortion and a culture of abortion, it reeks of colonialization and it reeks of cultural imperialism.”

Ekeocha said she presented statistics from the Pew Research 2014 Global Morality Survey of 40,000 respondents in 40 countries showing differing perceptions regarding abortion.

In Canada, 26 per cent of those

surveyed said they found abortion morally unacceptable; another 26 per cent found it morally acceptable and “everyone else fell somewhere in-between.”

In her country, Nigeria, 80 per cent of Nigerians surveyed found abortion morally unacceptable and only two per cent found it morally acceptable, she said. In Ghana, the opposition was even higher at 92 per cent finding abortion morally unacceptable and only two per cent finding it acceptable.

“This then means, if any powerful western nation was to come to African countries to fund abortions, they will first have to find a way to overpower up to 92 per cent of the population and they will be working against the will of the people,” she said.

“A lot of the aid projects right now are coming with strings attached,” she said. “They are heavily fettered to these new sets of values from the west.”

Those African nations more accepting of abortion services get rewarded, “their acceptance is

incentivized,” she said. “Those who resist are hit, punished some way or deprived.”

“At all times, African leaders tend to be stuck between aid they think they need for the people and the will and the desire of the donors who come making demands and requests,” she said, noting it’s not only nations like Canada that donate money to developing countries, but powerful philanthropic foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation and others, who “come in and try to trigger social change on matters and issues that the people have already decided.”

Ekeocha said she told the parliamentarians Canada has played a leadership role in promoting maternal, newborn and child health through its Muskoka Initiative launched by former prime minister Stephen Harper at the 2010 G8 meetings in Canada. This initiative, which did not include abortion funding, has done great work in the developing world, she said.

But the new Liberal govern-

ment has indicated a shift in approach to have “this funding stream include abortion services as well,” she said.

“This new approach seems to me to be ideologically driven,” she said.

Ekeocha said she reminded the parliamentarians of Pope Francis’ speech before the United Nations last year, where he spoke of ideological colonialization. This is a form of neo-colonialization, she said.

Instead, she urged Canada to focus on areas that would genuinely help developing nations reduce maternal and infant and child mortality rates.

The World Health Organization has found more than 30 per cent of maternal deaths are due to bleeding following delivery, she said. “So how about more of the effort be put on improving blood banking systems in African nations?”

Many African women must deliver their babies without professional health care — no doctor, no trained nurse or midwife and that means that needless, preventable problems like obstructive labour, and breech birth are big problems where women die, she said.

“What I hope and I am looking forward to seeing is the Canadian government working side by side with the Africans rather than



CCN/D. Gyapong

GUEST SPEAKER — Culture of Life Africa founder and president Obianuju Ekeocha is this year’s Rose Dinner speaker in conjunction with the National March for Life.

telling us what we should do,” she said. “That I will be grateful for.”

Ekeocha was also in Ottawa to address the National March for Life May 12 where she was the keynote speaker at the march’s annual Rose Dinner.

Baby booties adorn Parliament Hill

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — On May 11, the day before the annual National March for Life, a carpet of nearly 7,000 crocheted, knitted and sewn baby booties adorned Parliament Hill to send a pro-life message.

Organized by the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA), the same group that organized 100,000 pink and blue flags on the lawns of Parliament Hill and of Queen’s Park in recent years to represent the number of abortions each year in Canada, the “Booties for Babies” campaign initially had a much smaller target, said ARPA executive director Mark Penninga.

“We put a pitch out to get 1,000,” said Penninga May 11. While the flag efforts took a great deal of co-ordination and organization, the baby booties campaign became a grassroots effort that

“took off,” he said.

Fiena Dykstra, of Houston, B.C., told a news conference on the Parliament Hill lawn she held a workshop to teach some people how to make the booties. Interest grew into “weekly workbees,” she said.

She described the thousands of hours people put into making the booties as a “hands-on ministry of mercy.”

Inside most of the plastic bags containing a pair of booties was a personal pro-life message.

Dykstra said the crocheted, knitted and sewn booties are a “visible voice” of the need to “protect the lives of the most vulnerable.”

Dykstra said she and her husband, Henry, have five children. They had encountered some years ago a pregnant high school girl. They offered to take her into their home and take care of her baby while she returned to high school. The day she was supposed to

arrive at their home, the Dysktra’s discovered a doctor had arranged at taxpayers’ expense for the girl to travel 1,200 miles by plane to obtain an abortion. “What kind of health care is death?” she asked.

Conservative MP Kelly Block thanked the organizers for the “Booties for Babies” campaign for drawing attention to the 100,000 abortions that take place in Canada every year.

The booties will be distributed to all MPs and senators on the Hill but their final destination will be pregnancy crisis centres across Canada.

Betty Bandstra, who runs a crisis pregnancy centre in northern British Columbia, said she symbolically represented crisis pregnancy centres across the country. She said well-trained staff in these centres are prepared to “help anyone who steps through the door” to make a rational decision regarding an unplanned pregnancy.

Federal government to fund abortion overseas

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The federal government is set to begin funding abortion in the developing world, reversing the policy of the Harper government to not provide funding for such procedures overseas.

“The government will close existing gaps in reproductive rights and health care for women as part of its commitment to refocus Canada’s development assistance on helping the poorest and most vulnerable,” a Global Affairs Canada spokesperson said in an email statement. “It will also ensure that maternal, newborn and child health programming is driven by evidence and outcomes.”

When former prime minister Stephen Harper launched the Muskoka maternal, infant and child health initiative at the G8 summit held in Canada in 2010, funding for abortion was not included.

“The inclusion or exclusion of specific health services is under the purview of recipient countries,” the government spokesperson said. “Many governments allow abortion on request or for a variety of reasons including safeguarding the woman’s health.”

The government spokesperson said Canada supports the health care systems of countries in line with their legal frameworks and priorities.

“Canada will ensure access to safe, reliable and high-quality family planning services, which, when used effectively, should reduce the recourse to abortion, decrease the number of unplanned pregnancies and improve maternal, newborn and child health,” the government spokesperson said. “Canada has

committed \$3.5 billion for 2015 - 2020 to supporting the health and rights of women and children and closing existing gaps in sexual and reproductive health care and services for women and adolescents. For 2016 - 2017 disbursements are expected to exceed \$750 million.”

A spokesperson for the political arm of the pro-life movement said he was not surprised by the government move.

“We’ve seen this coming for a long time,” said Campaign Life Coalition’s UN representative Matthew Wojciechowski at a May 11 news conference in advance of the National March for Life, taking place May 12 in Ottawa. Even during the last election campaign, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau “discussed plans for exporting abortion overseas.”

Obianuju Ekeocha, who is in Ottawa to speak at the March for Life and its annual Rose Dinner, said the majority of Africans oppose abortion as morally unacceptable. Ekeocha, a Nigerian biomedical scientist and founder and president of Culture of Life Africa, addressed a breakfast of parliamentarians May 10 (see story, this page).

“They have decided that abortion is an attack on human life at its earliest stages,” the spokesperson said. “For a more developed country and a clearly wealthier nation bringing to us funding for abortion and a culture of abortion, it reeks of colonialization and it reeks of cultural imperialism.”

While the spokesperson said Canada is respecting local laws, Ekeocha said development funds often come with pressures from donor countries and philanthropic foundations to change those laws and “trigger social change.”



CCN/D. Gyapong

PRO-LIFE MESSAGE — Fiena Dykstra sits among nearly 7,000 baby booties in the “Booties for Babies” campaign organized by the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) on Parliament Hill May 11. Dykstra helped teach people how to make the booties and was overwhelmed by the interest.

Compelling docs command attention at Tribeca

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



The Tribeca festival's non-fiction selections seem to grow stronger every year, evidence of the vitality and creativity of documentary filmmaking. This year there was also a clever hybrid of "docu-fiction," *Houston, We Have a Problem!* (Slovenia/Croatia/Germany/Czech Republic/Qatar) in which director Ziga Virč pur-

went off the air and he left the country in the chill of the media repression under the current El-Sisi strongman regime. The day I saw this Egypt witnessed the largest public protests in two years — a hopeful sign perhaps even if it takes more than laughter to move from authoritarianism to democracy.

National Bird (U.S.) <http://nationalbirdfilm.com/>

Executive produced by Wim Wenders and Errol Morris, Sonia Kennebeck helms this stunning examination of the U.S. Air Force's predator drone program through its effects on both former operators and civilian victims of its "collateral damage." On the American side, mounting concerns and regrets are expressed through the testimony of three subjects and whistleblower legal advocate Jesselyn Radack (profiled in the documentary *Silenced*). The voice of the victims is expressed most powerfully by Afghan survivors of a 2010 attack on an unarmed funeral procession. Essential viewing in light of how the military use of drones has expanded to Orwellian proportions and made remote-controlled warfare seductively easy.

Betting on Zero (U.S.) <https://www.facebook.com/bettingonzero/>

Directed by Ted Braun, this incisive exploration of an ongoing high-stakes corporate battle pits Bill Ackman's Pershing Square Capital Management hedge fund against the "Herbalife" empire and its CEO Michael Johnson. Ackman has spent many millions trying to prove that Herbalife's marketing practices amount to a pyramid scheme, allegedly targeting the Latino community in the U.S. and the gullible in over 90 other countries where it operates. Ackman's fund has so far lost millions more in "shorting" Herbalife stock (i.e. Pershing gains the more Herbalife's value drops to zero). While disgruntled former Herbalife distributors protest "Herbalies" and federal investigations continue, the ultimate winner remains to be decided.

Life, Animated (U.S./France) <http://www.lifeanimateddoc.com/>

Roger Ross Williams won a Sundance directing award for this moving account of the life of the autistic Owen Suskind, now a young man in his 20s living on his own through special care arrangements. Initially unable to speak, parents Ron (whose book on his son inspired the film) and Cornelia painstakingly taught Owen to communicate through an immersion in Disney animated movies. Owen not only knows all their lines by heart, he has created his own character as a protector of fellow "sidekicks." He's also supported by big brother Walter in learning to navigate the complications of adulthood. (The same day I saw this, a new issue of *The Economist* was published with a cover feature on how to deal with autism, the incidence of which has increased enormously in recent decades.)

Shadow World (U.S./Belgium/Denmark) <http://www.theshadowworldbook.com/the-film/>

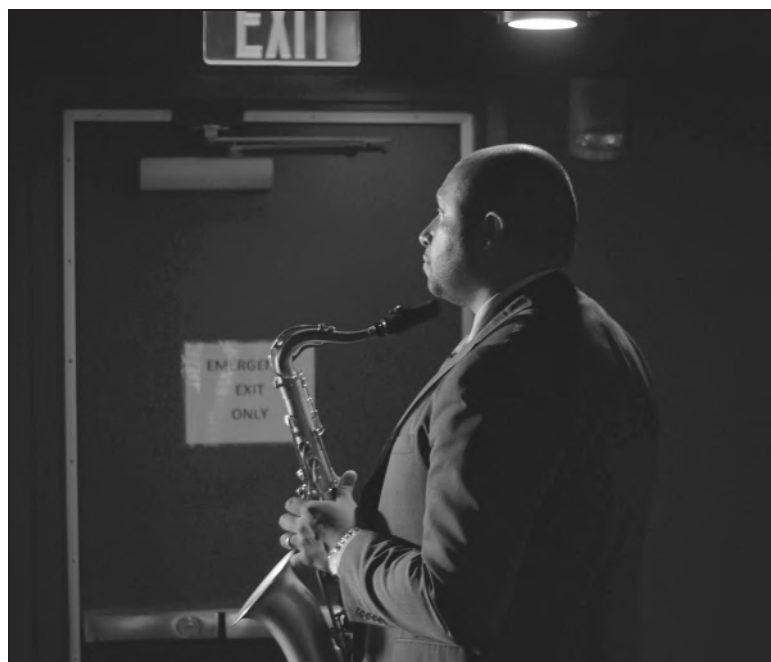
Drawing on the prodigious research of Andrew Feinstein's *Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade*, director Johan Grimont delves into the highly profitable complicity among weapons manufacturers, dealers, and governmental elites, a clubby covert world awash in corruption. It's a challenge for peace activists as new opportunities abound in the long "war on terror" and the burgeoning drone market. (Scheduled for future broadcast on PBS as part of its Independent Lens programming.)

