



Euthanasia

The church accepts that people have the right to refuse treatment that may keep them alive. "Letting them die is legitimate," says Brett Salked, Regina archdiocesan theologian, "just don't kill me."
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Right to Life

To be fruitful and wise, our lives must be grounded in prayer, being forever in touch with Christ, says author and professor Stephanie Gray, speaking at a Right to Life banquet recently.
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Order of Merit

Indigenous elder and advocate for women and children, Isabelle Impey of Prince Albert has been awarded the Saskatchewan Order of Merit for leadership and service to her community.
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Parenting advice

Australian parenting expert Andrew Mullins, currently on a speaking tour across Canada, offers some wise and practical suggestions to parents on how to manage the moral upbringing of their children.
— page 8

Von Humboldt's vision

This week Gerald Schmitz reviews *The Invention of Nature* by Andrea Wulf, a work of prodigious research that restores the significance of Baron Alexander von Humboldt's vision to our understanding of the natural world.
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Evil of factory farms

Many people don't care where their meat comes from, as long as it is cheap. What they do not consider is the price in horrific cruelty the animals pay living in factory farms.
— page 14



Faith groups play big role in giving aid

By Dale Gavlak

ISTANBUL (CNS) — Humanitarian aid can be carried out more efficiently and effectively if local

and faith-based institutions are given a greater role, Philippine Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila told the World Humanitarian Summit gathering in this Turkish city.

Tagle and others in faith-based communities argue that often they are the first responders in emergency and crisis situations worldwide and, as such, they should be included in how humanitarian responses are handled and developed.

"When a calamity happens, whether human-made or natural disaster, local communities and faith-based organizations are at the forefront of providing aid. In fact, they are already there before the conflict and during the conflict and when the international organizations have left the area, the volunteers from faith-based groups remain," said Tagle, president of *Caritas Internationalis*.

"And because of their connection to

the communities, knowing the culture, the mentalities, the dreams, what works and what does doesn't work," Tagle said, "they really should be given a bigger responsibility. Besides, most of these volunteers belong to those communities that are suffering."

"Part of giving faith-based organization a bigger role is to recognize that people must become agents of the rebuilding of their lives and not be made to feel simply like beneficiaries of the goodness of other people," Tagle told Catholic News Service May 23. He said "the current humanitarian system of donors too often fails to recognize them."

Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of 165 Catholic relief, development and social service organizations operating in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide, believes the current top-down

approach to humanitarian response must be replaced by an investment in local action, strengthening grassroots capacity, and improving partnership and co-ordination.

Tagle addressed the special session on religious engagement on the first day of the May 23 - 24 World Humanitarian Summit. The gathering has drawn 5,000 participants, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose country has taken in more than one million refugees, mainly Syrians.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon sought more action to prevent conflicts from breaking out, saying they "take up more than 80 per cent of humanitarian funding," and a record number of people — 130 million — need such aid to survive.

Tagle also challenged the inter-

— STRENGTH, page 19



CNS/M.A. Pushpa Kumara, EPA

AID SYSTEM NEEDS OVERHAUL — Displaced Sri Lankan residents try to cross floodwaters May 20 in the suburbs of Colombo. During the World Humanitarian Summit May 24 in Istanbul, Catholic leaders said it was time to overhaul the global humanitarian system because the current aid structure is failing to reach those most in need.

Sisters of Mercy challenge PotashCorp in board room

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland lost a vote at the May 11 Annual General Meeting of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Inc., but

they won attention from the mining giant's management.

The community of 95 Catholic sisters were asking the company, currently valued at \$14.7 billion on the Toronto Stock Exchange, to undertake a human rights study of its operations in the Western Sahara. The proposal garnered just 6.7 per cent of the votes at the 2015 AGM, but it attracted support from 31.6 per cent of the outstanding shares — including the votes of major institutional investors this year.

The sisters' motion was backed by the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation, which handles pension funds for B.C. public servants, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan among others — totalling 159,593,972 shares voting for the motion, versus 344,850,348 shares against.

As soon as the vote came in, senior PotashCorp managers came down onto the floor of the meeting to speak with the sisters and their supporters. The Sisters of Mercy had co-ordinated their efforts with mutual fund manager Oceanrock Investments and its Meritas Janzti Social Index funds. The campaign to bring in votes in favour was co-ordinated by SHARE, a labour-backed responsible investor and pension fund organization.

There have been very few investor-sponsored motions at annual general meetings that have outright won a vote for any motion that lacks management backing. But whenever a motion wins votes from more than 10 per cent of outstanding shares, boards of directors and senior executives sit up and

— INDEPENDENT, page 8

125 years of Ukrainian settlement celebrated

By Derrick Kunz

SASKATOON — A cultural extravaganza of music, song and dance by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' students, along with an historical look at the waves of immigration, was recently held in Saskatoon to mark the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada.

Adorned in traditional dress, students from Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School, who spent weeks rehearsing, presented the show May 19 to a capacity crowd at Lakeview Church.

"It really was a whole-school effort," said Shelly Lord, principal at Bishop Filevich. "We're blessed to have a really strong, close-knit community, and everyone pitched in to make the evening a truly wonderful celebration. I extend a huge thank you to our teachers, our families and the entire Saskatoon Ukrainian community for their continued support."

According to Library and Archives Canada, Vasyl Eleniak and Ivan Pylypiw were the first recorded Ukrainian settlers to arrive in Canada in 1891. Approximately 150,000 Ukrainian immigrants

arrived between 1891 and 1914, with the vast majority settling in the prairie provinces where they obtained land to farm. This was the first of three waves of Ukrainian settlement in Canada.

With 44 schools and nearly 17,000 students, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools provides education from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12, rooting students in their faith, helping them grow in knowledge, and encouraging them to reach out and transform the world.

Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School is Saskatchewan's only Ukrainian bilingual school.



Shelly Lord

CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA — A choir of students in grades 5 - 8 at Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School in Saskatoon, under the direction of Sonia Kodak, performs at an event to mark the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada.

‘Meeting is the message’: pope to head of al-Azhar

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — After five years of tension and top-level silence, Pope Francis and the grand imam of one of the most important Sunni Muslim universities in the world embraced at the Vatican May 23.

“The meeting is the message,” the pope told Ahmad el-Tayeb, the grand imam of al-Azhar University, as the religious scholar approached him just inside the door of the papal library.

El-Tayeb’s spring visit was the first meeting between a pontiff and a grand imam since the Muslim university in Cairo suspended talks in 2011.

Established in 1998, the formal dialogue between al-Azhar and the Vatican started to fray in 2006, after now-retired Pope Benedict XVI gave a speech in Regensburg, Germany. Al-Azhar officials and millions of Muslims around the world said the speech linked Islam to violence.

Al-Azhar halted the talks altogether in 2011 after the former pope had said Christians in the Middle East were facing persecution. Al-Azhar claimed that Pope Benedict had offended Islam and

Muslims once more by focusing only on the suffering of Christians when many Muslims were suffering as well.

In February, Bishop Miguel Ayuso Guixot, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, delivered a letter to el-Tayeb from Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, council president, inviting him to the Vatican to meet the pope.

Tauran and Ayuso welcomed the imam to the Vatican May 23 and accompanied him to the papal meeting.

Pope Francis sat to the side of his desk facing the grand imam rather than behind his desk as he customarily does when meeting with a visiting head of state.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesperson, said the pope spoke privately with el-Tayeb for 25 minutes and the conversation included a discussion about “the great significance of this new encounter within the scope of dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam.”

“They then dwelled upon the common commitment of the authorities and the faithful of the great religions for world peace, the rejection of violence and terrorism



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

POPE MEETS GRAND IMAM — Pope Francis greets Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Egypt’s al-Azhar mosque and university, during a private meeting at the Vatican May 23.

(and) the situation of Christians in the context of conflicts and tensions in the Middle East as well as their protection,” Lombardi said in a statement.

At the end of the audience, Pope Francis presented the grand imam with two gifts: a copy of his

encyclical *Laudato Si’*, on Care for Our Common Home and peace medallion depicting an olive tree holding together two pieces of a fractured rock.

In an interview after the papal meeting, el-Tayeb said the “circumstances” that led his institution to halt the dialogue with the Vatican “no longer exist,” so the Vatican and the university can “continue our holy mission, which is the mission of religions: ‘to make people joyful everywhere,’ ” by teaching them about God.

Meeting Pope Francis, “the first impression, which was very strong, is that this man is a man of peace, a man who follows the teaching of Christianity, which is a religion of love and peace,” and

“a man who respects other religions and shows consideration for their followers,” the imam told Vatican Radio and *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper.

Religious leaders today, he said, have a “heavy and grave” responsibility to teach people the true path to happiness and peace.

“Man without religion constitutes a danger to his fellow man, and I believe that people right now, in the 21st century, have started to look around and to seek out wise guides to lead them in the right direction,” el-Tayeb said.

Al-Azhar, as a reference point for many Sunni Muslims around the world, is engaged in an ongoing program to clarify the meaning of classical Islamic texts and make clear to Muslims, including schoolchildren, that groups claiming to base their violent actions on Islam are promoting “a deviant understanding” of the faith.

The Middle East, he said, has seen “rivers of blood and cadavers,” in part because of the misuse of religion.

“Islam and Christianity have nothing to do with those who kill, and we asked the West not to confuse this deviant and misled group with Muslims,” the imam said. “The issue must not be presented as persecution of Christians in the East, but on the contrary there are more Muslim than Christian victims, and we all suffer this catastrophe together.”

“We must not blame religions because of the deviations of some of their followers,” he said, “because in every religion there exists a deviant faction that raises the flag of religion to kill in its name.”

Prayer is no magic wand says Pope Francis

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Prayer is not a magic wand that fulfils your desires, but it is what helps you keep the faith when you don’t understand God’s will, Pope Francis said.

Prayer is meant to be “our daily bread, our powerful weapon and the staff for our journey,” he said May 25 during his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

In his catechesis, the pope talked about the Gospel parable of the persistent widow, who incessantly appealed to a corrupt judge for justice.

Judges at the time were supposed to be filled with the fear of God as they impartially and faith-

fully upheld the laws of Moses, the pope said. But the judge in this parable was dishonest and only cared about himself. He had no interest in protecting the rights of the weakest and easily exploited members of society, which included widows, orphans and foreigners, he said.

“Faced with the judge’s indifference, the widow resorted to her only weapon — to keep incessantly pestering him, presenting him with her appeal for justice,” the pope said.

The judge finally gives in, he said, “not because he is moved by mercy or because his conscience forces him to,” but because of her perseverance. He realizes he will never rid himself of her until he

delivers a just decision, and so he does, the pope said.

He said Jesus uses this parable to show that if a widow with no clout or influence could sway an uncaring judge merely through her patient and persistent pleas, then imagine how powerful that same force of prayer is when directed toward a loving, merciful and benevolent God.

Jesus is showing how important and necessary it is to pray tirelessly, all the time and not just every now and then, “when I feel like it,” the pope said.

“We all experience moments of exhaustion and discouragement, above all when our prayers don’t seem to work,” he said.

Contrary to the stubborn judge, he said, God speedily secures “the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night,” according to the Gospel of St. Luke (18:1-8).

But that doesn’t mean God will respond when “and in the ways that we want. Prayer is not a magic wand,” the pope said.

When Jesus prayed that his father spare him from “the bitter cup of his passion,” he also put himself fully in God’s hands, asking that the father’s will — not his own — be done.

Jesus shows how prayer is about strengthening one’s relationship with the father — transforming one’s own wishes and conforming them to God’s will, he said.

Prayer “helps us keep our faith in God and to trust him even when we do not understand his will.”

“Prayer is what keeps the faith; without it, faith wavers,” Pope Francis said. And it is in prayer that people experience the compassion of God who comes to his children “filled with merciful love.”

Catholics gather for requiem for Slovak nun

By Francis Njuguna

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS) — Missionaries and other Catholics gathered in Nairobi May 23 for a requiem mass for a Slovak nun killed in Yei, South Sudan.

Holy Spirit Missionary Sister Veronika Theresia Rackova, 58, director of St. Bakhita Medical Centre in Yei, was shot the night of May 16 while driving an ambulance after taking an expectant mother to the hospital. When the ambulance was attacked by soldiers, Rackova was wounded in the hip and abdomen.

After two surgeries in Yei, she was evacuated to Nairobi, where she died May 20.

Sister Maria Jerly, regional superior for the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, told Catholic News Service that Rackova was shot as people marked John Garang Day. She added that a motive for the shooting was not known.

Three soldiers were arrested in connection with the incident, and Jerly added, “One of them is said to have admitted having shot at Rackova.”

Six of the order’s nuns are serving in South Sudan, mainly in the Yei diocese. Jerly told CNS the congregation did not plan to leave the area.