Keep Quiet (U.K./Hungary) <http://keepquietmovie.com/>

Directors Joseph Martin and Sam Blair investigate the rise and fall of Csanad Szegedi, a notorious Hungarian anti-Semite and Holocaust denier who rose to leadership positions in the far-right Jobbik party, was elected to the European Parliament, and helped found the fascistic Hungarian Guard. That all crumbles when he discovers his maternal grandmother was a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz. Guided by a sympathetic rabbi, Szegedi renounces his past and transforms into an observant Orthodox Jew, though skeptics persist and the filmmakers wisely keep an ambivalent reserve.

Midsummer in Newtown (U.S.)

In 2012 Newtown, Connect-



Courtesy of Participant Media.

MIDSUMMER IN NEWTOWN — Jazz saxophonist Jimmy Greene is seen backstage before a performance in honour of his daughter, Ana, who was killed in the Sandy Hook massacre of 2012. The documentary *Midsummer in Newtown* follows the extraordinary collaboration that took place among Newtown children (some surviving classmates), parents, music and theatre professionals in mounting an exuberant child-centred rock-pop version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It's an intimate testament to the transformative and healing power of art, writes Gerald Schmitz.

icut, was the scene of the horrific Sandy Hook massacre of 20 first-graders and six adults. Director Lloyd Kramer shows how music has helped some of the families recover from the tragedy. One of those killed was Ana Grace, the daughter of Grammy-nominated jazz saxophonist Jimmy Greene. The film, a runner-up for the audience award, follows the extraordinary collaboration that took place among Newtown children (some surviving classmates), parents, music and theatre professionals in mounting an exuberant child-centred rock-pop version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It's an intimate testament to the transformative and healing power of art.

Command and Control (U.S.) <http://www.commandandcontrolfilm.com/>

Drawing on the eponymous book by Eric Schlosser, director Robert Kenner investigates the dark side of America's embrace of nuclear weapons and the missile-building binge in a nuclear arms race that has come perilously close to civilizational suicide. Among the near-miss accidents, a particular focus is on a covered-up 1980 incident at a Titan II silo in Arkansas in which catastrophe was narrowly averted. Extremely timely given renewed political attention to the dangers of a nuclear-armed world, Tribeca also presented a related panel discussion and a groundbreaking immersive production, "the bomb," which was projected over 360 degrees on huge screens with live musical accompaniment.

My Scientology Movie (U.K.)

Directed by John Dower for BBC Films, this is a more humorous and idiosyncratic but equally disturbing exposé of the "Church" of Scientology following on Alex Gibney's *Going Clear*. In Michael Moore fashion Louis Theroux, aided by former Scientologists, sets out to get to the bottom of the cult's bizarre but profitable practices, celebrity recruitment, harassment of apostates, and hierarchy

presided over by the omnipotent secretive David Miscavige who has been accused of violent abuse of subordinates. (In television interviews and the new book *Ruthless*, Miscavige's own father Ron has denounced him after escaping the church's California "Gold Base" headquarters.)

Enlighten Us: The Rise and Fall of James Arthur Ray (U.S.)

From CNN Films and director Jenny Carchman come this cautionary tale of the self-improvement guru Ray who soared to highly profitable heights selling "Harmonic Wealth" events and a promised path to personal success in books like *The Secret*. His empire came crashing down in 2009 when three followers died during a sweat lodge ritual as part of a "spiritual warrior" retreat and Ray spent time in prison for negligent homicide. Still one senses Ray will never stop selling himself and motivational dreams (see <http://james-ray.com/my-story/>).

I Voted? (U.S.) <http://www.ivotedmovie.com/>

Extremely timely in this U.S. election year is writer-director Jason Grant Smith's penetrating analysis of "how sloppy and faulty" are the voting systems in place in most American states, which jealously guard their jurisdiction over voting methods in the absence of national standards. Especially prone to error if not corrupt manipulation are various electronic systems lacking any paper trail to verify the results. Among the harsh critics is Deforest Soaries, former chair of the Congressionally mandated Electoral Assistance Commission who assails the "hypocrisy of Washington" and concludes that "our country would be found grossly deficient" in the eyes of international observers. The film appeals for citizens to demand paper ballots than can be audited (i.e., a national system like Canada's).

— STRONG, page 12

TRIBECA
FILM
FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY AT&T

ports to tell a Cold War story of how former Yugoslav president Josip Tito sold his country's faulty space program to the Americans during the Kennedy space race of the 1960s. Archival footage and interviews make it almost believable. Appearing periodically are the arch commentaries of philosopher Slavoj Žižek who sums up: "There is no simple lie. . . . Even if it didn't happen it's true and that's the crucial message."

I was reminded of the Sundance selection *Operation Avalanche*, exposing a supposed Cold War-era conspiracy of how undercover CIA agents, posing as a documentary film crew, were sent to NASA in 1967 to find a suspected Russian mole and instead discovered the "truth" about the Apollo missions to the moon.

Back on solid ground, here are some of the straight-up documentaries that most impressed:

After Spring (U.S.) <http://www.afterpringfilm.com/>

Executive produced by Jon Stewart, directors Ellen Martinez and Steph Ching capture the human face of the Syrian refugee crisis, focusing on the plight of several families among the 80,000 inhabitants of Jordan's Zaatari Refugee Camp, 58 per cent of whom are children. We see a story of struggles and hopes through their eyes, and also through the work of UNHCR counsellor Maram, camp manager Kilian Kleinschmidt, and a Korean benefactor who institutes a martial arts program for the youth.

Tickling Giants (U.S.) <http://ticklinggiants.com/>

The subject doing the satirical "tickling" is Basseem Youssef, an Egyptian heart surgeon turned television comedian sending up the powerful on his popular show (simply called "The Show" in Arabic) during the flower of the Arab spring, earning the moniker "the Jon Stewart of Egypt." Director Sara Taksler came to the subject as a senior producer with Stewart's *Daily Show* on which the charismatic Youssef appeared. It's a great story though his show



Nelson Hume

SOLITARY — In this photo from the documentary *Solitary*, an inmate looks out from inside of his cell.

Church responds to Fort McMurray crisis

By Glen Argan
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — Pope Francis has added his name to the list of people offering condolences to those affected by the massive forest fire that has led to the evacuation of Fort McMurray.

In a May 6 letter to St. Paul Bishop Paul Terrio, the pope said he “was saddened to learn of the destruction and distress caused by the extensive fires around Fort McMurray.”

The pope said he was praying “for all the displaced, especially the children, who have lost their homes and livelihoods.”

He also asked the Lord to bless civil authorities and those co-ordinating the evacuation and providing shelter for the nearly 90,000 people left homeless.

In particular, Pope Francis asked for strength and perseverance for those who are battling the fire.

The pope’s message came via Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican’s secretary of state, through Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, the apostolic nuncio to Canada.

The pope’s message comes as the church across Alberta is offering assistance to the evacuees.

In a letter to parishioners in the Edmonton archdiocese, Archbishop Richard Smith said Catholics are “shocked and saddened by the sudden destruction caused by the wildfire.”

The archbishop also invited Catholics to join him in offering “urgent prayers” for all those affected by the wildfire.

The archdioceses of Edmonton and Grouard-McLennan held special collections on the weekends of May 7 - 8 and 14 - 15 to assist Catholic parishioners in the two Fort McMurray parishes and the Fort McMurray Ministerial Association.

Smith and Archbishop Gerard Pettipas of Grouard-McLennan encouraged Catholics to also consider making direct donations to relief for fire victims through the Red Cross. Those donations will be matched by the provincial and federal governments.

Bishop David Motiuk of the Edmonton eparchy, which is the diocese for Ukrainian Catholics across Alberta, also encouraged people to donate to the Red Cross.

The Calgary diocese held a collection in parishes May 14 - 15 to assist the church in Fort McMurray.

Pettipas reminded priests of his archdiocese that people across Alberta and beyond came to the aid of the people of Slave Lake when they were forced to evacuate their town in 2011.

The Edmonton archdiocese has responded to a request for chaplaincy support at Northlands Expo Centre, which is the main gathering point for evacuees in the Alberta capital.

Four Edmonton area parishes —

St. Theresa, St. Charles, Corpus Christi and Holy Family in St. Albert — have responded to an Alberta Health Services request to provide accommodations at churches which have large kitchens.

As well, Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto, a former bishop of both St. Paul and Edmonton, has asked people in Canada’s largest Catholic diocese to contribute to a fund for relief for the victims of the fire.

The Toronto archdiocese will funnel the donations it receives through the Red Cross.

Meanwhile, 1,000 firefighters

continue to battle the blaze.

On May 4 Terrio issued a statement giving thanks that there had been no loss of life as a result of the wildfire. In his statement, Terrio said that with the community still in shock from the damage in Fort McMurray, “Let us give thanks to our Lord and God that, with some 60,000 - 70,000 people evacuated from the community in a matter of hours, there has been no loss of life.”

Terrio said that as the full extent of loss and damage becomes to be known, the whole community would be called upon to help

rebuild and resettle the city.

“This fire disaster is a hard blow at a time when Fort McMurray is already struggling under an adverse economic situation,” wrote Terrio.

He noted the economic slowdown with the worldwide drop in oil prices that has severely affected the local economy in the heart of Canada’s oil country.

“But with our faith, our hope and our love for each other, we shall, as a young local evacuee said on Facebook last night, build a ‘better Fort McMurray,’ ” he said.



WCR/Glen Argan

SAFE ESCAPE — Catholics who escaped the Fort McMurray wildfire were reunited in Lac La Biche May 7. Back row: Leo Ganancial, Gary Agarin, Rev. Andrew Schoenberger and Rev. Prabhakar Kommareddy. Front row: Norie Sanchez, Shiela Ganancial and Cindy Julapton.

Evacuated teacher is thinking of her students

By Lasha Morningstar
Western Catholic Reporter

Maria Donovan’s face broke into a delighted smile as she called out, “It’s so good to see you and that you are safe.”

Donovan is the Grade 9 English, religion and options teacher at Fort McMurray’s Holy Trinity Catholic High School. Delighted to see her students, she

The Fort McMurray fire was literally nipping at the teacher’s heels until a four prop water bomber doused a dwelling.

She had stayed with her students until their parents picked them up and then travelled in the gridlocked highway to a friend’s house in Leduc. “I love my kids.”

So what did she pack? “Only my good clothes, my teaching clothes.”

With all the stress and destruction, Donovan’s thoughts were still with her students. “I emailed all my kids and told them to keep a journal. That might help them decompress.”

To make sure the youth keep track of their thoughts and opinions in their journals, Donovan also emailed their parents.

“I have a journal, . . . but I haven’t written in it yet,” she said.

A native of New Brunswick, Donovan knew that on Mother’s Day her mother would be worried about her. So she took a selfie and sent it to her mother. “I told her not to listen to the news or watch TV.”

Her caring spirit makes her restless. “I feel like I need something to do, that I want to go back and help.”

Donovan does not know if she will see the year out with her students and whether she’ll go home to New Brunswick and be with her family. For the moment though, she is just happy to know that her school and students are OK.

Fort Mac drycleaning crew sticks together

By Glen Argan
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — The gang at EnviroClean Drycleaners in downtown Fort McMurray sticks together.

Not only do they run the drycleaning business, they provide the music ministry at 11:30 mass every Sunday at St. John the Baptist Church. So when disaster struck Fort McMurray, it was no surprise that they hung together through thick and thin.

When Cindy Julapton, who runs the drycleaner, heard the news on the afternoon of May 3 that Fort McMurray’s downtown was to be evacuated, at first her daughter didn’t believe it.

Her co-workers’ neighbourhood had already been evacuated, and so in their own car with their families, they followed Julapton to her home where they picked up her two daughters — Christine, 27, and Nikka, 22 — and her sister.

Then the group set out on their meandering exodus that ended in Lac La Biche 27 hours later. First, they headed north in two cars where they had supper at a lodge associated with Suncor. Then they were led in a 10-car convoy back through the city. Two of the cars ran out of gas.

“The fire and the smoke were terrifying,” Julapton said. “My focus was to get out of there.”

Throughout the journey, they prayed prayers of desperation: “Oh God! Please help us. Please save us.”

By 1 a.m., she was too tired to drive any more, and pulled into the ditch to get a couple of hours of fitful sleep. The normal half-hour drive to Anzac to get breakfast and some gas took hours.