“On the contrary, we would



CNS/Liam Dunne

Sister Veronika Theresia Rackova

like to continue giving services to the needy people of this great country of South Sudan,” she said, adding, “Some of our sisters are right now tormented over the incident, but we plan to continue to carry our badly needed services by the needy people of this country.”

Rackova was born Jan. 8, 1958, and professed final vows in 1994. As a medical doctor with specialization in tropical diseases, she worked in Ghana. She served as head of the province of Slovakia from 2004 - 2010, after which she was assigned to South Sudan.



CNS/Paul Haring

CARDINAL DIES — Italian Cardinal Loris Capovilla, the personal secretary of St. Pope John XXIII, talks with guests in 2012 at his residence in Sotto il Monte Giovanni XXIII, Italy. Capovilla died May 26 at the age of 100 in Bergamo, near Milan. A journalist before starting to work for the future saint, he was an energetic and eloquent storyteller, drawing on his remarkable and vividly detailed memory.

Murabit workshop addresses advocacy goals

By **Andréa Ledding**

SASKATOON — Dr. Alaa Murabit, the middle child of 11, moved from Canada to Libya at the age of 15 where she attended medical school and became a national leader for women. An activist from an early age, in March 2016 she was named a UN commissioner on Health Employment and Economic Growth. She presented an Advocacy Training Workshop on May 7 at Station 20 West in Saskatoon.

After encouraging everyone in the room to share why they were there and what specific project they wished to focus on as activists, she helped guide participants through to creating an action plan.

“The first step is to choose an advocacy project,” noted Murabit, adding that it needed to be focused down before a timeline could be created. “Sometimes you will find others with similar advocacy goals, but the best thing is knowing who you can ally with.”

She encouraged participants, once they had narrowed down their projects to a manageable and specific size, to identify all stakeholders.

“A stakeholder is someone affected by your issue, and anyone who affects your issue,” said Murabit. “This includes benefi-

aries, who are also your allies and are going to benefit from your advocacy.”

Tightening up the advocacy plan was followed by stakeholder mapping.

“Put your advocacy in the middle and put the webs outward. Public awareness and media are part of your outreach,” said Murabit, adding not to forget the biggest stakeholder who needs to show up regularly. “You are your single biggest stakeholder, and you need to be there, too.”

She noted that a lot of stakeholder mapping derails because too many people are included. It is important to narrow it down to who your primary stakeholders

are and what your primary focus is. Identifying allies also includes asking what additional pieces you are bringing to the table, if someone else is already doing similar work. And finally, identifying beneficiaries helps bring things into focus. She noted that, for many campaigns, fundraising is often a big focus.

“The only difference between a strong and weak campaign is money, for the most part,” she noted. “For the majority of you, you will either be media focused, or financially focused.”

Once stakeholders had been mapped, participants were encouraged to identify internal and external strengths and weaknesses, and

the external opportunities and threats to the campaign.

The final step was to create a timeline.

“Based on your stakeholders, and working with your strengths and weaknesses, decide when you’re doing it and what you’re doing, and with who,” explained Murabit. She also advocated having a plan B, based on the opportunities and threats identified in the process. “Your plan B doesn’t have to be as well formulated, but you have to recognize that sometimes that’s what you’re going to delve into.”

She added tips for presentations: telling stories works well in person, but when sending paper-

work or reports, empirical research such as statistics or numbers are vital, along with presenting the possibilities of what would happen if you don’t carry out your plan.

It was her hope that not only did each participant leave with a fully formulated plan and strategy for how to achieve it, but also to create a Saskatoon advocacy group to share and pool talents and resources. The group committed to creating a Facebook group which would be available on the Facebook event page for everyone to join.

Following the workshop, organizer Darlene Okamaysim-Sicotte presented Murabit with a shawl and thanks on behalf of the organizers.

Leaders of religious communities hold biannual meeting

By **Peter Novacosky, OSB**

MONTREAL — Leaders of religious communities from across Canada gathered here May 26 - 29 to share what gives them hope amid the challenges they face today. The Canadian Religious Conference (CRC) also elected a new team to lead them for a two-year term.

Challenges religious communities face include smaller communities, aging members, fewer vocations, downsizing, changing ministries and changing percep-

tions of religious life in today’s society.

Guest speaker Benedictine Father Simon Pierre Arnold of Peru noted that Catholicism has played a leading political and cultural role in Canada, especially in Quebec. “That explains why this church has long been a power of Christendom, linked to power, but also to the battles of your people, especially of the poor farmers.”

Today, he said, in countries where Catholicism has long been confused with national identity, an anti-clerical and anti-ecclesial reaction has arisen. In countries like Spain and Poland, he said, these “anti” crises “have sparked a defensive withdrawal or turning inwards, even in religious life, that is dangerously reactionary.”

He noted that, from the outside, “with European eyes,” Canada is seen as a model of secular democracy. In this context, Belgian-born Arnold lauded religious life in Canada which has “changed with the times to fit this new situation, despite the ‘anti’ currents it must face.”

Comparing religious communities in Canada with those in Latin America, he said many of them “still dream of the glories of the past.” Canada, he said, “seems to

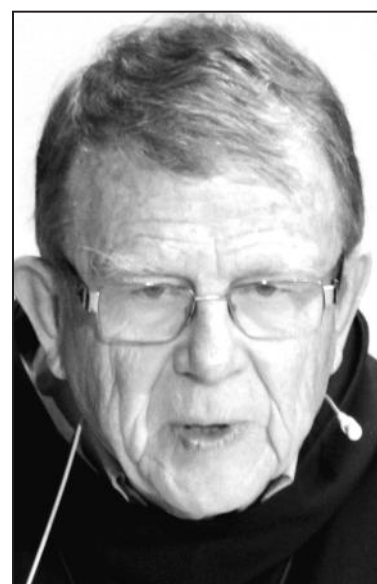
have abandoned those illusory nostalgias . . . to courageously explore new paths that have ecclesial and societal presence and impact.”

He lauded Canadian religious, for example, for lobbying against Canadian mining companies operating in the Global South who generally “have little respect for cultures, people and ecology.” He also praised religious communities for the psycho-spiritual care they give their members facing crises and women religious who are developing a new theology of women in the church.

Arnold noted that the model of Christendom based on a “Christian Europe” no longer exists. The church’s challenge is “to find new ways to move out of this pattern, which is inconsistent with the reality and emergencies in the world.”

“We need to reconnect with the Gospel,” he emphasized, and with “our origins as minorities, as marginal and as martyrs; we need to be prophetic.” This seems to be the path that Pope Francis is proposing for us, he said.

In this area, he said, “Canadian religious have a head start” compared to other countries. “You are in a process of emerging from the European Christendom model,”



Jean-Michel Bigou

Rev. Simon Pierre Arnold, OSB

he said, and taking “the first halting steps of establishing new presences as a prophetic minority, a process that is certainly painful, yet enriching.”

The process we are living in, he said, “is simultaneously both paschal and apocalyptic.” Our lifestyle is paschal because it has to die in order to resurrect. It is apocalyptic “because we are called by the God who makes all things new to wel-

— **RELIGIOUS, page 4**

Opposition is building to Bill C-14: speakers

By **Frank Flegel**

REGINA — Dr. Larry Rados, an emergency room physician at Winnipeg’s Misericordia Hospital, presents an alarming story of what has happened in other jurisdictions that have allowed euthanasia. Rados’ talk was recorded late last year on DVD and has made the rounds in presentations opposing Bill C-14, a bill that would allow euthanasia under certain conditions. The bill is the federal government’s answer to last year’s Supreme Court ruling that not giving people the choice to end their life assisted by a physician is against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms contained in the 1982 Canadian Constitution.

The session, an initiative of Christ the King Parish, was held May 15 in the church hall.

Rados devotes most of his talk to European nations who have a history of euthanasia, but did include a few statistics from U.S. States, such as Oregon, that have allowed it. “Oregon now has a suicide rate of 35 per cent, the highest in the country,” says Rados. Holland now has 12 people per day euthanized and the country is now developing or may have already developed portable units that can travel around to meet demand.

His presentation was followed by Regina archdiocesan theologian Brett Salkeld answering questions from the audience. He noted that he is currently writing a five-part series — three have already appeared — in the Prairie Messenger on the subject of euthanasia. Salkeld has written and

spoken about the church’s opposition to euthanasia, and his answers to audience questions reiterated those positions.

Contrary to public belief, Salkeld said, the church does not believe in keeping people alive forever and does accept that an individual has the right to refuse treatment and sustenance that may keep them alive.

“Letting them die is legitimate,” said Salkeld, “just don’t kill me.”

The church is also not opposed to giving people medication to ease pain and to provide comfort, said Salkeld, even if such medication has the possibility of ending the individual’s life. “The difference is intent.”

Salkeld also expressed concern that the proposed legislation does not provide strong safeguards to protect vulnerable people who, under the influence of someone else, may be coerced into being killed. He is also concerned that there does not appear to be any exclusion for Catholic institutions or protection for medical personnel for whom euthanasia is against their conscience.

“If Catholic institutions are not protected, they may have to disobey the law and see what happens.”

Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen is scheduled to lead a delegation next month to meet with legislators to request more palliative care and conscience rights for health care workers. Salkeld and others opposed to euthanasia have argued that, with palliative care as an option, there would be reduced demand for euthanasia.



G. Schmitz

150th BIRTHDAY TULIP — The official birthday tulip for Canada’s 150th birthday in 2017 was unveiled at the recent tulip festival on Ottawa. The “Canada 150” tulip is a predominantly white flower with red flame-like detail to reflect Canada’s national flag. Canadians will be able to purchase these bulbs at participating Home Hardware stores across the country this fall, and plant them in their own gardens in time for them to bloom next spring.

Office of Freedom and Human Rights announced

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Catholic overseas aid agencies welcomed the new Office of Freedom, Human Rights and Inclusion (OFHRI) announced by Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion May 17.

"We're encouraged by the fact they have kept a special division on inclusion of religious freedom," said Canadian Catholic

Organization for Development and Peace in-Canada program director Josianne Gauthier. "It reassures us the issue will not be ignored but will continue to be protected and defended within a broader human rights framework."

This new office will replace the Office of Religious Freedom created three years ago by the Harper government. It will have three times the budget of the Religious Freedom Office, at \$15 million a year. Religious Freedom Ambassador Andrew Bennett will remain at Global Affairs Canada until June to help with the transition.

The office's director general is Richard Arbeiter. According to a Global Affairs news release, the OFHRI will have three divisions: Human Rights and Indigenous Affairs; Inclusion and Religious Freedom; and Democracy. Inclusion and Religious Freedom director Giuliana Natale will be in charge with outreach to various religious and other groups. The office aims to build on the work already done by Bennett's religious freedom office.

"The struggle for religious freedom is, at its heart, a struggle for the universal and inseparable freedoms Canadians cherish," the release said. "This enhanced approach takes as its departure point a notion Canadians hold dear: people are stronger not in spite of their differences, but because of them."

"We're happy to see a greater promotion of human rights on the part of this government," Gauthier said, noting many people are persecuted for reasons other than religion, such as political beliefs or environmental activism.

Gauthier also applauded the government's adding indigenous rights to the mandate. "I hope all these divisions get needed attention and that one won't fall off but all will get equal support."

"The indigenous rights issue in Canada has to be a national priority," she said. Both the government and the churches are prepared to take responsibility for the past and help build a strong future together within reconciliation. We take this as a hopeful sign," she said.

"I hope as well the indigenous rights are not just about Canadian peoples but about all indigenous people," she said. "Most of the time the defenders of human rights in the Global South, especially those in environmental issues, on resource extraction, are very often from indigenous communities."

Indigenous peoples are often the first to be affected by mining and other activities and most vulnerable to degradation of their land and resources, she said. When it comes to mining and land use in general, "a lot of environmental defenders are also indigenous and have to be listened to."

"We're hoping this office will have a broader understanding of human rights and how all these different rights interact, and ensure better protection of human rights defenders, especially in the Global South but also in Canada," she said.

"We are happy to see the government still makes religious freedom a priority," said Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) Canada national director Carl Hétu, noting a statement from Global Affairs "clearly says religious freedom is at the heart of the office."

Religious persecution is a worldwide phenomenon of the 21st century. "Countries are imploding and the first victims are religious minorities," Hétu said. "When you attack a religious group, it's not just about religion, it's about democracy; it's about your right to speech; your right to decide, your right to



CCN/D. Gyapong

NEW OFFICE — Catholic agencies are relieved that the new Office of Freedom, Human Rights and Inclusion will take over concerns about religious freedom. Andrew Bennett's three-year term as religious freedom ambassador ended in March.

be, so it affects a whole variety of human rights."

CNEWA did some projects funded by the previous religious freedom office, such as work promoting pluralism and interfaith dialogue in Ukraine. "We're happy there is an office that will remain," he said. "Now I think it's up to us — organizations, churches and religions — to work with the government to ensure that reli-

gious freedom is always important in our foreign policy."

"In that sense, CNEWA is certainly open and willing to work with the government in that regard," he said. "We've been approached already for consultation, we said we were happy to be part of that."

"We acknowledge and appreci-

— INITIATIVE, page 5



Art Babych

FSIN NAME CHANGE — The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) is changing its name to reflect the organization's mandate, according to FSIN chief Bobby Cameron. First Nations chiefs voted for the name change of the organization in North Battleford May 25, the CBC reported. It said the federation will keep the same acronym but be known as the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. "It's a message and a reaffirmation . . . to our provincial and federal government that our 74 First Nation communities on our treaty territories do practise their sovereignty, they do have and exercise their own jurisdiction and laws and this work is going to continue," Cameron said.

Religious are the 'soul of the world'

Continued from page 3

come the New Jerusalem, our church and our religious life."

Religious have to become more "mystical," he said. "We can't repeat and teach the words and motions in which we no longer believe or which are no longer life-giving for us." Mystical experiences nourish faith, he said. Our top priority "is to relearn how to believe, to pray and to live in God's presence."

Religious "are not the masters of the world," he emphasized, "but the soul of the world."

Arnold believes the future of religious life lies "in small, pluralistic communities that are intensely connected." They have to become "human network specialists." They have to be able to dialogue about their differences "both for their own members and for those to whom they are sent."

Religious need to reclaim "the lost spaces on the stage of the world's destiny through art, science,

politics, thought and poetry." Where are the Fra Angelicos, the Luthers, the Teilhard de Chardins of our time? he asked. "The major challenge of our time for believers is in recreating a language of faith consistent with the requirements of today's new paradigms," he said.

A new administrative council was chosen at the assembly. Officers are: Sister Michelle Payette of Montreal, president; Sister Rita Larivée, of Lachine, past president; Rev. Louis Cinq Mars of Montreal, vice-president;



Jean-Michel Bigou

CRC EXECUTIVE — A new administrative council was chosen for the Canadian Religious Conference during meetings held May 26 - 29. Sister Rita Larivée, left, is past president of the CRC and Sister Michelle Payette of Montreal was elected president.

and Sister Joan Cronin of Pembroke, treasurer. The council also includes representatives from the four regions of Canada.

There were 90 communities represented at the assembly, which included 252 women and 25 men.

Queen's House

Retreat and Renewal Centre

Retreats & Workshops

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)

Spiritual Formation Days — Saturdays 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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)

Sacred in the City — Margaret Silf
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 Silf 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.)

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

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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.
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Euthanasia legal vacuum looms as deadline approaches

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A legal vacuum similar to that surrounding abortion looms as euthanasia and assisted suicide Bill C-14 is predicted not to pass into law by the Supreme Court’s June 6 deadline.

The threat has a coalition representing Canadians with disabilities worried.

“It’s dead certain the June 6 deadline will not be satisfied,” said Conservative MP Michael Cooper, vice-co-chair of the special joint Parliamentary Committee on Physician Assisted Dying, after a series of Conservative amendments to strengthen safeguards and protect conscience rights of health care professionals and institutions was defeated May 30 in the House of Commons. “That was apparent before the House rose last week.”

“It’s really remarkable the Minister of Justice has not seen fit to bring forward an application to the Supreme Court to ask for a further extension,” Cooper said, adding six weeks or even 30 days might be long enough to get the bill passed.

“The absence of legislation means a vacuum, an absence of safeguards,” said Conservative MP Garnett Genuis, who saw four proposed amendments defeated. But, he added, Bill C-14 as it is would be “the institutionalization of a vacuum in the absence of safeguards.”

“The reason why I voted against this legislation is because I see no meaningful improvement,” he said. “I would have supported a bill that put forward meaningful safe-

guards, even if it didn’t go fully in the direction I wanted it to go.”

“We are in a position of dealing with two possible vacuums,” he said. “It’s hard to see how we’re any better off with this legislation.”

On May 31, the day the House of Commons was scheduled to vote on Bill C-14 on third reading and pass the legislation on to the Senate, a coalition of groups representing Canadians with disabilities made a plea to parliamentarians to pass the bill.

“Today, disabled Canadians, speaking through our national organizations and with our supporters, and on the basis of decades of research, policy analysis and debate, call upon our parliamentarians to ensure that the minimal safeguards contained within Bill C-14 are legislated by June 6,” said a news release signed by 40 organizations, including the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, the Canadian Association for Community Living, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, and L’Arche Canada.

The release noted the struggle disabled Canadians have to obtain even basic supports. “Most perniciously, we are made vulnerable by the quiet and persistent reminders that our needs are costly and burdensome,” it said. “At root is the insidious idea that our disabilities are too onerous for society, our families and even ourselves to bear. This is why a system of physician-assisted dying without robust safeguards will jeopardize the lives of vulnerable Canadians.”

It noted disabled persons face the threat of inducement through coercion by others; hopelessness;

psychological pressure from health care providers; and lack of information or access to support and alternatives.

“While Bill C-14 does not fully address all the risks of error and abuse that arise from these realities, it does recognize that they exist and that safeguards are essential to protect the lives of vulnerable Canadians,” it said.

The Conservative amendments voted down May 30 included the safeguard of a prior judicial review before euthanasia or assisted suicide can take place; clauses to protect freedom of conscience and religion of health care professionals to not participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide either directly or indirectly and to ensure they will

not “be deprived of any benefit, or be subject to any obligation or sanction” for exercising their Charter rights; and safeguards to ensure underlying mental health challenges are addressed. Justice Committee Conservative vice-chair Ted Falk called the vote disappointing but expected.

Cooper said evidence before both the Joint Committee and the Justice Committee revealed two physicians or two nurse practitioners are not “able to evaluate the capacity to consent when a person has a mental illness.”

The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee had already submitted a series of recommendations to the House of Commons May 18. Senator Denise

Batters, a member of that committee, has told CCN she hoped the House would pass the Senate amendments before returning Bill C-14 to the Senate.

“The Liberal government can work in a number of these amendments,” she said. “If they pass it as is, it will be no surprise if it comes to the Senate and we have the exact same recommendations.”

The House of Commons, however, did not address any of the Senate amendments ahead of time.

“The bill will now go to the Senate and the Senate will raise many of the same issues,” said Falk, adding the Senate will “also make sure individuals have proper access to palliative care.”

Lacroix warns of euthanasia dangers

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — As the Supreme Court of Canada’s June 6 deadline approaches, bringing its euthanasia decision into effect with or without a federal law, Canada’s Catholic primate warned of danger.

“On June 6th, the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision concerning ‘medical assistance in dying’ will take effect with or without a federal law to control it,” said Cardinal Gerald Cyprien Lacroix, Archbishop of Quebec, in an open letter and video released May 30. “The adoption of Bill C-14 or the Carter decision’s coming into effect will certainly give place to appeals within the court system to widen the use of euthanasia in Quebec, available to its citizens for

the past five months.”

In Quebec, only those terminally ill can access so-called “medical assistance in dying,” and only a physician can cause the death. In Bill C-14, both physicians and nurse practitioners can assess a patient’s capacity to make the request and prescribe and administer the lethal substance. Some observers have said limiting assisted death to the terminally ill is an important safeguard that would protect the disabled and chronically ill from potential abuse.

Lacroix also pointed out the federal legislation allows a doctor or nurse practitioner to prescribe the lethal drugs and allow the patient to take it at a time and place they choose. The Quebec bill does not allow assisted suicide.

“My personal journey in accompanying people in end-of-life situations confirms to me that it is dangerous to allow permission to provoke the death of another person, even with his or her consent,” Lacroix said. “Not only does the law dictate; but it educates and gives a demand of a right and a suggestion of duty.”

“With time, customs are affected and the rarity of the gesture cedes way to habit,” he said, calling it a “sad progress.”

“To respect the sanctity of life, the Catholic Church firmly opposes euthanasia and assisted suicide,” the cardinal said. “She deplores that all the scenarios put forward



CCN
Cardinal Gerald Cyprien Lacroix

by the federal government eventually allow a growing number of people to ask to end their life.”

Lacroix directly addressed those who, in the words of the Carter decision, face “a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or a disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable.”

“The life you have received, the breath that sustains you, the personality that characterizes you are imprinted with beauty, nobility and greatness,” he said. “The love you have received, the love you have given are always present and make you — like all of us — people that are vested with great dignity in all circumstances.”

“What you have been, what you are today require, among other things, respect, accompaniment and appropriate care to help you grow to the very end,” he said.

Lacroix also issued a challenge to all people of goodwill who probably know someone in a circumstance similar to that described in the court decision.

“Listen to that person express to the very end his or her suffering and fear,” he said. “Tell that person that he or she has a great worth in your eyes and will always be able to count on your presence. Remind him or her of your unconditional love.”

The cardinal noted calls for an assisted death usually “disappear when someone is well-accompanied.”

He called for palliative care for the suffering and dying and conscience rights for health care professionals.

Ukrainian sister named dean of Newman

By Lasha Morningstar
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — Sister Dr. Zoe Bernatsky brings a multitude of talents to her new role as academic dean of Newman Theological College.

One of the most notable is her attitude.



WCR/L. Morningstar
Sister Zoe Bernatsky

“It’s been exciting,” she said in an interview. “I love to learn, love to pray, love to work with people. And I have had great mentors along the way and many, many blessings and opportunities.”

Her bouquet of skills and academic knowledge are enhanced by her collegial and

co-operative attitude.

Bernatsky’s eyes dance as she says, “I want to discover their (faculty and staff’s) gifts, remove any obstacles, clear their paths and let them run efficiently.”

The new dean said she wants to “listen to their wisdom. That is how the Spirit works.”

While the academic dean is an administrative position, Bernatsky will still be able to teach. She signed a one-year contract that she described as being “comfortable” for her.

As dean, she replaces Jason West who is also the college president.

Her office décor is relaxing with shelves of books lining the walls and a visitor’s chair and lamp in the corner much as one might find in a living room.

The myriad of books that fill the shelves include the expected theological treatises alongside secular works such as Emotional Intelligence, The Art of Listening.

A book, The Orthodox Way written by Father Kallistos Ware, is half read and lies turned over on the desk.

A Ukrainian Catholic, Bernatsky is a Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate and has extensive experience in hospital administration.

Her journey to this new post is an interesting one.

As a teenager, Bernatsky went on a number of retreats and was “kind of overwhelmed by God’s love, that he wanted to be noticed

in my life.” But she wanted to “test it to affirm it.”

So she became a registered nurse. But she still went on retreats and met with the sisters.

The call to religious life won, and Bernatsky has been a sister for more than 30 years. She also maintains her nursing qualifications.

Bernatsky based her doctoral dissertation on conscientious objection — “moral theology that integrates into our practices of daily life.”

Bernatsky is asked her opinion of the physician-assisted suicide controversy playing out in Canada’s public court of opinion.

She said she is worried about the impact it will have on the most vulnerable, that there will be no advocates for the poor, the elderly.

“I worry that their wishes will not be respected, that they might not have all the information needed to make an informed decision, whether their interests are being served.”

One answer, she said, is to “educate people so they can act according to their conscience.”

Returning to discussing her new position at Newman College, she said she expects she will draw from her background as a bioethicist, work in moral theology, pastoral theology and administration so as to be “able to bring my gifts and experience to the work and I’ll still be able to learn. . . . God has been the leader, making my path.”

Initiative necessary

Continued from page 4

ate what they are doing,” said Peter Bhatti, founder of International Christian Voice, and brother of assassinated Pakistani Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti whose martyrdom inspired the Harper government to set up the Office of Religious Freedom. “It has a different name, but I think the mandate is the same.”

Bhatti called the initiative necessary “because there is more violence in the world and extremism is growing due to religious tolerance.”

But Bhatti said it is “sad” to lose Ambassador Bennett. “He did a wonderful job,” he said. “We appreciate what he did for religious freedom.”

Pastoral appointments announced for Saskatoon

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Bishop Donald Bolen recently announced a number of pastoral appointments, retirements and departures in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. It is the first round of pastoral changes for the next ministry year, with further updates expected in the weeks ahead.

A number of international missionary priests are leaving the diocese, including Rev. Augustine Ebido, OP, who has been serving as pastor at Macklin, Denzil and St. Donatus; Rev. Joseph Gyim-Austin, who has been serving as pastor at Davidson, Kenaston, Outlook and Elbow; and Rev. Raphael Vezhaparambil, VC, who has been serving as pastor at Wynyard, Foam Lake and Wishart.

Rev. Modestus Ngwu, OP, has been reassigned by his Dominican order to Harrisburg, Pa., effective June 30, after serving a number of parishes in the diocese, and most recently as chaplain at the Regional Psychiatric Centre and a number of Catholic high schools.

After a year of parish ministry and time as chaplain at St. Ann Senior Citizens Village in Saskatoon, Rev. Eugene Nwachukwu returned to his home diocese of Sokoto, Nigeria, at the end of March.