“We thought it would be two days and we would go back to our place.”

At one point, they pulled over because Julapton needed to rest for 15 minutes. A man from Lac La Biche stopped and offered them sandwiches, granola bars, orange juice, water and gasoline.

Near Conklin, their way was blocked by a car crash. Then they heard that a friend had been hurt in another car accident and was taken to Lac La Biche hospital. So, they headed off toward that town. By the time they arrived in Lac La Biche at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, their friend had been picked up by his brother-in-law and taken to Camrose.

While Julapton was eager to head to Edmonton, the others wanted to go no further. “We

decided to stick together” to avoid the loneliness of separation, she said.

Still, she was in denial about the extent of the damage to Fort McMurray. When offered basic toiletry supplies and clothes at Lac La Biche’s main evacuation centre, she declined the offer, saying, “I’ve got those at home.”

It was only on Thursday morning that “I came to realize our lives are going to be like this for a while.”

Julapton and her crew were among a small handful of evacuees who attended the Saturday 5 p.m. mass at Lac La Biche’s St. Catherine’s Church.

“We just have gratefulness in our hearts right now,” she said. “You believe in God, that God is always there for you.”

She arrived in Fort McMurray 10 years ago from the Philippines. “I love it there. We have a very good Filipino community there.”

Julapton believes her home is undamaged because it is located downtown, close to the hospital which firefighters made sure that they saved.

Despite her safe escape from the raging wildfire, one question remains the focus of her attention: “I just want to know when we can go back to Fort McMurray.”



WCR/Lasha Morningstar

Maria Donovan

called out to them and their parents at the reception following the May 8 afternoon mass at Edmonton’s Resurrection Church.

“I felt so lonely,” Donovan said to a parent. “I’m so happy to see you.”

Mass celebrates survival of Fort McMurray residents

By Glen Argan and Lasha Morningstar
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — While video and photos of the raging inferno which destroyed much of Fort McMurray were being flashed around the world, Jason and Katharine Campbell and their two sons were expressing gratitude for all that they still have.

“We’ve been focusing on gratitude because it’s easy to relive the horror stories and relive the disappointment and the fear,” Katharine said following a May 8 mass for evacuees at Edmonton’s Resurrection Church.

“Every night before bed we’ve included a gratitude prayer and the boys (Ryan and Evan) have had to think hard about what they’re most grateful about,” she said.

“It’s really put this into perspective for them. They’re not upset about not being at home; they’re not missing their things because they understand we are very lucky and we have a lot of wonderful things in our life still.”

Katharine is an English teacher and Jason the vice-principal at Holy Trinity Catholic High School in Fort McMurray. They were part of a group, mainly associated with Catholic schools in the evacuated city, who packed the church for a special mass celebrated by St. Paul Bishop Paul Terrio.

When Holy Trinity’s principal Lucy Moore fled the school on May 3, she took only her laptop with her. In that laptop were email addresses for staff and parents of students at the school.



WCR/Glen Argan

GRATEFUL FAMILY — Katharine, Ryan, Jason and Evan Campbell have learned lessons of gratitude from the Fort McMurray fire.

In the five days prior to the mass, she sent three emails to her entire list, which helped organize the mass.

The coming-together of Fort McMurray Catholics late in the afternoon on Mother’s Day brought forth countless hugs and tears.

“You’re joined; you’re a community; you’re one body in Christ,” said Moore.

While no one knows how long it will take before residents return to the oilsands city, Moore is determined that the school hold its mass for graduating Grade 12 students by the end of June.

Monica Mankowski, deputy superintendent of the Catholic school system, said the mass was an opportunity for Fort McMurray Catholics to pray and grieve to-

gether as a community.

“We are so grateful to have everyone safely out of Wood Buffalo,” said Mankowski, who took a group of 14 in a van to spend a couple of days at her family cottage near Boyle, about 70 km southwest of Lac La Biche.



CNS/Chris Wattie, Reuters

ALBERTA WILDFIRES — Destroyed homes are seen May 9 in the Abasand neighbourhood of Fort McMurray, May 9, after wildfires forced the evacuation of the entire town.

University college opens doors to fleeing families

By Lasha Morningstar
Western Catholic Reporter

A smiling St. Joseph’s College employee poked her head around Danica Wolitski’s door and said, “We’ve got another family with three children”

“Great,” said Wolitski.

The translation of that triumphant discourse means a family fleeing the fire-storm ravaging Fort McMurray has found safe housing here in Edmonton.

The housing comes from vacant apartments at the new women’s residence (dubbed the Ilanders) at St. Joseph’s College on the University of Alberta campus.

The college is focusing on families and those deemed medically vulnerable.

Families are expected, says Wolitski, given the lack of privacy in cot-lined barracks in various evacuation centres across northern Alberta. The college is especially concerned to provide homes for families with upset little children and fussing babies.

The vulnerable will be those with medical conditions, especially women with high-risk pregnancies. The U of A Hospital is right next door.

There is no one person who gets all the credit for this refugee

housing suggestion.

“A bunch of us all came up with the same idea at the same time,” said Wolitski

Once she posted the plan on her personal website, donations came in almost instantaneously.

The goal is to take in 10 families. The apartments are ideal because they also have kitchen facilities. The newcomers could be there anywhere from six weeks to two months.

The ones already seeking refuge include those with extended families and also a pregnant mother.

The setting is ideal since there is a full cafeteria, four counsellors available to meet the traumatized survivors and chaplain Basilian Father Glenn McDonald even has a weekly children’s liturgy program.

This all costs money. Edmonton’s Catholic Social Services has been in touch and has offered to help out. Private donations are also coming their way as the story reaches the community.

Touching too is the response from other charities. Goodwill called and sent over 100 comforters. As well, the campus food bank donated gift baskets of food.

Bottom line for the fleeing souls from Fort McMurray, said Wolitski, “They are safe here.”

In Fort McMurray, everyone came together

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

As flames tore through much of Fort McMurray, one resident found comfort in how the emergency united the community, even as fleeing people left everything behind except each other.

“This week everyone came together like one person. Every human became one,” said Jules Ohelo, a resident of the city for the past nine years. “People were actually taking care of each other.”

The efforts of the Fort McMurray locals are what stand out for Ohelo.

“Strangers were offering each other rides; you never see that in Fort McMurray,” he said.

Typically in Fort McMurray, where the population has more than doubled in the past two

In an interview, Terrio said he is grateful all survived the fire. “They moved 90,000 people in five to six hours, and I thank God no one lost their life.”

Yet, he was shocked at the “devastation, loss of community space and disruption of people in Fort McMurray.”

The bishop said that among the people at the May 8 mass was Deacon Raymond Chan who serves in the city’s St. John the Baptist Parish.

Although wheelchair bound and unable to speak, Chan’s ministry is one of prayer. Still alert, he shares his reflections weekly in the parish bulletin.

“I bent down to him and said, ‘Thank you for your prayers. Let us continue praying. There is a silver lining and better days for Fort McMurray in days to come.’”

In response, Chan raised his one good thumb.

Terrio said, given the severity of the fire, he believes Fort McMurray will “take another step from a frontier boom town atmosphere to a more settled community.”

The Campbells, who came to

Fort McMurray 11 years ago from Cape Breton, were planning to head to Nova Scotia to stay with family until they hear that their school is reopening.

One reason for their gratitude is that they were contacted by friends whom he hadn’t seen in about 15 years. The friends learned through Facebook that the Campbells were leaving Fort McMurray and somehow found their phone number.

“We’ve stayed on their farm for four days,” Jason said, adding that meant their sons didn’t have to experience the stresses of living in an evacuation camp.

“Everyone has come together in such a remarkable way,” added Katharine. Co-workers and former students have been texting her to say, “I love you.”

The mass at Resurrection Church was a joyous time to reunite with their support network, the couple said.

“This is family for us. This is the family we see everyday,” Katharine said.

Ryan too was excited: “I was happy that I saw some classmates and friends” at mass.

decades as people flocked west to find employment in the oil industry, people are more focused on their jobs than their neighbours.

“People are always work, work, work, but the way that everyone came together, it was like there was actual faith. You’d see people actually helping each other,” he said.

Unlike many who waited to be told to leave, Ohelo moved his family to safety before the mandatory evacuation notice was issued May 3.

“I was getting off work and the smoke was just getting really bad,” said the delivery driver, who finished work around noon that day. “It was like the biggest rain was coming (and) you couldn’t breathe. That is when we decided to hit the highway to go and get my kids.”

Ohelo and his wife, who live north of the Athabasca River, tried

heading south toward the downtown area, where his children attend school and his mother lives.

“But I was told to go north,” he said, adding that the bridge spanning the river had already been closed.

“We couldn’t get to my kids in time.”

So the two packed a number of neighbours into their vehicle and headed north to the Noralta Lodge, praying all the way that his loved ones would escape to Edmonton, where family friends live.

Ohelo, a Pentecostal originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was eventually reconnected with his family.

“God tests people always. This is like a test,” said Ohelo.

“It is a tragedy. Seeing (our city) destroyed is almost like God is testing us.”

Personal prayer wall reflects modern sensibility

Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



In Sue Monk Kidd's wonderful novel *The Secret Life of Bees*, May, one of the three Boatwright sisters, has a unique empathy for suffering. As a deeply sensitive soul, she feels other people's pain poignantly and overwhelmingly.

One of the ways she copes is through her "prayer wall," a long, low stone fence on the property where the sisters live. When May is overcome with emotion, she scribbles her feelings onto a small piece of paper, runs to the wall

and stuffs the bit of paper into a crack in the stone. Each piece of paper is a profound experience of suffering or pain. Lily, the young protagonist of the story, is stunned the first time she comes across the fence. It is almost covered in the small, fluttering scraps of paper. Lily realizes it is a glimpse into May's heart and the sorrow that lodges there.

Several years ago I too came across a stone wall with small white scraps of paper stuffed in the cracks and fluttering in the breeze. We were just outside of Ephesus, Turkey, and visiting the shrine known as Mary's House. It

is a place of pilgrimage, revered as the spot where the Virgin Mary, brought there by Saint John, ended her last days. The small house is located high on a hill and there is a long pathway bordered with a low stone wall leading up to it. Stations with writing supplies are located along the path and pilgrims are encouraged to place prayer petitions in the cracks of the stone wall. I was surprised to see the lengthy wall almost covered in the small scraps of paper.

The sight reminded me of Tibetan prayer flags. Literally translated as *wind horse*, these colourful rectangular flags can be found strung along mountain ridges and peaks high in the Himalayas, and increasingly, around the world. They are used to bless the surrounding countryside, carrying prayers which are destined to become a permanent part of the universe as the images fade from wind and sun. Tibetans renew their hopes for the world by continually mounting new flags alongside the older flags.

Tibetan prayer flags call to mind Christian "prayer ribbons." These unofficial symbols, rooted, some claim in Celtic Christianity, can sometimes be seen tied around trees and shrubs outside churches or on retreat centre properties. In informal rituals, participants form prayer intentions and use the ribbons as the symbols of these intentions. Tying them to the tree or shrub, they release their prayers to God and the trees, thus embellished, stand as visible witnesses to a belief in prayer.

Spirit made incarnate: a similar dynamic is at work, I think, in

May Boatwright's practice of writing out her sorrow, a pilgrim's prayer petitions, Tibetan prayer flags, and Christian prayer ribbons. Each speaks to our need to make our soul life visible and concrete: what we hold in our hearts we need to see and feel with our senses. We are helped in our formless prayers when we can give them shape and solidity.

My own "prayer wall" reflects a pragmatic and modern sensibility. Rather than scraps of paper, flags or ribbons, it is made with simple office Post-It notes. These are scattered over the wall near where I pray every day. Each coloured square bears a name, an event, and a date. Each time someone asks me to pray for them or when I am moved to want to offer prayers for someone or something, I make a new note and tack it up. Some of the squares are there for only a short time and some have almost permanent residence.

Their purpose is always the same, though. They are there to remind me of my commitment to prayer and of my intention to pray consistently and consciously for people and events in my life and in the world. There are so many people and so many things to lift up to God in prayer! The notes keep me centred and focused and when I cannot find words to say, they speak for me. But most of all, the prayer notes serve as a silent testament to my faith in a God who cares deeply about human life and the cares and concerns of the human heart. My prayer notes are my soul's longings and desires writ large.