The bishop expressed appreciation to those priests from other countries who have served in the Diocese of Saskatoon. “We are grateful to them for their generosity in coming to serve here. Each in his own way has deeply enriched the lives of the faithful of the diocese, and we wish them well in the future,” said Bolen.

Judy Schmid is retiring as parish life director after four years of service at St. Francis Xavier parish in Saskatoon, announced Bolen, thanking Schmid for “her gentle presence in the parish and her faith-filled and dedicated ministry.”

Rev. Joseph Ackerman, OSB, is retiring as pastor of parishes in Bruno and Peterson, where he has served since 1998. “We are incredibly grateful to Fr. Joe as he in his unique way deeply enriched the lives of the faithful of the dio-

cese. We give thanks to Fr. Joe and to God for his generous ministry,” said Bolen. Rev. Cosmas Epifano, OSB, has been appointed as pastor of parishes at Bruno and Peterson as of Aug. 1, after serving as associate pastor in Humboldt this past year.

Two priests are taking sabbaticals in the year ahead. Rev. Ephraim Mensah — who has been serving as pastor at parishes in Humboldt, Burr, Pilger, and Marysburg — will take a 12-month sabbatical for study and writing. Rev. Mick Fleming CSsR, who has been serving as priest moderator of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Saskatoon, has been given a six-month sabbatical by his Redemptorist community.

Rev. Geoffrey Young, who is currently serving as pastor at parishes in St. Front, Rose Valley, Perigord, Archerwill, Naicam and Nobleville, will begin a study leave this summer, taking a three-year program in liturgy at the University of Sant’Anselmo in Rome.

Bolen also announced a new arrangement with Archbishop Murray Chatlain of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-LePas, to provide a priest to serve the parishes in La Ronge and Southend. For the coming year, Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, will be serving as pastor at these northern parishes.

DeMong’s current role as pastor of parishes at Leader, Lancer and Liebenenthal will be taken up by Rev. Joseph Thazhathemuriyil, VC, a Vincentian priest from the Marymatha province in India.

Rev. Binu Rathappillil, VC, another Vincentian priest from the Marymatha province, will serve as pastor at Macklin, Denzil and St. Donatus parishes.

A Dominican from Nigeria, Rev. Madonna-Godwin Aghedo, OP, will serve as pastor of the parishes at Davidson, Kenaston, Outlook and Elbow.

Rev. Augustine Osei-Bonsu of Ghana has been appointed pastor of parishes at Wynyard, Foam Lake and Wishart.

Priests appointed to serve at parishes in Humboldt, Burr, Pilger and Marysburg are pastor Rev. Joseph Salihu of the diocese of Kano, Nigeria (who has been serving in the Archdiocese of Edmonton for the past year), and associate pastor Rev. Greg Smith-Windsor, who has been serving as associate pastor at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Rev. Mark Miller, superior of the Redemptorists, has assigned Graham Hill, who will be ordained to the priesthood on June 10, to the Redemptorist community in Saskatoon. Hill will serve as

priest moderator of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

Rev. Joe Jacek, OMI, has been appointed chaplain for St. Ann’s Senior Citizens Village as of April. He previously served at parishes in Allan, Colonsay and Viscount.

Rev. Deyre Azcuna of the Territorial Prelature of Batanes in the Philippines will serve as associate pastor at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, with Rev. David Tumback continuing as pastor. Azcuna will also serve as a hospital chaplain.

“I wish to express my gratitude to all who will be assuming new responsibilities,” said Bolen. “They have responded to the needs of the diocese with generous spirits. I ask the people in parishes where changes are taking place to warmly welcome their new pastoral leaders.”

The bishop made special note of the generous service provided by the Redemptorists, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Benedictines of St. Peter’s Abbey, who fill in on weekends when there is an urgent need.

Additional announcements about pastoral appointments are forthcoming, with the diocese anticipating the arrival of an additional three missionary priests.



Kip Yaworski

PASTORAL CARE VOLUNTEERS — An annual appreciation evening for pastoral care volunteers in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was held April 19 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, featuring a prayer service, a reception and entertainment. Bishop Donald Bolen and hospital chaplain Rev. Rhéal Bussière and chaplaincy coordinator Jackie Saretsky spoke during the evening, reflecting on the vital importance of offering pastoral care in hospitals, care homes and the community.

Gray guest speaker at Right to Life banquet

By Jean Pawlus

NORTH BATTLEFORD, Sask. — An inspiring and invigorating experience awaited those who attended the Right to Life banquet at St. Joseph Calasactius Parish in North Battleford May 1.

Stephanie Gray, author and university professor, was the guest speaker at the pro-life banquet. In her 16 years as an international presenter, she has spoken in Costa Rica, Latvia, England, Ireland, the United States and Canada. She has formally debated with abortion doctors and professors at universities and had many one-on-one conversations with professors and students.

As she says in the introduction to her book, *Love Unleashes Life*, it has been her full-time job to discuss abortion with people who don’t share the pro-life view. While it can be tempting to focus on what we are saying rather than who we are saying it to, she has learned the importance of looking at a conversation as an encounter

with another soul. “While we certainly need the strongest of minds, we also need the most tender of hearts,” she wrote in her book.

Beginning with a quote from Pope Francis, who spoke of a “culture of encounter” in which all are called to visit the marketplace, Gray addressed the need for dialogues in the midst of the everyday life experience of every person.

Her presentation focused on three aspects of the message we are called to share: dialogue is our method; fidelity to the one our hearts call us to hear and share to; and proposing God’s offer of love.

With the vibrancy of her personality and the wisdom of her experience, Gray spoke of the importance of dialogue as our method in presenting God’s message of life and love, which to her is not an argument to be won.

To be fruitful and wise, our lives must be grounded in prayer, she explained, being forever in

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Youth Leadership graduation celebrated

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — “It’s all about leadership,” said Regina Catholic School Division Director of Education Rob Currie when he addressed the most recent Youth Leadership Course graduates May 12 at Holy Trinity Church. He told graduates that they will become leaders in their schools and bring their faith to their schools.

This is the 15th year for the program that began to teach mostly Grade 6 students about liturgy and the mass.

“Six students are chosen from 10 schools and this year we had a full complement of 60 students,” said Miles Meyers, Religious Education co-ordinator for the Regina Catholic School Division. “The program had been growing every year and last year we had to limit the number of students as the classes were getting too large,” said Meyers. The program is limit-

ed to Grade 6 students because the school then has them for two more years. However, graduates of the program use what they learned in the program when they move to high school and many work with their high school chaplain in organizing liturgies throughout the school year.

The graduating mass has always been held at Holy Trinity Church and Meyers made a point of thanking Rev. Ron Andree who has celebrated the mass with the students since he became pastor at the church. This year, Rev. John Weckend concelebrated the mass with Andree. A few graduates attend schools in St. Cecilia’s “catchment” area and Weckend as pastor of St. Cecilia frequently visits those schools.

Andree in his homily, which he delivered walking back and forth in front of the graduates, engaged them in the readings of the day that spoke about Pentecost and the Holy

Spirit. After Christ left them and ascended to heaven, they were scared and afraid to go out. “But Christ told them not to leave Jerusalem because they would soon receive the Holy Spirit and create a fire in them” to teach God’s word.

He then questioned how did the faith get from Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago to Regina. “I believe because my parents believed and my grandparents believed, all the way back to the apostles. It was the Holy Spirit.” Briefly going back to the altar, he showed how the Holy Spirit is called at mass to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

People were told to shut their mouths, keep quiet and not talk about their faith in those days, and it’s still happening today, said Andree. “People are still dying for their faith,” he said. “You can kill the body, but you can’t take away eternal life.”



F. Flegel

YOUTH LEADERSHIP — Graduates of the Youth Leadership Course assembled May 12 at Holy Trinity Church in Regina.

Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant thrives

By Frank Flegel
with notes from Linda Kapasky
of The Saskatchewan Anglican

REGINA — The Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant between the Regina Archdiocese and the Diocese of Qu’Appelle signed in 2011 continues to grow, with activities between the two faith communities. They gathered May 15, Pentecost Sunday, at St. Paul’s Cathedral for a traditional Anglican evensong service with a homily delivered by archdiocesan administrator Rev. Lorne Crozon and the

apostolic blessing performed by Winnipeg Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber. Canon Michael Jackson, Anglican co-chair of the Covenant Implementation Committee, opened the service, followed by St. Paul’s Cathedral dean Michael Sinclair, who welcomed everyone.

Susan Klein, Roman Catholic co-chair of the Covenant Implementation Committee reported on the numerous activities the covenant participants have shared since the last time they met. Among the highlights was Signs of Hope: A Conversation on First Nations

Ministry, held in the fall of 2015. It attracted Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals who engaged in conversations following presentations by Rev. Dale Gillman and Sister Re-Anne Letourneau.

Sinclair spent a week in Rome attending a Christian leadership course at the Anglican Centre, visited Assisi and attended a public audience with Pope Francis. Archdeacon Catherine Harper presented on the diaconate program, and Canon Jackson is in touch with the Roman Catholic Diaconate programs in Saskatoon and Prince Albert as well

as Roman Catholic authors and diaconate leaders in the U.S.

In addition to these highlights, there were several joint parish activities, including a vacation Bible school, marriage course, Advent and lenten programs. “Concrete examples of what we are doing together,” said Klein in her report.

The service continued with Roman Catholic and Anglican participants reading the lessons and prayers. The St. Paul’s choir, led by Bob Nicholls with organist David McIntyre, provided the music.

Crozon’s homily focused on the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is able to put the skin of Jesus Christ on us in order that others can see Jesus through us.” He emphasized that people must wisely use the gifts the Holy Spirit gives because they are signs of hopefulness and faithfulness.

In his closing remarks, Bishop Robert Hardwick noted that the ancient Augustine Crozier was on loan to Canterbury Cathedral and was prominently on display at the Anglican Primates meeting held earlier this year. “It is symbolic of our shared roots.” He thanked the Catholic Church for what he called its generous gift.

The service ended with Weisgerber giving the final blessing and, as is customary in both faith communities, Roman Catholic Deacon Joe Lang gave the dismissal.

A reception catered by the St. Paul’s Cathedral Catering Group followed the service. Money donated at an open offering was donated to the people of Fort McMurray.

Free services provided for inner-city residents

By Andréa Ledding

SASKATOON — For the second year in a row, YXE Connects provided free services and access to community vendors in the inner city, at White Buffalo Youth Lodge and City Centre Church on 20th St., May 16 from 10 a.m. to four p.m. At various stations and tables, participants were offered everything from a massage to health care, to counselling, to literacy programs, to shoes and a haircut. The goal is to provide one-stop shopping for people who experience barriers to services, programs, and community organizations.

YXE Connects co-ordinator Justin Fisher said they were thrilled to offer the program to an appreciative core neighbourhood, explaining that with over 70 different service providers and double that number of volunteers, they were expecting more than 1,000 people throughout the day.

“The service providers are providing a range of services like chiropractic, physical therapy, massage therapy, haircuts — all these things are provided for free,” explained Fisher. “So the idea is to bring everything into one place, for one day, to offer it in a barrier-free environment, both to provide services and to connect community members with all the amazing community agencies and supports available in Saskatoon.”

Modelled after similar events in centres like Edmonton, Toronto, and the original template from San

Francisco, Fisher explained that it doesn’t just provide services, it also creates community and connection. Homelessness, taking a broad definition of the term, is a growing problem in Saskatoon, and looking at what was being offered in other cities, they thought a similar program was needed in Saskatoon.

“A lot of people in Saskatoon have trouble accessing services,” Fisher said, noting numbers were already up from last year. “Within a few minutes of the haircuts opening they were booked for hours.” He noted similar response with the free massages being offered. He had nothing but praise for the service providers. “It’s a very positive environment.”

The two buildings — City Centre being a former bingo hall converted to a worship space — were filled with people of all ages, from the elderly to the infirm to young families pushing strollers or with children in tow.

Fisher expressed his gratitude to the United Way and the Community Initiatives Fund for providing funding and support so that they could double their access and improve services this year. He also thanked City Centre and White Buffalo for providing their buildings free of charge for the community and service providers.

One volunteer noted that even with full-time employment, there were many services he couldn’t afford on his salary, such as a massage, so he was encouraged to come

and get a massage on his break.

“I wish this happened more frequently than once a year,” noted the volunteer, adding the location and the services are excellent. “They’re bringing so much joy and practical supports to people right where they are.”

“I feel like I could fall asleep after my massage,” said elder

Maria Linklater, beaming from her wheelchair. “But now I’m going over to the other building to do some shopping.”

Value Village had tables of free clothing, while literacy programs, the sexual assault centre, the public library, and many other vendors provided information and services via staff and volunteers.

Prince Albert citizens recognized

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — Prince Albert citizens involved in improving daily life for people in their communities were awarded medals of two kinds last month: the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal and the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

The Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal was established in 1995 to recognize volunteers with exceptional community involvement. Jeanette Eddolls and Dale Ebert received the medal April 26 in a ceremony at Government House in Regina. It was presented by Lt.-Gov. Vaughn Solomon Schofield.

Eddolls said she was stunned when she found out.

“I really gain a lot personally through meaningful connections with others. I believe in community development and working alongside others. I believe that we are all our brothers’ keepers. There is much need in our society. If I can do something to assist others, I may be a contributor to making a person more comfortable, at peace, and then I may have accomplished something meaningful. It is about connecting with others.”

Throughout the years, Eddolls has been involved with many programs and associations, including the Tutor Learner Connections Program, the Prince Albert Food Bank, Catholic Family Services, St. Michael Community School Operation Christmas Store, and the Spruce Home Activity Centre. She works with literacy training and foreign exchange students, and distributes quilts to shelters and daycare centres. In 2003 she travelled to Ghana as an educational volunteer for Project Overseas.

Ebert, a retired teacher, also received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Award. A Knights of Columbus member since 1961, his volunteerism spans local, provincial and national associations. He has been a member and president of both the Saskatoon West School

Division Teachers Association and the Herbert School Division Teachers Association. As a resident of Wakaw, he worked with the Wakaw School Division Teachers’ Negotiating Committee and Sports Committee. He was a member of the Wakaw Curling Club executive and coached the Wakaw School girls curling team.

He served on the boards of Prince Albert’s KIN Enterprise and the Canadian Association for Community Living. He volunteered for Prince Albert Victim Services and comforted terminal patients for the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region.

The Saskatchewan Order of Merit acknowledges individuals who have made their mark in agriculture, the arts, business, industry, community leadership, public service, research and volunteer service. It takes precedence over all other provincial honours and awards.

Isabelle Impey, social worker and child advocate in Prince Albert, received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit from the lieutenant-governor May 24 in Regina. Known for her gentle nature, Impey has “provided leadership and service to her community and beyond in the areas of culture, family life, justice, education and the alleviation of poverty” according to her biography on the Government of Saskatchewan website.

An indigenous elder and advocate for women and children, she was a major contributor in founding and implementing the Opikina-



Prince Albert Daily Herald

ORDER OF MERIT — Isabelle Impey, social worker and child advocate in Prince Albert, received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit from the lieutenant-governor May 24 in Regina.

wasowin (Opik) child welfare dispute resolution process, which over 100 families have chosen to use. Opik has a high success rate in bringing families back together.

Impey co-ordinates the Opik Elders Council, whose members form the Opik Dispute Resolution Hearings. She helped build Interval House, the first women’s safe shelter in Prince Albert, and is a major organizer for the annual Prince Albert Community Christmas Dinner which provides meals to those in need on Christmas Day.

In 2009, she received the Aboriginal Women of Distinction Award. She is involved in organizations that provide resources to those in need, including First Nations and Métis child advocacy, Second Harvest programs, Prince Albert Aid to the Homeless and Hungry, and the West Flat Community Centre.

According to the Government of Saskatchewan website, Saskatchewan has the highest rate of volunteerism in Canada.



A. Ledding

YXE CONNECTS — Participants get a haircut at YXE Connects, a program that offers free services and access to community members in inner-city Saskatoon.

Australian expert offers wise advice for parents

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Australian parenting expert Andrew Mullins, author of *Parenting for Character: Equipping your children for life*, kicked off a cross-Canada speaking tour in Vancouver May 26.

Mullins' tour included Victoria, Calgary, Toronto, London, Ottawa and Montreal organized by Family Development Canada president Gillian Roussy.

In an interview from Australia, Mullins stressed parents "need to manage the moral upbringing of their children" by ensuring they receive a consistent message from their parents, friends, media, relatives and peer groups.

When it comes to consistency in message, "parents are finding a lot of competition," he said. "It's difficult for parents to keep enough weight on their end of the seesaw."

On the other end are values in the community, in the media, in the global youth culture that are not sympathetic to character building, he said. At issue is how



Andrew Mullins

parents "take the space to be the decisive moral exemplar in the lives of their children."

"If in the end we find more joy in company of Homer Simpson and McDonald's than in the company of our own parents, there is something wrong with that," Mullins said.

Parents also need to invest in

how children integrate their emotional lives with their moral convictions, he said. Parents model their emotional capacity by showing the child what gives them joy and happiness and what they should fear or avoid.

This is not a matter of communicating anxiety to make a child fearful or anxious, he said. Instead it is applying what Aristotle teaches about the good, the true and the beautiful, "raising children to have a love for the good," he said. The joy parents find in friends, friendship, family, and ideals helps communicate that.

"Education is not simply about protecting children, but teaching them to think for themselves," he said. "It's important parents are close to their children, so parents can tell them what is going on in their own thoughts."

If children are not open about "what is coming into their lives" and their own thoughts from their teacher and friends, it makes a parent's task almost impossible.

"It's a huge task for parents to be close to their children," he said.

Parents earn the communication with their child in adolescence by the "effort and attention" they pay to the child when he or she is small.

This is especially true for boys, who tend to be more concrete. "If you are not part of their life daily, you can become fairly remote to them," he said. "It's easy for parents to become remote in the lives of their children. That's not right."

Mullins said he is "very concerned about assumptions many educators have that somebody else than the parents have the right to be the decisive moral influence on the child."

It's not only the parents' right, but their "solemn duty," he said.

Training children to take joy in the right things, to have a "balanced emotional view of the world" is the "task of parents when children are very small," he said. It must take place in addition to training and educating children to develop their minds.

Mullins bases his parenting advice on the four cardinal virtues: temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice. Temperance

and fortitude involve training a child in where to seek pleasure and "how to overcome difficulties for a good reason."

"It's very important we seek to inculcate into young people the capacity to think for themselves and choose wisely," he said. "Prudence is the capacity to understand what is right and wrong."

Prudence also includes setting goals wisely, he said.

The fourth cardinal virtue, justice, "is the capacity to measure all of our actions against how they affect others," he said. In this virtue, a child develops a sense of "kindness to all," and learns to "pay attention to people."

"Human beings are social," he said. "We can't find happiness apart from other people unless we contribute to their happiness in the process."

"Parents do well to help children to set goals wisely, and to always take others into account when they set those goals," he said.

Details on Mullins' pan-Canadian tour can be found at familydevelopment.ca

Professor's book on sex and marriage creates space for dialogue

By Glen Argan
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — One of the most frequently asked questions in Paul Flaman's recently released book, *Sex, Love and Marriage*, is "What do you think?"

It's a different approach for a Catholic textbook on sexual and marital morality, one that cuts against the widespread belief that the church wants to dictate moral precepts to an increasingly rebellious or uninterested public.

Flaman, soon to be raised to the level of a full professor of theology at the University of Alberta's St. Joseph's College, says the book developed out of more

than 30 years of teaching undergraduate students on the topics of sex, love and marriage.

While some of those students are practising Catholics, others are non-practising, others are members of other Christian churches while still others are atheists or have never set foot in a church.

Flaman hears a wide spectrum of views, including many with which he disagrees. "It's good to be informed (of different views) and understand where these people are coming from."

In the classroom, he emphasizes the Golden Rule — treat others the way you would like to be treated. "If a student expresses a view that I don't agree with, I think about

how I would like to be treated if I sincerely held that view myself."

He has also taught his course online, a medium where students are encouraged to discuss each others' opinions. The debate is often free flowing.

"I think that's wonderful — that open, honest dialogue."

In Flaman's book, his respect for opposing points of view comes across in spades.

Each chapter begins with a list of questions that will be discussed so that the reader can formulate their view before reading the arguments Flaman presents.

Perhaps it is his openness to dialogue that has led some students to change their views on the

moral issues he discusses both in class and through the 350 pages of *Sex, Love and Marriage*.

"Some students come to agree a lot more or even whole-heartedly with church teaching," he says.

Flaman

tells of one

male Protes-

tant student

who moved to

the Catholic

view on many

issues, includ-

ing that of nat-

ural family

planning. "He

was sold on

it." The stu-

dent then went

off to try to

convince his

fiancée of the

Catholic view.

In another

class, a female

student found

some of the

material upset-

ting. He

learned that

she had had an

abortion and

invited her to

come and talk

with him about

the experience.

"I was so

glad that happened

during the

course," he said,

noting that in

some cases he

only hears stu-

dents' negative

views through

the anonymous

student evalua-

tions at the

conclusion of the

course. That

leaves him with

no opportunity

to thrash out the

issue with the

student.

In its 15 chapters, *Sex, Love*

and Marriage

covers the water-

front of issues

on those topics,

always in a

readable, non-

confrontational

manner which

is faithful to

Catholic teach-

ing.

Flaman offers

tips for choos-

ing a marriage

partner, church

teaching on

homosexuality,

celibacy,

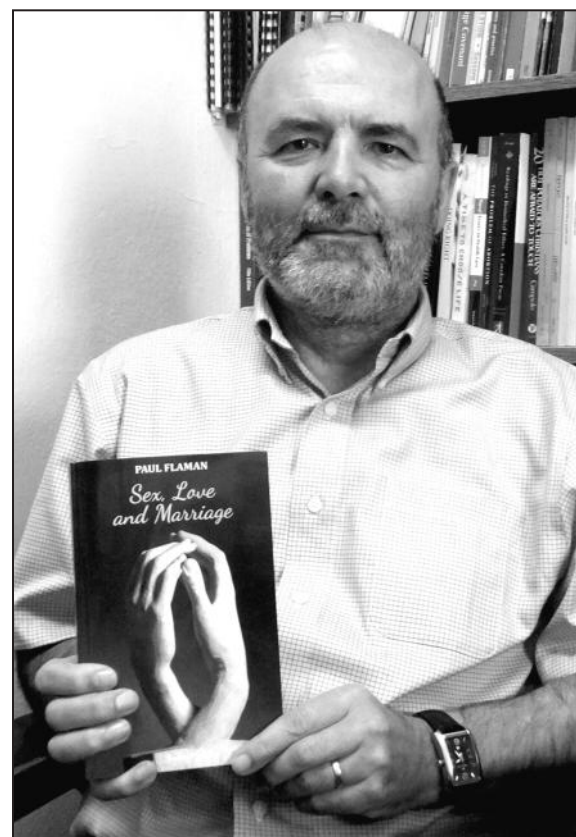
forgiveness,

pornography,

sexual

abuse, gender roles and chastity.

On chastity, he discusses how it is important for married people as well as for singles. Church teaching on marital chastity is sparse, except for prohibitions on



WCR/G. Argan

Paul Flaman

adultery, lust, pornography, contraception and sterilization.

Some students believe that chastity means waiting until marriage before having sex and, after that, anything goes, he says. "Which is not the case."

"The virtue of chastity is not about arbitrary rules, but it's about loving God." If one does love God with his or her whole mind, heart and strength, they will want to please God. That will include seeking to understand God's design for sexuality and respecting that design in one's actions.

A husband may not be lustful

— GOD'S LOVE, page 17

Independent, transparent assessment essential

Continued from page 1

take notice, said Sisters of Mercy general superior Elizabeth Davis.

The sisters already have the attention of PotashCorp's major rival in the agricultural minerals business with a similar motion put to Calgary's Agrium Inc.'s annual general meeting last year.

"A victory would be if both Agrium and Potash actually had the public, independent assessment of their human rights responsibilities with respect to sourcing phosphate rock in the Western Sahara," Davis told The Catholic Register.

The Western Sahara has been on the United Nation's list of "non-self-governing territories" since 1963, shortly after Generalissimo Franco's Spain gave up on playing the colonial power in the region. Morocco filled in the gap when Spain left and currently exercises control over most of the towns and the stretch of Atlantic coast attributable to the region. But the Polisario Front has been seeking independence for the area and its administration. It's claim is recognized by the African Union. Mo-

rocco, which has the backing of most of the Arab League, recently expelled 80 UN peacekeepers as tensions are on the rise. Thousands of Western Sahara families live in refugee camps on the borders of the territory.

"I will be honest — I don't think a human rights impact assessment is going to tell us much we don't already know," said Mining Watch Canada outreach co-ordinator Jamie Kneen. "If the UN has a whole string of resolutions on the situation, I don't think we need to do more research."

Rather than conduct another study — a process that may take years — Mining Watch would like Potash to simply withdraw until there is a recognized, stable government in the Western Sahara.

"Don't buy from occupying military forces," said Kneen.

But Davis doesn't think the situation is quite so black and white.

"We can't expect a company like Potash to take any responsibility for the political situation that's there," she said. "But what they can take responsibility for is ensuring that their involvement is not adding any further complexity

to the political situation and is actually supporting the people themselves in getting a bit closer to their own autonomy."

The business case for undertaking a human rights assessment is "to protect the company from reputational and operational risk," according to SHARE.