We celebrate Pentecost this month. I like to think of the stone wall in Ephesus adorned with white prayer notes fluttering in the breeze, of Tibetan prayer flags flapping in the wind and Christian prayer ribbons being blown about. I like to think of my own little notes, each an expression of my heart, being swept up by the Spirit, right into the heart of God.



Peggy Vance

PRISON DOGS — A story of love, loss, and redemption, *Prison Dogs* focuses on the impact of a unique dog training program that gives two of the most marginalized populations in society — prison inmates and veterans — a second chance. Filmed at Fishkill State Correctional Facility in New York, the documentary follows a select group of inmates serving long-term sentences for murder and armed robbery. Through a program called Puppies Behind Bars run by Gloria Gilbert Stoga, several inmates learn to train puppies to become service dogs for disabled veterans, whether suffering from PTSD or physical injuries that render them immobile.

Strong docs deal with prison system

Continued from page 9

I wasn't able to see *Do Not Resist*, on the militarization of American police forces, which took the jury documentary award. However, I can recommend four more strong documentaries dealing with the U.S. criminal justice and prison systems.

The Return (U.S. <http://www.thereturnproject.com/>)

Recipient of the documentary audience award, directors Kelly Duane de la Vega and Katie Galloway's film follows the return from prison of over 2,000 inmates, almost all racial minorities, released under a 2012 reform of California's infamous 1994 "three strikes" law that resulted in some 10,000 life sentences, most for minor non-violent offences. It's an intimate moving look at the reintegration process as well as moment of reckoning on the manifest failures of mass incarceration. (Scheduled for broadcast May 23 on the PBS Series POV.)

Solitary (U.S.)

This HBO film directed by

Kristi Jacobson probes the effects of solitary confinement on the tens of thousands of U.S. prisoners locked up in "seg" (segregation) in 8x10-foot cells, 23 hours per day, for years even decades. It does so through the stories of individuals in Virginia's Red Onion state prison, one of 40 "supermax" prisons. The system of dehumanizing isolation, akin to being buried alive, is stressful for staff and guards too, almost all of whom are white in contrast to the majority of inmates. Not surprisingly, those in solitary account for half of prison suicides.

Prison Dogs (U.S. <http://www.g2p2films.com/prisondogs>)

There are prison stories that offer a measure of hope and redemption. Such is the case with the "Puppies Behind Bars" program in which prisoners apply to be matched with dogs which they will train as service dogs to provide therapy for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Although not every prisoner is successful and not

every dog successfully placed, directors Perri Peltz and Geeta Gandbhir's film is a deeply affecting look at the healing transformations that are possible.

Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four (U.S. <http://www.southwestof-salem.com/>)

Director Deborah Esquenazi explores the outrageous miscarriage of justice which, in a climate of homophobia and hysteria, led to long prison sentences for four young Latina women accused of abusing two little girls in 1994. The case has been described as "the last gasp of the Satanic ritual abuse panic." A Canadian, Darrel Otto, an instructor at Yukon College, played an important role in reopening the case, which has also been taken up by the Innocence Project of Texas. Although the four have been released on the basis of exonerating evidence and the recantation of one of the alleged "victims," amazingly after so many years they have yet to be cleared and face a possible retrial.

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SASKATOON

Full-time permanent position

Human Resources Manager

Responsibilities

- To manage Human Resource in the areas of employee relations, recruitment, retention, orientation, performance management, staff development
- To facilitate conflict resolution consistent with the mission and vision of our Diocese.
- To ensure human resource practices are in keeping with government labour legislation.

Qualifications

- Undergraduate degree in Commerce majoring in Human Resource Management or equivalent
- Five years experience in Human Resources, including experience working with the labour standards legislation.
- Demonstrated experience in conflict resolution and policy development.
- Effective and pastoral interpersonal and communication skills, both written and oral.

Salary

Based on education and experience and consistent with our salary grid.

Please send cover letter, resumé and references (including one pastoral reference) in confidence to:

Blake Sittler, Director of Pastoral Services

123 Nelson Road

Saskatoon, SK S7S 1H1

director@saskatoonrcdiocese.com 306-659-5834

Deadline for applications is 4:30 p.m. on Monday, May 30, 2016.

Feast day reminds us of Christ’s comforting presence

Liturgy and Life

Lorette Noble



This Sunday is now called the Body and Blood of Christ, but when I was younger I, and probably some of you, remember it as *Corpus Christi* Sunday. Reference to the Blood of Christ has rightly been added, and this Sunday is a special moment in our liturgical year to help us realize that bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, his gift to each one of us, every time we receive him in communion.

Bread and wine appear at various points in the Bible, as we are reminded in the first reading when, in celebration of Abram’s victorious return home after defeating his enemies, the high priest and king, Melchizedek, “brought out bread and wine” and blessed him. And in St. Paul’s letter we are once again reminded about what happened at the Last Supper, quoting Our Lord saying, when he gave the bread to his apostles, “Do this in remembrance of me,” and, when he gave the wine, “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

One evening some time ago I was meeting the parents of children whom I was preparing to receive their first communion, trying to get them interested and involved in this

Noble was pastoral animator in an elementary Catholic school for 30 years, produced community television programs for 11 years in the 1980s and '90s, was animator for her diocesan English Region from 2000 - 2006 and is past national president of the CWL (2006 - 2008). She lives in Candiac, Que.

preparation. I told them the most amazing gift Christ gave us was himself in the host which becomes his body at the consecration at mass. I mentioned that, in my experience, children did not have a problem believing this miracle. At that point, one of the parents stood up and challenged this: “Who told you that the host becomes the Body of Christ?” I replied that this was our faith, based on Jesus’ own words, but this parent was not convinced at all, saying, “It is not Christ’s body. It’s only a symbol.” He then said he would write to the bishop and also to the pope about what I was saying! If he did, he was probably set straight, because he continued to come to our meetings and the subject did not come up again, and his child did receive her first communion.

On certain major feasts in our liturgical year, there is a Sequence, which the Living with Christ publication says is optional, though, if used, it must be sung. In our parish, a member of our choir usually does sing it, and it is beautiful. The language in this Sunday’s Sequence is rather old-fashioned and quaint, but beautifully touches the heart of the miracle that is the eucharist: “blood and flesh as wine, bread broken; yet

was looking up at him. He said this was strange, since they were supposed to be looking at the host when he raised it up.



Design Pics

Body and Blood of Christ May 29, 2016	Genesis 14:18-20 Psalms 110 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Luke 9:11b-17
--	---

beneath each wondrous token, Christ entire we know to be . . . Jesus, with your love befriend us . . .”

A few years ago at our diocese we had a guest speaker, a priest from Belgium, who talked about our liturgies. He mentioned that in the past he had noticed that, when he raised the host at the consecration and the bells were rung, the members of his congregation all bowed their heads, and when he lowered the host and then knelt or bowed, all the congregation

But when he knelt or bowed down all that the congregation saw was the bald spot on the top of his head! So he encouraged us to look upon the host when it is raised and then, when it is lowered to the altar, to bow at the same time as the priest does. What happens in your congregations?

At the beginning of May the Catholic Women’s League of Canada launched a national initiative called “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care.” This was held in the small chapel in our parish office building and all our parish congregation were invited to come and spend some time in prayer with the blessed sacrament. It was a beautiful day of silent and spoken prayer, in Christ’s presence, and, looking at the host in the monstrance, I am sure each of us felt Christ’s presence in our midst.

When, every so often, we stop and think of Christ’s amazing gift of himself to us, is it not the deepest comfort?

Ten commandments of mercy are written into our very DNA

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Among the Ten Commandments, one begins with the word “remember”: *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.* It reminds us to recall something we already know. There are commandments of mercy written into our very DNA. We already know them, but we need to remember them more explicitly. What are they?

The Ten Commandments of Mercy:

1. Remember that mercy lies deepest in God’s heart.

Few things so much approximate the essence of God as does mercy. Mercy is God’s essence. Scripture uses words such as loving-kindness and compassion to try to define what constitutes God’s mercy, but the

central biblical concept, captured in the Hebrew concept of *hesed*, connotes a relationship that loves, embraces, and forgives even when, and especially when, we cannot measure up or deserve what’s given us

2. Remember that mercy is the essence of all true religion.

Inside religion and spirituality, within all faiths, three things try to lay claim to what’s central: *proper religious practice, outreach to the poor, and compassion.* Ultimately they are not in opposition, but complementary pieces of one religious whole. But for religious practice and outreach to the poor to be an extension of God’s love and not of human ego, they need to be predicated upon compassion, mercy. Deepest inside of every religion is the invitation: Be compassionate, merciful, as God is compassionate.

3. Remember that we all stand forever in need of mercy.

There is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who converts than over 99 righteous persons. Does God love sinners more than the righteous? There are no righteous persons. It’s rather that we feel God’s love more when we admit that we’re sinners. None of us ever measure up. But, as St. Paul so consolingly teaches, the whole point is that we don’t have to measure up. That’s what mercy means. It’s undeserved, by definition.

4. Remember that, having received mercy, we must show mercy to others.

We only receive and appropriate God’s mercy and the mercy of others when we extend that same mercy to others. Mercy has to flow through us. If we don’t extend it to others we become self-indulgent and too harsh on others.

5. Remember that only the practice of mercy sets us free.

Receiving and giving mercy is the only thing that frees us from our congenital propensity to self-seek, self-justify, and judge others. Nothing frees us more from the tyranny of ego than does the practice of mercy.

6. Remember that mercy is not opposed to justice, but is its fulfilment.

Mercy, as Walter Kasper so aptly puts it, is not “a kind of fabric softener that undermines the dogmas and commandments and abrogates the central and fundamental meaning of truth.” That’s the accusation the Pharisees made against Jesus. Mercy is where justice is meant to terminate.

7. Remember that only the practice of mercy will make God’s kingdom come.

Jesus promised us that someday the meek will inherit the earth, the poor will eat plentiful, rich food, and all tears will be wiped away. That can only happen when mercy replaces self-interest.

8. Remember that mercy needs too to be practised collectively.

It is not enough for us to be merciful in our own lives. Mercy is marginalized in a society that doesn’t sufficiently attend to those who are weak or needy, just as it is marginalized in a church that is judg-

mental. We must create a society that is merciful and a church that is merciful. Mercy, alone, enables the survival of the weakest.

9. Remember that mercy calls us to do works both spiritual and physical.

Our Christian faith challenges us to perform mercy in a double way, corporeally and spiritually. The classic corporal works of mercy are: *Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead.* The classic spiritual works of mercy are: *instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the afflicted, admonish the sinner, forgive offences, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead.* God has given us different gifts and all of us are better at some of these than at others, but mercy is manifest in all of them.

10. Remember that our lives are a dialogue between God’s mercy and our weaknesses.

The only thing at which we are adequate is being inadequate. We are forever falling short at something, no matter the strength of our sincerity, good intention, and will-power. Only mercy, receiving it and giving it, can lead us out of the choppy waters of our own anxieties, worry, and joylessness. Only in knowing mercy do we know gratitude.

This year, 2016, Pope Francis has asked us all to live a year of mercy, to contemplate the mystery of mercy “as a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace.” Mercy, he believes, is the secret to putting a credible face to God, to putting a credible face to our churches, and to walking with steadiness inside our own lives.



94th annual

Mount Carmel Pilgrimage

(two miles north of Carmel, Sask.)

Sunday, July 17

Year of Mercy

Program:

9:30 An hour with Mary
Marian hymns, rosary, Sacrament of reconciliation

10:45 An hour with God's family
Sunday eucharist
Bishop Donald Bolen, presiding
Blessing of fields
Blessing of the sick

12:00 An hour with our diocesan family
Lunch & quiet time with the Blessed Sacrament

1:30 An hour with the Lord
Hymns
Stations of the Cross
Blessing with the Blessed Sacrament

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. Follow Father Ron on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser

Yes is the dangerous word on which to build a life

Barefoot and Preaching

Leah Perrault



Yes. I'm trying to say yes more often these days, with more reckless abandon. It is a dangerous word. Yes tempts me, commits me, holds me. It binds me. And it is the only word that makes sense of my spiritual life. It is the word God speaks to me, over and over again.