Much of Canada's mining community recognizes those as real risks, even if they are hard to quantify, said Mining Association of Canada vice-president of sustainable development Ben Chalmers. He praised the sisters for their positive engagement at the Potash AGM.

"It's a fairly constructive avenue to take, to take a position in a company and then engage with them to get them to take action if you don't agree with the direction they're taking," Chalmers said.

Human rights assessments — farmed out to third party experts and made available publicly — have become a preferred strategy for Canadian mining companies with investments in conflict zones.

An independent and transparent assessment is essential in the Potash case, said Davis.

Tears washed away at rededicated Hiroshima memorial

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — The war over Toronto's peace garden ended in sunshine, spring flowers and paper cranes from Hiroshima.

The \$40-million redevelopment of Nathan Phillips Square at City Hall marked a milestone with a rededication of the 32-year-old peace garden in its new location along the western boundary of the square May 18. The ceremony drew the curtain on a decade of drama, tears and anger over the city's plans to move the garden away from its central location and modernize its design.

"We stand on holy ground," Rev. Massey Lombardi told about 300 people gathered at the new peace garden before he and Mayor John Tory relit the eternal flame from Hiroshima and added water from Nagasaki to the reflecting pool.

From 1982 to 1984, it was Lombardi, as head of the Archdiocese of Toronto's now defunct office of justice and peace, who led a campaign to have the peace garden placed in front of City Hall, where nobody could miss it. Lombardi travelled to Japan to collect water from the fountain which commemorates 75,000 killed by the nuclear attack on Nagasaki. He worked with Canadian Hiroshima survivor Setsuko Thurlow to persuade Hiroshima mayor Takeshi Araki to share his city's eternal flame at ground zero with Toronto.

The first shovel of sod for the garden was turned by then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau. The garden was officially inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II. The eternal flame was lit and the water of peace added by Pope John Paul II in 1984.

When Toronto decided the square in front of City Hall needed a facelift in 2005, Lombardi

and activists at the city's Hiroshima Day Coalition reacted with horror.

Thurlow, who was 13 when she witnessed the city of her birth enveloped in an apocalyptic fireball, wept in frustration 10 years ago when she explained to this reporter what was at stake in the redesign of the peace garden.

"How do you explain that to the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the people who shared something almost sacred to them?" Thurlow said in 2005.

The initial redesign for the garden included few elements from the original. A black granite wall replaced the pavilion as the central feature of the garden. The pavilion, designed by city architect Ken Greenberg, with its symbolically damaged roof and missing walls made explicit reference to the destructive power of nuclear weapons. Lombardi wondered what a black wall said about anything.

"Isn't there any sense of legacy?" he asked at the time. "Isn't there any sense of history? Isn't there any sense of continuity? Or is everything up for grabs?"

In the end, the pavilion was preserved. It still stands beside the eternal flame and the flowing water as a warning about the cost of war in the nuclear age. The final design of the new garden won a 2016 National Award for PLANT Architect Inc. from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects.

The new garden is larger than the old, and with more flowers and trees looks more like a garden. It also has space for gatherings of anywhere from 40 to 4,000 people. The peace garden as a focal point for protest was an essential demand of the Hiroshima Day Coalition, which has commemorated the Aug. 6, 1945, first use of nuclear weapons at the site every year since it was opened.



Catholic Register/M. Swan

PEACE GARDEN — Rev. Massey Lombardi joins Toronto Mayor John Tory in relighting the eternal flame at the peace garden in Nathan Phillips Square May 18. The garden was moved during the redevelopment square in front of Toronto City Hall.

The protest function of the peace garden was praised by Tory at the rededication ceremony. He called the garden "a refreshed and renewed place at the heart of our democracy."

"As with most things around here, there was some controversy," Tory conceded.

But before protest, the garden's first function is to help us remember the dead and the dying of our many wars, said Toronto poet laureate Anne Michaels.

"For over 14,000 years we've used flowers to honour the dead. Perhaps the first garden was a grave," she said. "Memory is a moral muscle and it must be exercised. This garden is an act of memory."

For Thurlow, the retired Toronto social worker who saw flesh melt off people when she was just

a girl, our memory of war — nuclear and otherwise — should inspire the city to action.

"I hope that our peace garden will continue to be a beacon for Torontonians, to inspire us to take action for peace," she said before she added the water from Nagasaki to the reflecting pool.

As far as Thurlow is concerned, there's plenty to protest.

"We have all been forced to live in the shadow of apocalyptic destruction," she said. "We are hostages of nuclear weapons states — nuclear weapons states who have failed to live up to their legal obligations (under the 1970 nuclear non-proliferation treaty)."

For Lombardi, who had invested so much of his hope and faith in the garden 30 years ago, the only words that would suffice were the peace prayer of St.

Francis — "Make me an instrument of your peace . . ." he prayed before lighting the eternal flame with Tory.

For St. John Paul II, who spoke so often of the healing and purification of memory, that the world's most diverse city finally managed to remember its dedication to peace would have been a small triumph.

"To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace," the sainted John Paul said in 1981. "Let us promise our fellow human beings that we will work untiringly for disarmament and the banishing of all nuclear weapons."

For the retired Lombardi, the peace garden will always stand for unfinished business.

"It is a reminder of the gap between what is and what might be," he said.

Canadian Holocaust survivor tells of his lucky escape

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

AURORA, Ont. (CCN) — When a gang of pretty high school girls spot 87-year-old Max Eisen they all shout "Max!" and shuffle over for a hug and a chat with the man who showed them the inside of Auschwitz last summer.

Eisen spent three days with 30 "amazing kids" from the York Catholic District School Board last summer as they toured Poland and examined the history of the Holocaust. As a 15-year-old boy who lived in Auschwitz for nine months before liberation (the fifth of the five camps he survived) and a man who has only two cousins left out of 55 members of his extended family, Eisen was something more than a tour guide to the students.

At the May 19 launch of his new book, *By Chance Alone*, the kids were anxious to catch up with



Catholic Register/M. Swan

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR — Max Eisen shares his experience surviving Auschwitz and the Holocaust in his new memoir, *By Chance Alone*.

one of Canada's few remaining living survivors of the planned, organized murder of six million European Jews — the Nazis' "final solution."

The kids' interest in Eisen is more than matched by Eisen's interest in them. Most of them are graduating this year and the old man wants to know about their plans for the future. Though his book recalls events that are now more than 70 years old, Eisen's most ardent interest is in the future. His family today includes three great-grandchildren aged

eight, six and three. They are the first subject of conversation he brings up.

As students ask him again how he found the will to survive even after his father and uncle had been gassed and he was living alone in the camp, Eisen again talks about family.

"We were living in a place where life was not worth a plug nickel. My father tried to instil in me the will to go on," he said. "You needed to be very resilient and you needed a lot of luck."

Luck came in the form of a Polish doctor in the camp who treated Eisen for a serious head wound that resulted from a run-in with one of the SS guards. He was still weak and woozy after his treatment, so the guards put Eisen on a stretcher to carry him to the gas chambers. The doctor pulled him off the stretcher, gave him a lab coat and made him his cleaner and general dogsbody.

Dr. Tadeusz Orzesko also survived Auschwitz and 50 years later Eisen met the doctor's children and grandchildren in Rome. He still gets a call every March 15 from Orzesko's son. One of Orzesko's

grandchildren has named her son Max, after Eisen.

The Catholic school board north of Toronto began organizing trips to Auschwitz for students after deciding to name one of its schools after St. Maximilian Kolbe, a priest who died in Auschwitz.

After the initial 2012 trip, the last three have been offered as credit courses. York Catholic superintendent of education Michael Nasello has organized the annual trips, but will take a break this summer and instead make a presentation at an educational conference on his experience introducing high school students to the history of the Holocaust.

No one knows more than Eisen how remote the Holocaust can seem to a Canadian teenager.

"This is such a far stretch from that time. We live in a country of such plenty," he told the students. "Be thankful for what you have here. Tell your parents that you love them."

Eisen's memoir of life in the Nazi camp system is published by Harper Collins and is available on amazon.ca in paperback for \$13.62.

www.prairiemessenger.ca

Cultural advisers help rework Muslim stereotypes

By Julie Poucher Harbin
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As part of his “Islam in Film” class at the University of Nebraska, religious studies professor Kristian Petersen screens movies such as *The Hurt Locker* (2008), *Argo* (2012) and *American Sniper* (2014) to make the point that depictions of Muslims on the big screen often involve a conflict narrative.

Muslim characters are either terrorists or “good” Muslims trying to overcome “bad” Muslim plots. In either case, they “are still

Poucher Harbin is a correspondent based in Cary, N.C.

constrained by conflictual framing,” typically around themes such as terrorism, post-9/11 politics or overseas military intervention.

But Hollywood is slowly changing this paradigm as writers, show-runners, producers and directors reach out to cultural advisers and Muslims become part of the creative process. The Muslim Public Affairs Council’s Hollywood bureau and other informal networks of academics, policymakers and regional studies experts are increasingly recruited by the movie and TV industry to offer advice on scripts, review raw footage and correct pronunciations for actors.

Saudi filmmaker Jassim

Alsaady, who served as cultural adviser and Arabic dialogue coach on the fictional Saudi Arabia-set film *A Hologram for the King*, said he was “disgusted” by *American Sniper* and its one-dimensional depiction of Iraqis “as people who want to kill you.”

“Hologram,” a comedy-drama based on a Dave Eggers book, tells the story of a desperate American salesman who travels to Saudi Arabia to pitch a teleconferencing system to the king and ends up falling for his Muslim soon-to-be-divorced Saudi doctor, Zahra.

Tom Hanks, who plays the salesman, said in a video about the film, “I think that the key to making movies now is to surprise

the audience. . . . I never thought I’d see a movie about a guy who goes to Saudi Arabia and everything works out for him.”

Alsaady, who lives in Jeddah and Berlin, said the German director and crew were welcoming and receptive to his suggestions. He was part of the casting process, consulted on the script and was involved in production and post-production for the film.

It was the desire to see better stories about Islam and Muslims on screen that prompted MPAC Hollywood bureau consultants to work on the 2014 Forest Whitaker/Harvey Keitel film *Two Men in Town* and the 2014 Kristen Stewart/Peyman Moaadi Guantanamo film *Camp X-Ray*, as well as the TV series *American Odyssey*, *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders* and *Tyrant*.

learn war zone field techniques, and left with a planeload of medical equipment gifted by the American doctors. MOST’s role in that April 2013 episode was in getting the writers in touch with real Syrian doctors, and helping choreograph some of the scenes.

MOST’s work with the political drama *Madam Secretary* included finding an Iraqi expert to make an Iraq scene sound plausible, and helping with character development of the secretary’s husband, a Georgetown University theology professor. To make him more credible, MOST put the show in touch with Georgetown University religion professor John Esposito.

“It makes sense that experts on Islam, Muslim politics, radical militant groups, etc., be consulted, especially since these programs, though for entertainment, also often impact public attitudes,” said Esposito.

In the ABC crime drama *Quantico*, Lebanese-born Yasmine Al Massri plays twin FBI recruits Nimah and Raina Amin (one veiled and one not). Obeidi, who doesn’t consult on this show, said she likes that it’s “balanced” in that the character is able to “keep everything honest” by making a point of differentiating Islam and terrorism when it comes up in the storyline.



Photo courtesy of Suhad Obeidi

REWORKING MUSLIM STEREOTYPES — It was the desire to see better stories about Islam and Muslims on screen that prompted MPAC Hollywood bureau consultants to work on, for example, the 2014 Kristen Stewart/Peyman Moaadi Guantanamo film *Camp X-Ray*. From left: actor Peyman Moaadi; Suhad Obeidi, director of operations and head of the Muslim Public Affairs Council’s Hollywood bureau; and actor Kristen Stewart on the set of *Camp X-Ray*.

Books

Vanier book part of excellent ‘People of God’ series

JEAN VANIER: Logician of the Heart, by Michael W. Higgins. 2016 Novalis. 122 pages, \$15.95. Reviewed by Beth Porter.

Michael Higgins’ profound admiration for Jean Vanier suffuses this little book — one in the excellent “People of God” series published by Novalis. A gifted writer, in just a little over a hundred pages Higgins traces the life journey of Jean Vanier and highlights not only his subject’s significant achievements and contributions — above all the founding and nurturing of the L’Arche movement and Faith and Light (which he co-founded) — but also his humanity. He aptly calls Vanier “the philosopher-activist par excellence.”

Higgins has a gift for relating Vanier’s life and actions to the larger intellectual and often theological context: “he was being called to trust his intuition, his conscience, the ‘aboriginal Vicar of Christ’ as Newman would argue.”

Without getting caught up in theological discussion, Higgins points out how Vanier’s early thinking reflected Thomist and Aristotelian notions. Similarly, in a few strokes he situates Jean Vanier’s personal growth in understanding and vision and his ability to bring together theory and practice in the context of his heritage and of the times — the trust of his father whom he profoundly loved and respected, the impact of the Second World War and its aftermath, the theological currents in the Roman Catholic Church in the 1950s and 60s, the Spirit of Vatican II, and pre-and post-

conciliar lay communities.