I make my living in religious settings, wading through the most intimate moments of human living, and wrestling with some of life's most challenging situations. I spend a lot of time with people and rules and we talk a lot about what is wrong and what needs to change. My friends and neighbours who are not intimately connected with my world are intimately aware of the things to which my religious com-

Perrault is a wife and mom, a grateful employee of Emmanuel Care, and a speaker, writer and consultant at www.leahperrault.com

munity says no. No is also a powerful word. But it is not an inviting one. And it can never be the word upon which to build a life.

When I was locked in a particularly frustrating pattern of power struggles with my littles, I began to read, as I do, devouring books and blogs, seeking understanding and answers and mostly a magic solution to my problem. I did not find what I was looking for, because what I was wanting was an escape from the messy humanity of real life. But I did find a clue.

Several sources pointed to the power of yes. How often do I, as a parent, give no as the answer? Can we paint with our fingers? No, it's too messy. Can we do an experiment? No, we don't have time. Can we . . . ? No. The whole of my over-protected life rests on the hinges of what will not fit.

There's another way.

Another way often results in stronger connections between parents and their children, I have

learned. I can say yes to finger painting when I give my kids the responsibility of cleaning up and myself permission to have laughing kids and a few extra minutes to wipe up the places they miss. I can say yes to the experiment after dinner, if not now. The real reason I am so inclined to say no is because the yes costs me something. It requires me to say no to my own way, no to my schedule, no to my own expectations.

To say yes to one thing is to say no to others. There's no avoiding the no, yet my religious tradition has said no so frequently that many, both inside of churches and outside of them, no longer know to what we are saying yes. To choose faith and a spiritual way of life is to say yes to God with our whole lives. And life brings so many things my way that I would not choose for myself that I need to stay focused on my yes to keep swimming when I would otherwise be pulled under.

I am saying yes to a God who says yes to my deepest hopes and scariest emotions, who wraps me in love and replaces my fear with freedom. I am saying yes to all the discomfort that growth requires, choosing to learn, to get up again when I inevitably fail, to choosing again. I am saying yes to a God who never takes away my freedom and who set the world up in such a way

that I can only say yes for myself.

I am saying yes to being with my people, to hearing little voices, to laughter. Here's my yes to joy and gratitude, to more playing in the rain and fingerprints on the windows, to messier bathrooms and more piles of laundry. Yes to a new puppy and to date night on

the couch and donations to families homeless and displaced by the fire. To the requests for more of me and less stuff to do, the answer needs to be yes.

I am saying yes to vulnerability and to imperfection. If you

— TIME, page 17



L. Perrault

Joy of full surrender lost on fundamentalists

Outlooks from the Inner Life

Cedric Speyer



"When you love, you should not say 'God is in my heart' but rather, 'I am in the heart of God.'" — Kahlil Gibran

"The self is not the hub, but the spoke of the revolving wheel. In prayer, we shift the centre of living from self-consciousness to self-surrender. Prayer takes the mind out of the narrowness of self-interest and enables us to see the world in the mirror of the holy." — Abraham Joshua Heschel

"Too often we put saddlebags on Jesus and let the donkey run loose in the pasture." — Rumi

Sometimes it seems that the "original sin" of self-importance is indeed the obstacle to knowing, surrendering to, and serving God; yet when Jesus spoke of losing oneself to gain eternal life, I don't think he meant trading in a worldly self for a redeemed religious one. Another more radical shift in consciousness is required, rather like discovering that the earth revolves around the sun with its very existence and orbit

Speyer is a Benedictine Oblate as well as clinical supervisor of e-counselling for a major employee & family assistance program, and creative director, InnerView Guidance International (IGI). He also directs a documentary series titled GuideLives for the Journey: Ordinary Persons, Extraordinary Pathfinders. <http://www.guidelives.ca/> Connect with Cedric on <https://www.facebook.com/cms94> or via cms94@hotmail.com

text, God is the ground of being we all rest upon, named as our rock of salvation or not.)

The first comment during question period came from a lady who presented herself as "awake" and confronted the teacher about all those who lead mindfulness groups without being spiritually awake themselves. She went on to say that while he spoke of a non-judging awareness, she made no such distinction; not being separate from that awareness and not speaking about truth; rather being the truth speaking. Meanwhile, if you will forgive my hopelessly judgmental mind, you could see from a mile away that she was "more awake than thou" with an angry, bitter, split-off shadow side, unbeknownst to herself (being pure awareness will do that to you).

The human condition is challenging. We are caught between heaven and earth, and need to cultivate "double awareness" for that and every other dialectic. Yet the call to imitate Christ in the eternal/temporal crucible can also make our burden light. There's no place to arrive where we've got it all known and right.

We can afford to keep our sense of humour, and play like children with our personas and identities; not confusing the flowers with the roots, or the relative with the absolute. As the Steve Earle song goes, *"I believe in prophecy/ Some folks see things not everybody can see/ And once in a while they pass the secret along to you and me/ And I believe in miracles/ Something sacred burning in every bush and tree/ We can all learn to sing the songs that angels sing/ Yeah I believe in God/ And God ain't me."*

SAYING YES — Leah Perrault is trying to say yes more often these days. "Yes to the puppy, the walks, the cuddles, and the joy of our kids delighting in her."



BOSCO FOUNDATION

John Bosco
Child & Family Services Foundation

The John Bosco Child and Family Services Foundation (Bosco Foundation) is a public foundation dedicated to the provision of buildings and facilities used for the treatment, education and housing of children, adolescents and adults who are in need of support.

Bosco Foundation believes in assisting non-profit and charitable organizations who provide vital services which aid vulnerable people in our society. We do this by providing our facilities to various non-profit and charitable agencies at below market level rental rates.

Our facilities are used for social services group care, foster care, adult mental health care, the St. Francis Food Bank, two AA groups and a NE Edmonton cadet core among others.

In addition, we provide volunteer services to assist two small non-profit organizations working with low income seniors and victims of stroke with fundraising and volunteer recruitment assistance.

The Bosco Foundation is currently working with a large service organization on a joint project with the aim of providing affordable housing for low-income seniors.

100% of donations go toward charitable purposes. Administrative expenses are covered by other sources.

Please forward your donation to:
Bosco Foundation
315-6770 129 Avenue NW,
Edmonton, AB T5C 1V7
Tel: (780) 809-8585 ♦ Fax: (780) 809-8586
www.boscofoundation.com
Charitable Tax Number: 85985 8664 RT0001

Anniversary of Protestant Reformation upcoming

Challenge of Ecumenism

Thomas Ryan, CSP



The year 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the publication of Martin Luther's 95 theses in Wittenberg, Germany, which eventually gave rise to what has become known as the Protestant Reformation. It will be the first centenary commemoration that takes place in an ecumenical age. What's important to know is that a year of events in approach to the anniversary itself will open on Oct. 31, 2016, and culminate on Oct. 31, 2017.

On Oct. 31, 2016, 95 Volkswagen buses will gather in front of Berlin Cathedral, and then head for 95 Reformation cities throughout Germany and Europe, collecting one thesis from each of them. By the end, if all goes well, there should be 95 theses from 95 cities across Germany and Europe, which together will add up to the 95 theses for today. The various places will reveal their own quite specific approach to the Reformation.

In addition there will be an exhibition showground in Wittenberg for 95 days in the summer of 2017, along with concerts, film festivals, youth camps and large worship services in various countries. The Lutheran World Federa-

tion (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church will jointly hold an ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation on Oct. 31, 2016, in Lund, Sweden.

The 2017 commemoration will also mark 50 years of Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in which representatives of both churches have looked afresh at their own theological traditions and practices, recognizing the influences they have had on each other. Past commemorations have been by and large oppositional, intensifying the conflict between the churches and even leading at times to open hostility. This will be the first commemoration marked by a real desire to come together for its observance.

In our time, the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity has produced its latest report, titled: "From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017." The international Lutheran-Catholic dialogue has gone on continuously since 1967 and has been one of the most detailed and fruitful of all the bilateral ecumenical dialogues. The intertwining of these two anniversaries — that of the Reformation and that of the dialogue commission's healing work — appropriately inclines us to a joint commemoration of them which is both joyful and yet also penitential, on account



CNS/Massimiliano Migliorato, Catholic Press Photo

UPCOMING ANNIVERSARY — Pope Francis receives a gift from children during a visit to Christuskirche, a parish of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Rome in this Nov. 15, 2015, file photo. The pope will visit Sweden Oct. 31 to participate in an ecumenical event marking the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

of the past sins and deficiencies within both communions.

What is there to commemorate about the Reformation, Catholics may ask? The answer given by the commission is the genuineness of Luther's spiritual search and its very positive results in re-emphasizing the centrality of God's free grace in the life of the church and each Christian. The report spells this out in a chapter entitled, "New Perspectives on Martin Luther and the Reformation." It shows how Roman Catholic scholars have come to a very different evaluation of Luther from the traditionally negative one of the Counter-Reformation and the Roman Catholic Church in gener-

al up to the time of Vatican II.

It is now recognized that the Augsburg Confession of 1530, still the standard Lutheran confession of faith, stated the doctrine of justification *within* the context of the faith of the traditional creeds and that it called for a real reform of the church and a new zeal in Christian spirituality rather than a complete break with the past. The third chapter of the commission's report stresses that Luther insisted that his original theses were intended not as assertions, but precisely for academic discussion.

In the mid-16th century, the context was one of hardening mutual alienation. At the end of the 20th century, by contrast, it was one of increasing mutual rapprochement, powerfully aided by an ecumenically committed pope and a Lutheran commitment to wide-ranging ecumenical dialogue, the latter in particular showing important advances not only with the Roman Catholic Church but also with Anglicans,

Reformed and Methodists.

Catholic Suffragan Bishop Jaschke of Hamburg has declared that today Luther's 95 theses would also be accepted from the Roman Catholic side and said that he shares Luther's criticism of the trade in indulgences at that time. And in Augsburg in 1999 the Roman Catholic Church and The Lutheran World Federation signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, which was affirmed by the World Methodist Council in 2006. The declaration nullified centuries' old disputes between Catholics and Protestants over the basic truths of the doctrine of justification, which was at the centre of the 16th-century Reformation.

These events set a new context for the upcoming commemoration of the Reformation. Given that the kickoff of events leading up to the 500th anniversary will begin on Oct. 31, 2016, and culminate on Oct. 31, 2017, it's now time to begin the planning of jointly sponsored events.

Ryan directs the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in Washington, D.C.

Help Pope Francis Save Children in the Middle East

Send your gift today!

www.cnewa.ca • 1-866-322-4441

CNEWA Canada
a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support

☒ **Yes, I want to help children in the Middle East!**

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Charitable Registration #86775 7502 RR0001 10759

Mail your cheque to:

Catholic Near East Welfare Association
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9

www.prairiemessenger.ca

Prairie Messenger
CATHOLIC JOURNAL

NOW AVAILABLE e-Edition subscriptions
visit: www.pmonline.ca
for more information

Receive 45 issues per year

Mail coupon to: Prairie Messenger, Circulation Dept.
Box 190, Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0
Phone: (306) 682-1772 Fax: (306) 682-5285
email: pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca

☐ One Year \$37.00

☐ U.S. \$170.00 ☐ Foreign \$269.00

Applicable tax included

☐ New ☐ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Prov: _____

Postal Code: _____ Tel: _____

Visa/MC: _____ Expiry: _____

Actions need to be changed, not the climate

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



Pope Francis repositioned the entire global debate around climate change when he released the first-ever encyclical on Christian responsibility to protect the environment. *Laudato Si'* was timely, morally incisive, and prophetic. And now, almost one year later, we have a historic opportunity to direct the way Canada will address climate change.

Will faith communities show up — in timely, incisive and prophetic ways — or leave the moral and ethical issues surrounding climate change up in the clouds?

At the UN on Earth Day, April 22, Prime Minister Trudeau indicated he would present the Paris Agreement to Parliament for approval in May. Minister McKenna announced national public consultations to develop climate change strategies for our country. Through a Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change website (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-action.html>) Canadians are invited to submit their “general ideas on addressing climate change.” Government would like to hear from the public on four specific themes that echo what the first ministers identified as “working groups”: 1) reducing emissions, 2) clean technology, innovation and jobs, 3) preparing for climate change impacts, and 4) carbon pricing.

Submissions from individuals and groups can be delivered by June 1, allowing federal and provincial officials on the working groups to develop their final report by September — all in time for another first ministers’ meeting in October.

The process also encourages “town hall” meetings in communities. Minister McKenna launched the first such event in her own riding of Ottawa Centre on the evening of April 28. Karri Munn-

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

Venn of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) was invited to facilitate a panel, and so many people signed up to come — over 200 — that some had to be turned away!

CPJ encourages all people of faith to impress upon our governments that Canada needs an ambitious but socially fair plan to reduce our carbon emissions based on the scientific evidence, committing our nation to respect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to rapid conversion to a renewable energy

future.

We have worked with Development and Peace — Caritas Canada has insisted that Canada also provide communities in the Global South with the necessary resources to adapt to climate change based on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities.” (This means avoiding scenarios where the poorest in the Global South — who contribute least to climate change — are hardest hit by its impacts.) The Ontario bishops will soon launch an online study guide on *Laudato Si'*, and Scarboro Missions has hired an animator to bring workshops to parish groups.

CPJ has launched a webpage (http://www.cpj.ca/climate-consultation?utm_source=justicENEWS&utm_campaign=eed4feff5-April_2016_JusticE_News_from_CPJ4_26_2016&utm_medium=e

[mail&utm_term=0_00b7fceacb-eed4feff5-100558769](mailto:utm_term=0_00b7fceacb-eed4feff5-100558769)) with resource materials and action suggestions, so that people of faith can get involved, and make their views known. Please ask your own member of Parliament if she or he plans to organize a town hall consultation evening. If they don’t, organize one in your own congregation — we’ll help you do so!

CPJ believes that by sharing stories about our ministries to protect creation, faith communities can enhance our advocacy efforts. Since climate change affects us all, many of us have already been impacted by climate change. You’re invited to contribute to this learning of how faith communities have responded.

As examples, Lutheran pastor Adam Snook in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, writes how his church — and his town — risk flooding as sea

levels have increased. Sheila McKinley relates how her Ursuline Sisters have achieved GOLD certification from LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) in the construction and operation of their convent in Chatham, Ont. Like the Sisters of St. Joseph in London and Toronto, among others, they used ground source heating and cooling, as well as the most environmentally friendly products available. United Church member Christine Boyle of Vancouver offers testimony of how her involvement in Fossil Free Faith (advocating for institutions to refrain from investments in fossil fuel firms) has assisted her ecological conversion.

You can find, on CPJ’s website, what your own church has said about climate change. Ask your church leaders if they plan to present their views, and how the folks in the pews can participate.

There’s also a template to assist anyone wishing to submit their own opinion to the government — and you can revise CPJ’s preferred message to reflect your own views.

Let’s change our actions — not the climate!



Design Pics

TAKING ACTION — Citizens for Public Justice encourages all people of faith to impress upon our governments that Canada needs an ambitious but socially fair plan to reduce our carbon emissions based on the scientific evidence, committing our nation to respect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to rapid conversion to a renewable energy future.

PRAIRIE MESSENGER PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

KAPOOR, SELNES, & KLIMM
Barristers & Solicitors
W. Selnes, B.A., LL.B.;
G. Klimm, B.A., LL.B.;
Phone (306) 752-5777, P.O. Box 2200
Melfort, Saskatchewan S0E 1A0
Phone (306) 873-4535, P.O. Box 760
Tisdale, Saskatchewan S0E 1T0

WEBER & GASPER
Barristers & Solicitors
Russel Weber (B.A., LL.B.)
Tabbatha M. Gasper (B.A., LL.B.)
517 Main Street, Humboldt, Sask.
Phone: 306-682-5038
Fax: 306-682-5538
E-mail: weber.gasper@sasktel.net

Assante
WEALTH MANAGEMENT
Assante Financial Management Ltd.
Peter Martens, FICB 301 - 500 Spadina Crescent East
Financial Advisor Saskatoon, SK S7K 4H9
Cara Martens, CFP T: (306) 665-3244
Financial Advisor 1-800-465-2100
E: pmartens@assante.com

VOLUNTEER INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE
requires Teachers, Administrators, Medical Professionals and Trades People, aged 21 - 65. If you are interested in serving overseas for two years, we may have an assignment for you! Please call 306-374-2717, Email: vics1@telusplanet.net or visit our Website at www.volunteerinternational.ca

MCKERCHER LLP BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS
SASKATOON:
(306) 653-2000
L.J.(Dick) Batten, QC
Michel G. Thibault
David M.A. Stack, QC
Curtis J. Onishenko
Galen R. Richardson
REGINA:
306.565.6500
David E. Thera, QC
Committed to serving the legal needs of Religious Organizations for the past 90 years.
MCKERCHER LLP
mckercher.ca

RAYNER AGENCIES LTD.
www.rayneragencies.ca Est. 1948
General Insurance Broker
Motor Licences & Notary Public
1000 Central Avenue, Saskatoon
Phone: 306-373-0663
Shawn Wasylenko Norbert Wasylenko

MAURICE SOULODRE
Architect Ltd.
Maurice Soulodre, B.A., B.Ed., M.Arch., SAA, MRAIC
1815C Lorne Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7H 1Y5
Tel: (306) 955-0333 Fax: (306) 955-0549
E-mail: soularch@sasktel.net

MOURNING GLORY
FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES
John Schachtel
1201 - 8th St. East
Saskatoon, Sask.
(306) 978-5200

Schuler-Lefebvre
Funeral Chapel
"Dedicated to those we serve"
Ph: 306-682-4114 Humboldt, Sask.

MALINOSKI & DANYLUK
FUNERAL HOME
HWY 5 EAST HUMBOLDT
Humboldt's only 100% locally owned and operated.
PH : 306-682-1622

Satisfaction Hearing Systems Ltd.
Hearing Aid Sales, Service & Repair
Ph: 306.979.4543 #16-1945 McKercher Dr.
Cell: 306.881.8602 Saskatoon, SK S7J 4M4

St. Peter's Press
Commercial Printers Since 1904
Fine Quality Printing
Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0
Ph: 306-682-1770
Fax: 306-682-5285
press@stpeterspress.ca
Place your professional ad here
Call 306-682-1772

Are you Moving?
Please let us know a month in advance.
Write to:
Circulation Dept.
Prairie Messenger
Box 190
Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0
pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca
Undeliverable papers cost twice as much to return.

Obituary
MILLER, Sister Elizabeth Anne
(formerly Hilda Helen)
entered eternal life on Monday, May 9, 2016, at Villa Angela, Chatham, Ontario. She entered the Ursuline Sisters of Chatham in 1956. During her religious life she served as a teacher in Chatham, Rockyford, Alberta, Regina, Saskatchewan and Chiclayo, Peru. She has also lived and ministered in London, Windsor and Saskatoon in Parish Ministry, Community Service, Refugee/immigrant ministry and with the Inter-Ursuline Community Among Hispanics in Brownsville, Texas. She served on the Brescia Leadership Team from 2000 - 2003 and on the Finance Committee and as General Treasurer of the Community from 1982 - 1988 and 1996 - 97. Wherever Sr. Elizabeth Anne lived, she opened her heart to those who were most vulnerable. She always paid special attention to those who were poor, displaced, troubled and treated unjustly.
She was born in Viscount, Sask., on January 12, 1938, the daughter of the late Andrew & Elizabeth (Novocosky) Miller of Russia. She is survived by two sisters, Bridget Wolfe of Saskatoon and Sr. Rita Miller, OSU, of Chatham and sister-in-law's, Betty, Denise, Marjorie, Elsie and Tina Miller and many nieces and nephews to whom she was very close. She is predeceased by siblings, Magdalen, Peter, Benedict, Joseph, Anthony, John, Elizabeth German, Leo, Bernard, Edward, Martin, and Albert. Relatives and friends were invited to join the Ursuline Community at a prayer service May 10 in the Kiva at Villa Angela in Chatham where the Mass of Resurrection was also celebrated on May 11. Interment in St. Anthony's Cemetery. Donations in memory of Sister Elizabeth Anne may be made to "Chatham Ursuline Charities" or to the charity of your choice. The Hinnegan-Peskeski Funeral Home, 156 William St. S, Chatham, Ontario (519-352-5120) was in charge of arrangements. Online condolences welcomed at www.peskeski.com

Outdoors may be an antidote to our restlessness

Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



This year I've decided to try something different. I'm going to go outside. You might think everyone from the prairies was raised in the outdoors — cross-country skiing and skating on ponds in the winter, gardening, camping at the lake (is there only one?) in the summer — but you would be wrong.

I do not come from a tradition of the great outdoors. For my mother, being stuck in the house was not seen as a bad thing. Dad sometimes tried to convince Mom to walk around the block for some fresh air. When that wouldn't work, he'd suggest going to the end of the street, and then halfway down, to the lamppost. When that was dismissed, he would suggest in his droll way that she go to the end of the driveway.

Over my lifetime I have worked to overcome an indoor mindset, and I do well where exercise is concerned (except it's usually on a treadmill), but after this past winter of being inside more than usual, I had become restless.

Since spring has arrived in the guise of summer heat, dandelions have threatened to take over the plot of dirt that was left when some overgrown cedars were removed last fall. Hoping I had a latent call to be a gardener, I decided to go out and pull them, quickly realizing you don't pull

dandelions. At first it was enjoyable to hear a satisfying rip when I gave the plant a tug, until it was clear I was leaving most of the hearty root in the ground where it would certainly propagate as soon as I was out of sight.

You have to admire the tenacity of a dandelion. Two small, flat leaves can lie overtop the dirt in a most surreptitious manner, yet those two leaves will have a tiny bud between them — barely discernable if you don't have your reading glasses on — and if you leave it, by tomorrow there will be a sunny yellow head smiling for all the neighbours to see. Dandelions grow by the edge of the sidewalk, making them even harder to dig out, or they hide within the burgeoning irises and lilies, hoping you won't notice until they are old enough to spew their parachute seeds to yards near and far.

And I didn't know they were a haven for ladybugs. When I dug around a rather bushy dandelion with my little spade and pulled it up, there, emerging like molten lava, were hundreds of red ladybugs who lifted off into my face, settling into the creases of my collar and jeans. A few interlopers were escorted out of the house later that evening. After what seemed an eternity of weeding I decided I'd had enough of this outdoor endeavour. As my neigh-



M. Weber

LIFE FLOURISHES OUTDOORS — Ladybugs emerge like molten lava from the roots of a dandelion in Maureen Weber's front yard. Close encounters with nature are live-giving and spirit-enriching, but they are more fun on a bike than when weeding a yard.

bour said as he watched me struggle, "that's what poison is for." A large bumblebee who cruised past begged to differ.

Weeding dandelions reminded me of a recent episode of *Call the Midwife*. Eccentric elderly Sister Monica Joan was attempting to replant a pile of dandelions someone else had dug out. One of the young midwives gently told her they were weeds, but Sister Monica Joan was adamant: "I do not believe in weeds. Look at that glorious colour. A weed is simply a flower that someone has decided is in the wrong place. Why

should the *taraxacum* struggle in the cracks? It deserves an efficacious spot in which to flourish." Sister Monica Joan is my role model.

Biking is a more enjoyable outdoor activity than weeding, and it gets me to the country. Or at least as close to the country as I want to be, which is 5th Ave. by the railway tracks. There is a small slough where old cattails stand with heads that look like fluffy popcorn on tall sticks. This little oasis is filled with red-winged blackbirds who practise their trills like they're rehearsing Mozart. They can't be related to the blackbirds that hang out on my street. Dad always said nobody had ever taught those birds to sing — the ones that click and squeak and mostly make rude noises. I found out they're actually grackles, which seems the perfect name for something that obnoxious. Having said that, I feel some remorse. Even grackles must have some redeeming features.

Fifth Ave. is prone to noisy traffic in the daytime so this evening I biked over to see if I could hear a free concert. The frogs were so loud it sounded like full-blown applause. Some ducks gabbled and the red-winged blackbirds did not disappoint. But the encore I did not expect was a sound from my childhood. When I was a kid we lived near the school's football field and every morning in the summertime, for years, I would wake to the sound of a meadowlark calling from the top of the goalposts. To hear a meadowlark is rare now, but there it was, distant but gloriously unmistakable.