He notes Vanier’s ability to find common ground and form trusting friendships with others — Sue Mosteller, CSJ (to whom the book is dedicated), Pope Jean-Paul II, Henri Nouwen. In fact, the one place where the book stumbles is the chapter on Vanier and Nouwen. The title, “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,” is hardly consistent with the content and the “rich reciprocity” that Higgins describes as existing between them, and the chapter inserts Vanier into the Daybreak story of Nouwen as though Vanier were present at events, where that was not the case.

Higgins highlights Vanier’s gift for articulating “an authentic humanism” that led to the enormous success of his Massey Lectures (Becoming Human) and to his becoming a bestselling author. Vanier’s compassion, his capacity for self-reflection, his growing internationalism, his commitment to nurture peace, and his efforts to break down barriers not only between people with and without intellectual disabilities but between churches and religions and ethnic groups, are highlighted.

In many ways the full ripeness of Vanier’s life is revealed in the past decade in his singular sustained reflection on the Gospel of John. Higgins captures admirably the remarkable legacy of Vanier as he lives into his later 80s — his keen intellect wedded to a living faith, his compassion, his commitment to the poor, his capacity to read the signs of the times and continually to go ever deeper in his own reflection.

It has referred experts to several shows, including *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Army Wives* and more recently *Madam Secretary* and *Tyrant*, a drama that centres on the youngest son of a Middle Eastern dictator who returns to his homeland with his wife and kids after 20 years of living in America.

“More and more TV programs . . . are playing out storylines that involve Muslims in American society,” said Michael Wolfe, MOST’s co-director. “Television and films have been our way of coming to terms with new groups and understanding them for decades; from the African-American community beginning in the 1970s, to women in the workplaces in the ’80s and ’90s, to the LGBT community beginning in the ’90s. Muslims, in that regard, are the news kids on the block. They are small in number, but they represent a huge population globally.”

Obeidi said MPAC consultants have given notes on outlines and scripts for *Tyrant* and have also reviewed the raw footage. Wolfe said *Tyrant* is the “most receptive program that we’ve ever worked with.”

One of the more powerful *Grey’s Anatomy* storylines that MOST consultants worked on, said Wolfe, involved a pair of Syrian doctor characters who came to the Seattle hospital to

There are exceptions, he pointed out, such as the character Abed of *Community* and Sayid of *Lost*, who “were not defined by their religious practice or communal identity though they were marked as Muslims by the shows’ creators.”

The more common portrayal of Muslims as terrorists is “extremely damaging to the public perception of Muslims and Islam because they wrongly suggest that there is an inherent licence to commit rampant murder and terrorism embedded in the faith itself,” added Sabir Pirzada, a Muslim screenwriter from San Jose.

Pirzada said he wishes that screenwriters would examine the true causes of such violent acts, such as “politics and mental health.”

Cultural advisers, while part of the creative process, have only so much control over outcomes.

That’s one reason MPAC organizes a yearly Hollywood summit — the next one is in July — where the organization introduces 15 emerging young Muslim leaders to the industry, by visiting studios and holding roundtables with TV executives. Past summits have resulted in internships and jobs, including at the 20th Century Fox studios.

“I think pop culture is more powerful than government policies,” said Obeidi. “Government can protect our civil rights as American citizens, but it won’t tell people how to feel. It won’t make people respect, like us or accept us. . . . A great movie can change hearts and minds.”

Porter is a longtime member of the L’Arche Daybreak community.

Why von Humboldt's vision is still relevant today

Readings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



I turn 64 on June 6 and it's made me think of the Beatles song *When I'm Sixty-Four* with its plaintive refrain, "will you still need me, will you still feed me." The 6th is also the deadline by when, following the Supreme Court decision legalizing "medical aid in dying" (the polite euphemism for doctor-assisted suicide or euthanasia), government legislation to that effect must be passed.

Rather than dwell on the morbid, I've found inspiration in

lutions. He was a harsh critic of colonial exploitation, slavery and the dispossession of indigenous peoples (all prevalent in the Spanish Americas) which he linked to environmental despoliation. As Wulf writes: "Humboldt was the first to relate colonialism to the devastation of the environment." Nature must be respected, not conquered. Following a further year in Mexico, Humboldt was able to share his ideas with President Thomas Jefferson, a fel-

travel to the Indian subcontinent, but it was never granted. He turned instead to the Russian empire and in 1829 was allowed to travel into Siberia. Ignoring orders to go no further than Tobolsk, his quest for wild places took him all the way to the Altai mountains in the far east bordering Mongolia and China where he could compare observations with those he had made in the Andes decades earlier.

In Wulf's words: "Russia was the final chapter in his understanding of nature . . . Humboldt wrote about the destruction of forests and humankind's long-term changes to the environment. When he listed three ways in which the human species was affecting the climate, he named deforestation, ruthless irrigation, and perhaps most prophetically, the "great masses of steam and gas" produced in industrial centres. No one but Humboldt had looked at the relationship between humankind and nature like this before."

For 12 years Humboldt laboured on his masterwork *Cosmos* before the first volume was published in 1845 propounding a holistic understanding of all creation in constant evolving interconnection and flux. A worldwide bestseller, it also made no mention of God. In Humboldt's universe nature was enough of a wonder in itself. A second volume, described as a "voyage of the mind," appeared in 1847. These made a profound impression on contemporaries, notably Darwin then working on *The Origin of Species*, and in America Henry David Thoreau. The revolutionary uprisings that swept across Europe in 1848 revived liberal political hopes but proved ephemeral. Instead over the next decade an aging Humboldt concentrated on producing further volumes of *Cosmos*.

The last chapters of Wulf's book show Humboldt's posthu-

low polymath and kindred spirit.

When Humboldt returned to Paris in 1804 he found it a congenial hothouse of scientific and intellectual inquiry despite Napoleon's increasingly autocratic rule and imperial ambitions. He threw himself into a frenzied dissemination of his findings. It was there he met Simon Bolivar, the future "liberator" of Hispanic America (who would also develop dictatorial tendencies once in power). Humboldt's books, *Views of Nature* and the seven-volume expedition account *Personal Narrative*, became best-sellers, and an inspiration for the young Charles Darwin to undertake his own voyage of discovery. Humboldt reluctantly moved to Berlin for several years but returned to Paris in 1807 where he would spend the next 15 years. His fame continued to grow throughout the era of Napoleonic conquests (including wars with Prussia) and ultimate defeat. His *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* was first published in several volumes in French between 1808 and 1811 at a time when the Spanish American colonies were in the throes of revolts and civil strife.

Humboldt was always firmly on the side of independence, freedom of thought, indigenous rights and the abolition of slavery. But as he became disillusioned by the unfortunate aftermath of revolutionary politics in France and elsewhere, he focused his energies on a wide range of scientific subjects. His public lectures on these were a phenomenal success. By middle age, however, he had used up most of his fortune and needed the income from a retainer to the Prussian King Wilhelm III who drew on his encyclopedic knowledge while ignoring his liberal views. Bowing to his royal benefactor, Humboldt returned to Berlin in 1827, although he chafed under the restrictions imposed by his service to the court.

Humboldt was always eager to embark on new explorations. He went to London, where his brother Wilhelm (the founder of Humboldt University) was a Prussian diplomat, seeking permission from the British East India Company to

something much more life-affirming. I was born in Humboldt, Sask., one of 13 towns in North America named after Baron Alexander von Humboldt (1769 - 1859). At age 65 he began work on his most influential multi-volume work *Cosmos*. (Maybe my best intellectual years are still ahead?) When he died nearing 90 he had just finished a fifth volume and was the most famous scientist and naturalist the world had ever known.

Andrea Wulf's *The Invention of Nature* is a work of prodigious research (110 pages of fine-print endnotes and bibliography) that restores the significance of Humboldt's vision to our understanding of the natural world. An intrepid explorer driven by scientific curiosity, he was also passionate about encouraging a "love of nature." Conceiving of nature as a complex dynamic web of life he "saw the earth as one great living organism in which everything is connected." Observing the consequences of deforestation in South America, he was the first scientist to document harmful human-induced effects on climate.

Humboldt was raised in a wealthy aristocratic Prussian family with his older brother Wilhelm. He was a restless brilliant loner (apart from a few intense male friendships), animated by a love of knowledge that fused scientific method with artistic imagination. Observing and classifying was insufficient to a holistic appreciation of the nature of things. A large inheritance enabled his scientific pursuits. In 1799 he was granted permission by the Spanish king to visit Spain's vast possessions in the Americas, leaving behind a Europe soon to be convulsed by the Napoleonic wars.

Accompanied by a young French scientist, Aimé Bonpland, Humboldt arrived first in Venezuela and would spend the next few years exploring the region's rainforests, river systems, and mountain ranges, often enduring extreme, even life-threatening conditions. Humboldt was a liberal idealist who had been inspired by the American and French revo-



Wikimedia Commons

A portrait of Alexander von Humboldt by Joseph Stieler, 1843.

lous influence on key figures in an emerging environmental movement. In America George Perkins Marsh published *Man and Nature* in 1864 decrying how through deforestation and industrialization humans were becoming agents of environmental destruction. The German zoologist Ernst Haeckel, a fervent Darwinian, developed the concept of "ecology" as part of a scientific and aesthetic exaltation of the natural world. Another American, the Scots-born John Muir, who travelled in Canada during the civil war years, found the divine in nature through his explorations of California's Sierra Nevada and Yosemite Valley. His numerous publications argued passionately for the protection of

wilderness, helping to inspire the creation of national parks. He co-founded the Sierra Club in 1892.

Although Humboldt faded from prominence in the 20th century (anti-German sentiment in the wake of world wars was also a factor), Wulf makes a compelling case that his legacy — his "interdisciplinary approach to science and nature," his great achievement in making "science accessible and popular" — is more relevant than ever. "His concept of nature as one of global patterns underpins our thinking."

As Nathaniel Rich writes in *The New York Review of Books*, "Wulf makes Humboldtians of us all," for which this Humboldt-born reader has found another reason to be grateful.

Books

Pope's book can engage radical conversation of the heart

THE NAME OF GOD IS MERCY by His Holiness Pope Francis and Andrea Tornielli, translated from Italian by Oonagh Stransky. New York: Random House, 2016. Hardcover, 151 pages, \$34 Cdn. Reviewed by Edwin Buettner

Anyone browsing books in a store or library will have observed that Pope Francis' pontificate continues to generate a good deal of ink. In a relatively short time, the pope has emerged as a world figure, not only as the formal head of the world's one billion Catholics, but also among the legion of spiritual seekers from other faith traditions and those not under the umbrella of organized religion. *The Name of God is Mercy* is of particular importance as an accompaniment to the papal Year of Mercy. It comprises a conversation between Pope Francis and a well-known Vatican Journalist, Andrea Tornielli, along with the text of the formal declaration (Bull of Indiction) of the "Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy." There is a remarkable similarity in the tone and content of both sections of this book, a rare convergence of a formal Vatican document and the more or less spontaneous reflections of a pope.

This book is exquisitely personal in tone, free flowing yet substantive. The pope's responses to his interlocutor's sometimes pointed questions reveal a disarming degree of honesty and even vulnerability that occasionally catches the interviewer off guard. For example, when Francis calls himself a sinner, Tornielli states that it is "striking to hear a pope say this." The pope then expresses his own surprise by responding with, "Really?" Francis goes on to describe how upon entering a prison he becomes mindful of how only God's grace and mercy have kept him from being incarcerated: "I deserve to be here. Their fall could have been mine."

It is inevitable that any serious discussions of mercy will lead to considerations of justice. Regardless of one's religious orientation, it cannot be denied that actions have consequences, natural and/or humanly imposed. Francis does not avoid the paradoxical relationship between justice and mercy and places it within the mysterious perspective of Divine love. "Justice should not be devalued or rendered superfluous . . . God does not deny justice." However, because of God's essential merciful nature, ". . . He (God) envelops it and surpasses (justice) with an event in which we experience love as the true foundation of justice." (Emphasis added.)

In saying, "sinners yes, corrupt no!" the pope captures a critical distinction that is foundational to his teaching. What Francis calls "corruption" is the delusion of absence of sin in one's life. In contrast, when people recognize the errors of their ways, they "(may) be great sinners and never fall into corruption." Mercy cannot be received unless one experiences a need for it. (Pope Francis makes the point that even praying for the desire to feel the need for mercy is an important step toward receiving the gift.) The mutuality between repentance and Divine mercy is not only personal; it is ". . . also important in social relationships and relations between countries."

The Name of God is Mercy has the potential to engage a radical conversion of the heart: to receive God's mercy, dispel fear, and enlarge its capacity for love.