The cacophonous concert faded into the dimming sky and I turned to head for home. Now the street was quiet and I pedalled almost silently when I saw a slight movement to my right. Just across a small muddy ditch only a few feet from me was a deer almost perfectly camouflaged in the brown grass. I stopped carefully so as not to startle her. Her large, dark eyes met mine and we held each other's gaze for a few moments before she turned and bounded back to the cover of the taller grass.

We all hope to flourish, as dandelions do in May, but often find ourselves slumping into acedia, a sense of spiritual stagnation. The antidote is within, if only we are willing to enter God's world one breath at a time and, rather than acquiesce to someone else's notion of what is good for us, to pay attention to what delights our soul.

I love my new bike and my close encounter with the deer was a numinous vision, but I'll never be interested in camping. And the dandelions are starting to line up against the sidewalk like a deliberate border of yellow — almost as if I'd planted a bunch of chrysanthemums. I saw a gigantic bumblebee in one of them. If she is happy in the *taraxacum*, who am I to interfere?

Diacre Rédemptoriste, Joseph Manh C.S.s.R.
Ordonné, septembre 2015, Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Québec



Je crois...

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

Joseph Manh, C.S.s.R.

Viens et vois chez les Rédemptoristes.
Communique avec
Pr. David Purcell, C.Ss.R.



Voyez une vidéo Rédemptoriste

vocations@redemptorists.ca
www.redemptoristvocations.ca
416-770-3217



PLUG IN TO CHRIST

Time for yes to uncertainty

Continued from page 14

think I have it all together, I am sorry for deluding you. It is time for yes to truth-telling, and yes to uncertainty and the mess. Yes to a simpler way of living, by doing the next thing that lies in front of me and leaving for tomorrow what cannot fit in today. Yes to really seeing the people around me and really listening to them. Yes to forgiveness and starting over again. I am saying yes to rest.

My heart is often heavy with all the things that need to be done, and especially the things I cannot do and wish I could. And only one thing is needed: yes to the next thing that lies before me. Yes to this. Yes to now. Yes, with my whole heart to this moment and this life. Amen.

Big win for Little Sisters

A May 16 U.S. Supreme Court decision is bringing a solution to a long, drawn-out battle between religious groups and the U.S. government over contraception and religious freedom. At issue is the Affordable Care Act of 2010.

In the dispute, the federal government has sought compliance from most employers, including religious employers, with the mandate requiring them to provide contraceptives, sterilization and abortifacients as part of employees' health insurance plans — even if the employer morally opposes the coverage. Refusal to comply subjects employers to heavy fines.

The law has a very narrowly drawn exemption for churches. For non-exempt religious employers the government created what it calls “a work around,” by which the objecting religious employers can certify with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or the Department of Labor that providing the coverage will violate their religious principles. In turn the federal government arranges with a third party to provide the coverage.

But non-exempt religious employers object. They say that even following this so-called accommodation would violate their religious principles. An earlier version of the “work-around” asked objecting employers to sign a form, file it with HHS and ask a third party, such as the manager of their health plan, to provide the coverage.

Attorneys for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, in the case of *Zubik vs. Burwell* which involves the Little Sisters of the Poor, Priests for Life and the dioceses of Pittsburgh and Erie, Pennsylvania, and the Archdiocese of Washington, argued the government could use a less restrictive manner of providing contraceptive coverage to women working for their organizations. Their lawyers argued that religious freedom was at stake in the government's accommodation because even though the contraceptive coverage would be supplied by a third party, the religious employers would still be complicit in providing something that goes against their beliefs.

The nine-page, unanimous decision of the court “is a game-changer,” said Mark Rienzi, senior counsel at The Becket Fund. “The court has accepted the

government's concession that it can get drugs to people without using the Little Sisters. The court has eliminated all of the bad decisions from the lower courts. And the court has forbidden the government from fining the Little Sisters even though they are refusing to bow to the government's will. It is only a matter of time before the lower courts make this victory permanent.”

The court made clear that it is not expressing an opinion on the merits of the cases that are challenging aspects of the government's health legislation and it also was not ruling on the issue of a potential violation of religious freedom.

Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl said the court's order offered a path forward, but he also acknowledged that “this struggle will continue.”

He said the archdiocese will continue its work to “serve others in education, health care, social services, and outreach to the poor and those most in need.” We will continue to do that because “that is our Catholic identity.”

The court decision shows that rational arguments can overcome ideology. Too bad it took so long. — PWN

Perspectives of indigenous absent from the euthanasia discussion

Building a Culture of Life

Mary Deutscher



This February, in preparation for Canada's new euthanasia law, our parliament's Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying released a report. Along with its recommendations to extend euthanasia and assisted sui-

cide to children and persons with mental illnesses, the report also recommended that special consideration be given to how these practices will be implemented in indigenous communities.

However, as our country con-

tinues to debate the government's proposed legislation on “medically assisted dying,” I can't help but notice that the perspectives of indigenous peoples remain absent from the discussion.

When I read the joint committee's recommendation regarding indigenous communities, it reminded me of an historical footnote in the world's euthanasia debate. Very few people remember that in July 1996, Australia's Northern Territory legalized euthanasia through a bill named the Rights of the Terminally Ill (ROTI) Act. However, a few short months later, ROTI was nullified

by federal legislation, and euthanasia has remained illegal in Australia ever since.

Although the Australian federal government does not typically overrule territorial bills (much like the Canadian federal government), the federal reaction was spurred by the response of indigenous peoples to ROTI.

When ROTI was first introduced, the indigenous viewpoint was largely ignored. Some politicians felt that the indigenous people did not understand euthanasia, while others believe that anti-euthanasia activists were fear mongering in indigenous communities. This attitude changed, however, following a euthanasia education program that revealed the true reasons for indigenous opposition to ROTI.

Rather than being uneducated or blindly fearful, Australia's indigenous people simply felt that taking another person's life is wrong and that medicine should be used for healing. They held a deep suspicion of any health care

system that claimed to be able to kill as well as heal, and the introduction of ROTI had the potential to discourage indigenous people from accessing much needed health care services. The indigenous communities made their opposition to ROTI well known, and thankfully the Australian legislature listened to them.

Although the two situations are not identical, there are many parallels between the Australian and Canadian indigenous peoples. In their respective countries, both groups have poorer health outcomes than non-indigenous people, and both occupy some of the most sparsely populated areas. Further, our indigenous communities in Canada do not have consistent access to palliative care or mental health services. And so I wonder, how are Canada's indigenous people responding to Bill C-14, our soon to be adopted legislation on euthanasia and assisted suicide?

— INDIGENOUS, page 19

Stop throwing public money at companies

By Gwyn Morgan, Victoria Troy Media

Canadian governments regularly fund corporate ventures, but it is invariably money poorly spent.

Bombardier Inc. received its first federal subsidy of \$36.9 million back in 1966 from Prime Minister Lester Pearson's governing Liberals. The Montreal-headquartered company has since received Industry Canada funding of more than \$1.1 billion, plus another \$1.1 billion that the federal agency poured into airplane manufacturer de Havilland, which later became Bombardier's airplane division. The company has also received nearly \$300 million from provincial governments, bringing the total to \$2.5 billion.

Now Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government faces intense pressure to match Quebec's \$1.3-billion bailout of Bombardier's financially strapped airplane division, more than doubling the taxpayer largesse received by the company in the past 50 years.

This latest aerospace subsidy saga is only a part of taxpayer support for the sector. Quebec-based Aero-engine manufacturer

Pratt & Whitney has received a whopping \$3.3 billion and Ontario-based flight simulator CAE has received \$646 million.

Overall, Industry Canada doled out \$22.4 billion of taxpayers' money to private businesses from 1961 to 2013. And that's just part of Ottawa's corporate welfare generosity. The \$350-million Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the \$250-million Western Diversification Program dispense direct handouts that tend to favour governing party constituencies. And then there are the tax-based subsidies including: labour-sponsored venture capital corporations (\$120 million), flow-through shares (\$100 million), Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit (\$200 million), the Film or Video Production Services Tax Credit (\$100 million) and the Atlantic Investment Tax Credit (\$250 million).

Among the provinces, Quebec is the champion corporate subsidizer, handing out billions per year. Besides the recent \$1.3-billion bailout of Bombardier, there's the \$350-million handout to McInnis Cement for a plant under construction in the Gaspé region that, interestingly, is owned by the Bombardier-Beaudoin families.

Ontario is also a generous subsidizer. It gave U.S.-based technology giant Cisco \$220 million to hire 1,700 people. There have

been myriad other recent subsidies to business, including \$120 million to software company Open Text, \$87 million to Honda and a plethora of smaller handouts. The province has established

— PRIVATE, page 19



CNS/Paulo Chunho, EPA

FATIMA ANNIVERSARY — The statue of Our Lady of Fatima is carried through a crowd May 13 at the Marian shrine of Fatima in central Portugal. Thousands of pilgrims arrived at the shrine to attend the 99th anniversary of the first apparition of Mary to three shepherd children. Lucia dos Santos and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, received the first of several visions May 13, 1917.

Morgan is a retired Canadian business leader who has been a director of five global corporations.

Berrigan leaves a magnificent witness to the Gospel

The Editor: Rev. Daniel Berrigan, SJ, has left the church and the world a magnificent witness to the Gospel. He exemplified for me an enormous capacity to allow himself to become fully spent — down to the last penny and beyond — with the excruciatingly painful implications of what the Gospel imperative meant for him personally, the church and the wider world.

He was a man, poet, scholar, activist and chaplain at large to those matters and issues which for him were intimately associated with God’s passionate concern for peace and justice in the world. Always dedicated to the ongoing study of Scripture with others in

concert with the implications of same for what action(s) were required, he quietly and not so quietly moved toward the full stature of his life as an old man fulfilled with the biblical promise of hope for a better world for all.

The breadth of his zeal which took him from acts of civil disobedience, imprisonment, to ministry with AIDS patients and others offers to us the example of a man rooted not in any particular role but rather grounded in a deep vision that called for varied responses and actions. For those of us eager to pay attention, he awakened within us the stirrings of our own conscience, hope and calling.

May he rest in peace and live in

glory. — **Kevin Jozef Krofchek, Regina**

PM very helpful

The Editor: Thanks so much for producing this fine weekly. When I was thinking about entering the Catholic Church, the Prairie Messenger was a great help in understanding what I was joining. Since then it has helped me to understand what is going on in the church beyond my parish.

Though you publish a variety of opinions, I think the PM tends to hew to the centre, which is usually where I find myself. All the best as you continue this important ministry. — **Don Schroeder, Winnipeg**



Design Pics

Indigenous leaders fight ‘spirit of suicide’

Continued from page 18

The answer to this question is not easy to find, particularly since it seems our government has made no effort to find it. However, a few indigenous leaders have spoken up on the subject.

Following media attention on the suicide epidemic that is plaguing our northern communities, the CBC reported that Robert-Falcon Ouellette, a Liberal MP, asked for more consultation on Bill C-14. Ouellette cited the wisdom of his Sun Dance chief, who told him, “We must fight the spirit of suicide. We must work each and every day to defeat it.”

For Ouellette, opening the door to assisted suicide is a permanent decision that needs to be consid-

ered with special attention to the communities that it could damage.

Other indigenous leaders, such as Dene leader François Paulette, have spoken up as well. For Paulette, the spiritual law is straightforward: “God is responsible for bringing us into this world, and taking our life.” Although Paulette does not speak for all indigenous people, this sentiment is likely shared by a fair number of Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities.

I do not understand why, when Canada is finally beginning to value the wisdom and experience of our indigenous peoples, we have done nothing to seek out their insight into the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide. If there was ever an issue that touched the deepest spiritual beliefs of

every Canadian, this is it, and yet both our government and our media would prefer to look the other way.

Perhaps they are afraid that we will be reminded of the ugliness we are preparing to embrace.

For generations Canadians have divided ourselves into different cultural groups, but once legalized, euthanasia and assisted-suicide will not recognize cultural boundaries. “Medical assistance in dying” is being introduced through the thing we all share, our medical and legal systems, and it will be impossible to give it to some Canadians while denying it to others.

Now is the time for all Canadians to find a voice in this discussion, and help shape the values that will guide future generations of Canadians.

Private businesses like government money

Continued from page 18

a Jobs and Prosperity Fund that will dole out \$2.7 billion in subsidies over a 10-year period.

Taken together, Canada’s federal, provincial and municipal governments hand out tens of billions annually to private businesses. Announcement of these handouts are great photo opportunities for politicians who extol the jobs to be created.

But do these pronouncements paint a true picture? For example, when Premier Kathleen Wynn arrived at Cisco’s Bay Street offices to announce that \$220-million grant, she stated, “This is the largest job-creating investment that we’ve seen in the technology sector.” But University of Western Ontario economist Mike Moffatt points out that Cisco will be hiring people who would have been employed by other high tech firms. “They automatically assume the people that get hired wouldn’t have had jobs otherwise.”

Another perverse effect of

selective subsidization is the tilting of the playing field against unsubsidized competitors. And there are myriad examples of businesses that failed after being granted a subsidy, illustrating the truth of the adage, “Governments are terrible at picking winners but losers are great at picking governments.”

Australian professor Terry Buss, formerly with the World Bank and a foremost expert on business subsidies, authored a comprehensive analysis that found most job and economic benefit studies are “based on poor data, unsound social science methods and faulty economic reasoning.” He states that such reports “provide politicians and practitioners with justification to award political favours without appearing to be political.”

And then there’s the bees-to-honey effect of putting billions of dollars in the hands of politicians to dispense. Montreal-based business columnist David Descoteaux points out that “The more governments hand out subsidies . . . the

more corporate success is dependent on government assistance, forcing companies to hire lobbyists to get their share of the pie.”

But what about the argument that if we don’t do it, the investment will flow to a jurisdiction that will? In such situations, subsidies may be the only hope of attracting or retaining important employers. The U.S. think-tank Good Jobs First estimates that state and local governments shell out US\$70 billion a year in business subsidies, sometimes funding half or more of a new investment. Trying to compete with such aggressive tactics is a losing game.

Descoteaux says that the only way to halt this race to the bottom is to strengthen international trade agreements to eliminate subsidies. Canada should be a big booster of such agreements, because the 10-fold larger economy to the south can win a subsidy competition any time they choose. And as long as that imbalance exists, we tend to throw good money after bad.

Dialogue with world stressed

Continued from page 1

While the pope has caused more people to take notice, that doesn’t mean that everyone agrees or follows the message he preaches, Rosica said.

But he explained that Pope Francis has opened up a dialogue with the world and the Catholic media is a big part of showcasing the work of the Catholic Church.

He referred to Pope Francis’ message for World Communications Day to explain how church media should go about its work.

“Our primary task is to uphold the truth with love,” he said.

That means that Catholic media should “listen” to, rather than merely “hear,” as it engages in dialogue.

It also means that church media should communicate with everyone, without exception.

It further means that “Christians ought to be a constant encouragement to communion and, even in those cases where they must firmly condemn evil, they should never try to rupture relationships and communication.”

“May our way of communicating help to overcome the mindset that neatly separates sinners from the righteous,” he said. “We can

and we must judge situations of sin — such as violence, corruption and exploitation — but we may not judge individuals, since only God can see into the depths of their hearts.”

Rosica said the work of the Catholic media is to build bridges that encourage encounter and inclusion and to avoid misunderstandings that add to wounds and vengeance.

He urged a prudent use of some of the new social media.


“The character assassination on the Internet by those claiming to be Catholic and Christian has turned it into a graveyard of corpses strewn all around,” he said. “Often times the obsessed, scrupulous, self-appointed, nostalgia-hankering virtual guardians of faith or of liturgical practices are very disturbed, broken and angry individuals, who never found a platform or pulpit in real life and so resort to the Internet and become trolling pontiffs and holy executioners! In reality they are deeply troubled, sad and angry people.”

He pointed out that Catholic media will be held to accountability and responsibility for creating communion and engaging in a dialogue that is fuelled by mercy and understanding.




Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
Circulation Department
100 College Drive, Box 190, Muenster, Sask., S0K 2Y0
Fax: (306) 682-5285 pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca
Published by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter’s Abbey.
Printed by St. Peter’s Press, Muenster, Sask.

Editor: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB 306-682-1772
<pm.editor@stpeterspress.ca>
Associate editors: Maureen Weber <pm.canadian@stpeterspress.ca>,
Don Ward <pm.local@stpeterspress.ca>
Layout artist: Lucille Stewart
Advertising: Gail Kleefeld 306-682-1772 <pm.ads@stpeterspress.ca>
Circulation: Gail Kleefeld 306-682-1772 <pm.circulation@stpeterspress.ca>
Regina diocesan editor: Frank Flegel 306-586-7316, 306-352-1651
Saskatoon diocesan editor: Kiply Lukan Yaworski 306-242-1500, 306-651-3935
Prince Albert: Chancery Office 306-922-4747
Winnipeg diocesan editor: James Buchok 204-452-2227
Saint-Boniface Chancery Office 204-237-9851



Subscriptions: \$37.00 per year (45 issues); tax included; U.S. \$170.00 per year. Foreign \$269.00 per year.
Single copy: \$1.00 GST#10780 2928 RT0001
Copy and advertising should arrive 12 days before publication date.
Change of address: Please allow 3-4 weeks for processing and send both old and new addresses.
Website: <http://www.prairiemessenger.ca>

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



CN ISSN 0032-664X Publication Mail Agreement No. 40030139

Iraq’s humanitarian need is so vast, ‘it’s shocking’

By Beth Griffin

NEW YORK (CNS) — A rising tide of intolerance in the Middle East threatens minority faith communities with cultural extinction, said speakers at a May 10 lecture in New York.

Religious minorities are the most seriously impacted among the millions who have fled their homes to escape violence and the percentage of Christians in the region has dropped to an all-time low, panelists said.

The Russo Family lecture event at Jesuit-run Fordham University was titled Endangered: Religious Minorities in the Middle East and their Struggle for Survival and co-sponsored by Fordham’s Centre on Religion and Culture and its Orthodox Christian Studies Centre.

A vast and vibrant network of religious and spiritual communi-

ties flourished in the Middle East for millennia and managed to live in peace, although with difficulty, according to journalist Eliza Griswold, who has travelled in and written extensively about Christianity and Islam.

Christians and other religious minorities were first targeted for persecution after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, she said. Iraq was destabilized and the Arab Spring felled tyrannical leaders whose forces previously “shored up” religious minorities. Neighbours turned against one another. Griswold said religious minorities were attractive targets because they had money.

“It’s not a sensational story; it’s the reality for those living in the region,” she said.

Although numbers vary from country to country, Griswold said the Christian population of the Middle East is now four per cent,

down from 20 per cent. She said Islamic State buys and sells Christian women and girls in telephone negotiations. She witnessed a man in an Iraqi restaurant pose as an Islamic State member to negotiate the purchase of his kidnapped wife and daughters.

Iraqi Father Gewargis Sulaiman, a priest of the Assyrian Church of the East, described the plight of Christians in Iraq as cultural genocide, for which immigration is the only immediate solution.

Sulaiman said he did not think Christianity would die in Iraq, because Christians have overcome violence in the past. “We are people of that land and believe God put us there to be the salt and light our ancestors were,” he said.

“When there was justice, people could live together. The cultural norms were protective to each group, but when politicians abuse

of State. His office works with vulnerable communities, tracks laws and co-ordinates with civil society groups to identify and help those persecuted because of their faith.

The subsequent challenge is “to put Iraq back together in such a way that diversity can be main-

tained” and minority groups can enjoy security and economic and political viability, Padgett said.

“The humanitarian need is so vast, it’s shocking,” he said, but United Nations’ appeals for help are routinely underfunded by at least 40 per cent.

God doesn’t barter with us with rewards, punishments

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Salvation has nothing to do with the tidy business of bartering — earning God’s love in return for good behaviour, Pope Francis said.

“If you do well you get a reward; if you do poorly you get punished. This is not the logic of Jesus,” whose ability to love and forgive is unconditional and infinite, the pope said May 11 during his weekly general audience.

The pope reflected on the Gospel parable of the prodigal son, which teaches everyone is a child of God not because of one’s merits or actions, but because of God’s “unchanging love and ready forgiveness.”

The father patiently waits for his sinning son and rejoices with a celebration when he returns home, the pope said.

Even though the son tells his father, “I no longer deserve to be called your son” because of the extent of his sins, the father immediately seeks to restore “the signs of his dignity,” because in his eyes, he never stopped being his child, the pope said.

No one can take away this dignity of being a child of God, “not even the devil,” the pope said.

The father responds to his repentant son with tenderness and love; he doesn’t say, “‘You’ll pay for this.’ No. The father embraces him, he waits with love.”

The parable also talks about the older son, who never strayed from the father and worked hard, obediently serving him.

This older son, however, lacks the tenderness and understanding of the father, and he speaks with disdain and resentment, the pope said.

“He only

thinks about himself. He boasts about having always stayed by the father’s side and served him; and yet, he never lived this closeness with joy.”

“Poor father. One son left and the other had never been truly close” to him with his heart and love, the pope said.

The older son needs the father’s mercy, too, he said. The older son represents the self-righteous, he “represents us when we ask ourselves whether it’s worthwhile to work so hard and then we get nothing in return.”

“Jesus reminds us that you stay in the house of the father not to get compensation, but because you have the dignity of being a jointly responsible child. It’s not about ‘bartering’ with God, but following Jesus who gave himself on the cross.”

God only follows the logic of love and mercy — not the mindset of the younger son, who “thought he deserved punishment because of his sins,” or of the older son, who “expected a reward for his service,” the pope said.



CNS/Tiksa Negeri, Reuters

ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN FACE DROUGHT — Children wait to receive treatment at a health centre in Kobo village, in a drought-stricken area of Ethiopia. Hunger is worsening because of the worst drought in the country in about 50 years, and some children are saving any food they get to take home and share with younger siblings or their mothers, Msgr. John Kozar, president of Catholic Near East Welfare Association, said in a May 11 telephone interview from Addis Ababa.

Groups urge Kenya to keep refugee camps

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS) — Jesuit Refugee Service has urged Kenya to reconsider its plans to close camps that host hundreds of thousands of Somali and South Sudanese refugees.

“The directive to close the camps violates the general principle of voluntary repatriation of refugees living in Kenya,” JRS and 10 other humanitarian organizations said in a May 10 statement. They noted the refugees needed to be returned to their countries of origin “in a safe and dignified manner.”

Kenya’s government said May 6 that it would disband its Department of Refugee Affairs and close the sprawling Dadaab camp, home to mostly Somalis, and Kakuma camp, which has grown through the conflicts in South Sudan and Burundi. The government said hosting refugees posed a security threat, particularly from

Somali Islamist group *al-Shabab*.

But the humanitarian organizations said shutting down the camps will put the refugees, mostly women, children and unaccompanied minors, at great risk. They said Kenya “has been recognized as a safe haven for persons seeking refuge from conflict and environmental disasters.”

Acknowledging the “hospitality and responsibility” that Kenya has borne over decades, the organizations said that, despite “huge economic and social pressure, Kenya continues to host close to 600,000 refugees and asylum seekers” from neighbouring countries.

“The acceptance of refugees in Dadaab, Kakuma and those living in urban settings is a reflection of good practice and gesture exhibited by the government of Kenya and host communities,” they said.

“Somalia is faced with drought

and other security risks” and is “likely to see an increase in displacement and vulnerability,” the organizations said, adding that the humanitarian crisis in wartorn South Sudan is far from over. Both Somalia and South Sudan are largely ungoverned.

“An abrupt closure of the two camps would mean a humanitarian catastrophe for the region as neighbouring countries, especially Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, are already shouldering huge refugee influxes,” the groups said.

Kenya’s Department of Refugee Affairs “delivers crucial administrative services for refugees and asylum seekers, and its disbandment would create an immediate critical service provision and co-ordination gap for management of refugee affairs,” they said.

The department also plays a vital role in the voluntary repatriation process, and the decision to disband it will stall this process, they said. The UN refugee agency said in January it was planning for up to 50,000 Somalis to return home in 2016 under a voluntary repatriation program.



CNS/Paul Haring

ROSE PETALS AT THE PANTHEON — A boy collects rose petals after they were dropped by Rome firefighters from the oculus of the Pantheon at the conclusion of Pentecost mass May 15 in Rome. The rose petals symbolize the tongues of fire that came upon the apostles at Pentecost.

No problem can be solved by the same consciousness that caused it.

— Albert Einstein