Love of God found in being present to each other



Recently I received, on the same day, news articles from three different sources. One was about the 219 girls captured by Boko Haram, still missing. The second, about “way more” than 1,200 Aboriginal Canadian women missing or murdered. And the third, about 4,472 baby girls “unaccounted for” in Canada over the past 20 years, referring to female fetuses aborted in favour of male children.

In all three stories there’s an anguish, a silent massacre hidden just beneath the surface. What’s it about, the hurling of such aggression at girls and women in our day? It’s not random, but purposeful. Directing violence deliberately against women taps into a kind of negative “faith” that’s felt but not understood. It comes from an understanding of what “God” wants, be it a cultural or religious god, a god of conquest, control or negation.

Christian tradition wrestles with the problem of how it can be that God’s children seek to hurt and destroy each other. St. Irenaeus, in the second century, painstakingly demonstrated how the Old Testament repeatedly portrays evil coming among people, turning them against each other. Much closer to our day, Dorothy Day wrote of the moment she tasted the reality, not only of human suffering, but of how much suffering is inflicted by humans on other humans. “I could only feel darkness and desolation all around me,” she writes. “I would never be free again,” having felt “this wound, this ugly knowledge . . . of what

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(humans) were capable in their treatment of each other.”

The particular violence done to women isn’t only against women. It’s done to human nature — though in a way that can be done only to women. John Paul II wrote that the body makes visible the invisible; the body “transfers into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden from eternity in God.” Women make God visible in a way men don’t, and men make God visible in a way women don’t. Only together do man and woman become a visible manifestation of who God is: “a single human nature appearing in two types, man and woman,” says Paul Evdokimov. Man and woman are image of God, not as though they could be isolated from each other, but in communion with each other.

Sin breaks apart this unity of human nature. Created for one another, men and women turn against each other in a violence that often presents itself as good, positive, and compassionate. Any crisis that attacks woman or man attacks both, because what’s at stake is their common humanity. Man can’t be human by refusing to indwell in woman, and woman can’t be human if she refuses to indwell in man.

Our joy is found in each other, in being really present to the other. We’re created in the image of God, whose very nature is mutual indwelling. Christian tradition speaks of the dance of mutual love, the “perichoresis,” of the three Divine Persons of the Trinity: each is completely given to the other, and completely receives the other. We humans, in turn, come to life by sharing our lives.

In the Scriptures it’s particular to woman to bear life, to bear God’s Spirit. Mary is the first in creation who is perfectly able to



CNS/Afolabi Sotunde, Reuters

HUMAN VIOLENCE — A girl displaced as a result of Boko Haram’s attack in the northeast region of Nigeria rests her head on a desk at a camp for internally displaced people in this file photo. “Directing violence deliberately against women taps into a kind of negative ‘faith’ that’s felt but not understood,” writes Mary Marrocco.

bear the Spirit. She does so at the Annunciation, when God takes flesh. She does so at Pentecost, when the church is born.

So much that happens in this world depends on women and their ability to love. Life is born out of pain. Through pain, we learn what love is.

As deep as the pain, so deep is the healing. If evil attacks woman in a particular way as bearer of the Spirit, then Love descends to the “darkness and desolation” of that suffering. I’ve seen it in so many ways. In May I always help run a Project Rachel retreat. Here women who’ve suffered the pain of having abortions bring that pain before God, the church and others.

As one woman said to me: “You mean I might be able to let go of this anguish one day? It never occurred to me I wouldn’t have it every day for the rest of my life.” Where they held death, they’re invited to hold life. They don’t escape the pain of sin and suffering. But they discover within it a love more powerful than they could ask or imagine, full of mercy and forgiveness, surprising in its joy, in which no one is lost.

If we’re able to bear the Spirit of God, as his mother did, then we bear life as deeply. We needn’t run away from the depths of our inability to love each other. We can receive a life wrought of the love God bears for us. As a dear

friend — a beautiful woman of joy and life, and a cloistered Benedictine — once told me: “It’s never too late to learn to love a new way.”

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Classic stories invite us to contemplate relationship



Liturgy and Life

Deacon Bob Williston

Have you ever noticed that Luke loves to use two characters in the telling of the “Jesus story”? Simeon and Anna are temple dwellers who prophecy over the infant Jesus. Two brothers vie for a privileged place at his right and his left. There are two disciples on the road to Emmaus in the Acts of the Apostles, and Jesus sends the disciples out as witnesses, two by two.

On a deeper level, Luke uses this “principle of twos” to tell a story of contrasting characters. So we have Jesus telling the story of a father who had two sons, a younger, rebellious type and an older “duty-bound” resentful follower of the rules. It is noteworthy that the father in the prodigal son story goes out to both of them in an effort to bring them home.

There’s the story of the self-righteous Pharisee praying to God and the penitent tax collector beating his breast and asking for mercy; the heart of the Pharisee full of himself, and the heart of the tax collector full of remorse.

Even the friends of Jesus, Martha and Mary, have different responses to Jesus. We also have the contrasting thieves who are crucified beside Jesus; the first who mocks Jesus’ inability to save himself and them, and the repentant thief

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who simply asks Jesus to remember him when he comes into his kingdom.

This literary tool of contrasting characters is used in our Gospel today. We are introduced to Simon, the Pharisee, a publicly righteous man who has invited Jesus to his house to dine, not out of any desire for a relationship, but rather, out of a mild curiosity. He offers Jesus no common signs of hospitality, no foot-washing, no customary kiss, hardly even greets him at the door.

The second character is a woman who has been classed as a “public sinner.” She has had such a powerful experience of transformation from her encounter with Jesus that she is unafraid to enter this all-male gathering and boldly anoint Jesus with costly ointment, clean his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair.

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 12, 2016

2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13
Psalm 32
Galatians 2:16, 19-21
Luke 7:36 — 8:3

This act of repentance and “metanoia” (a turning around) is all the more moving when considered against the backdrop of the story of King David’s repentance for his sin in the first reading. With David there is no minimizing, rationalizing or otherwise discounting of the sin he has committed. He is a model of real repentance. So is this woman who is anointing Jesus.

While others judge her harshly for this extravagant act, Jesus defends her with words that are meant to shed meaning on the extravagance of Jesus’ own imminent sacrificial death. Just as the alabaster jar has been broken, and the precious ointment has been totally spent, so will the alabaster jar of his body be broken for all, and the precious ointment of Jesus’ blood be poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins.

In defence of her actions, Jesus contrasts her loving ways with the inhospitable actions of the Pharisee. Hers was a heart reborn of love, compassion and mercy, while

Simon looked down on her with judgment, harshness and a distrust of this so called “prophet” who let her touch and defile him.

This story has even greater weight because it is mentioned in all four Gospels and it precedes the Passion narrative.

In the same story in Mark and Matthew, Jesus says something about this woman that he does not say about any other person in the Gospels: that, “wherever the Gospel is proclaimed throughout the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.” This is like a key signature in a manuscript of music. If we miss this, we could miss a deeper understanding of the passion and death of Jesus. It recalls the phrase Jesus used at the Last Supper: Do this in memory of me. It signifies a eucharistic moment. When we give our hearts in loving service, we are sharing in the act of Jesus giving himself to the world. We are meant to spread that same kind of loving mercy to those around us.

As a missionary with the Redemptorists for 30 years, we almost always included this Scripture reference in our preaching, as we felt it to be an injunction of Jesus’ “wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

My wife, Joan, and I led a lenten parish mission entitled: “The eucharist: unfolding the mercy of God.” Two “linchpin” scriptures acted as bookends for this four-day event. We began the mission with the classical story of the prodigal son. We ended the closing night with today’s Gospel story of Jesus’ visit to Simon the Pharisee’s home.

In both of these stories, Luke invites us to contemplate our relationship to Jesus. What Jesus offers us is a friendship that is deep and abiding. Our whole life of faith is meant to centre around this fundamental relationship. What Luke offers us is contrasting responses to that invitation. I dare to add that, in those contrasts, we can find ourselves at times the Pharisee, but hopefully more often, the one at the feet of Jesus, loving boldly for the forgiveness and healing we have received!

God and God’s infinite creation go beyond our imagination

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



At an academic dinner I attended, I was sitting across the table from a nuclear scientist. At one point I asked him this question: Do

you believe there’s human life on other planets? His answer surprised me: “As a scientist, no, I don’t believe there’s human life on

another planet. Scientifically, the odds are strongly against it. But, as a Christian, I believe there’s human life on other planets. Why? My logic is this: *Why would God chose to have only one child?*”

Why would God choose to have only one child? Good logic. Why indeed would an infinite God, capable of creating and loving beyond all imagination, want to do this only once? Why would an infinite God, at a certain point, say: “That’s enough. That’s my limit. These are all the people I can handle and love! Anything beyond this is too much for me! Now is the time to stop creating and enjoy what I’ve done.”

Put this way, my scientist friend’s hunch makes a lot of sense. Given that God is infinite, why would God ever stop doing what God is doing? Why would God favour just us, who have already been given life, and not give that same gift endlessly to others? By what logic, other than the limits of our own mind, might we posit an end to creation?

We struggle with this because what God has already created, both in terms of the immensity of the universe and the number of people who have been born in history, is already too much for our imagination to grasp. There are billions and billions of planets,

with trillions of processes happening on each of these every second. Just on our planet, Earth, there are now more than seven billion people living, millions more have lived before us, and many more are being born every second. And inside of each of these persons there is a unique heart and mind caught up in an infinite and complex array of joys, heartaches and moral choices. Moreover, all of these trillions of human and cosmic processes have been going on for millions and billions of years.

How can we imagine a heart and a mind somewhere that knows and loves and cares intimately about every individual person, every individual joy, every individual heartache, every individual moral choice and every individual planet, star and grain of sand, as if it were an only child?

The answer is clear: It cannot be imagined! To try to imagine this is to end up either in atheism or nursing a false concept of God. Any God worth believing in has to be able to know and love beyond human imagination, otherwise the immensity of our universe and the uniqueness of our lives are not being held inside the loving care of anyone’s hand and heart.

But how can God know, love and care for all of this immensity and complexity? Moreover, how will all these billions and billions of people go to heaven, so that all of us end up in one body of love within which we will be in intimate community with each other? That’s beyond all imagination, at least in terms of human capacity, but my hunch is that heaven cannot be imagined not because it is too complex but because it is too

simple, namely, simple in the way scholastic philosophy affirms that God is simple: God so embodies and encompasses all complexity so as to constitute a reality too simple to be imagined.

It seems too that the origins of our universe are also too simple to be imagined: our universe, in so far as we know it, had a beginning and scientists believe (the Big Bang Theory) that everything originated from a single cell of energy too tiny to measure or imagine. This single cell exploded with a force and an energy that is still going on today, still expanding outward and creating billions and billions of planets in its wake. And scientists believe that all of this will come back together again, involute, sometime in a future which will take billions of more years to unfold.

So here’s my hunch: maybe the billions and billions of people, living and dead and still to be born, in both their origins and in their eventual destiny, parallel what has happened and is happening in the origin, expansion and eventual involution of our universe, that is, just as God is creating billions and billions of planets, God is creating billions and billions of people. And, just as our physical universe will one day come back together again into a single unity, so too will all people come together again in a single community within which God’s intimate love for each of us will bring us together and hold us together in a unity too simple to be imagined, except that now that union with God and each other will not be unconscious but will be known and felt in a very heightened self-conscious gratitude and ecstasy.

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Factory farms: false gods of profit and consumerism

By Charles Camosy
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Joking with vegetarians about how good meat tastes is old hat. We vegetarians have heard them all:
* “Animals have rights. The right to get in my belly.”
* Question: “How many vegetarians does it take to eat a bacon-cheeseburger?” Answer: “One, as long as no one’s looking.”
But here’s the latest:
“I’ve always thought the reason people are vegetarians is simply because they haven’t met

Camosy is associate professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University and author of “For Love of Animals: Christian Ethics, Consistent Action.”

the right pork loin yet.”
It comes from Angelo Stagnaro, a Secular Franciscan, in an article he wrote for the National Catholic Register. He would go on to say that his grandmother made a pork loin so delicious “it would drive a vegan animal rights activist to strangle a pig with his bare hands in the oft chance (she) would cook it for him.”
His joking about horrific cruelty to animals aside, it is interesting that Stagnaro uses the image of strangling a pig here, especially since he knows that in the biblical Book of Acts, Chapter 15, the Council of Jerusalem taught that Christians are to keep four prohibitions of the Jewish law — one of which is refraining from eating animals that had been strangled.
Another prohibition Stagnaro

mentions is refraining from eating animals that have been sacrificed to idols.
Today we hear this passage and simply say, “Well, nobody worships Jupiter anymore,” and move on. But it turns out that most of us are eating meat, which has been sacrificed to idols: the twin false gods of profit and consumerism.
The cruel suffering and death inflicted on 50 billion animals in factory farms every year is necessary to drive the prices down low enough so that (1) we can get our tasty meat at the kind of price which allows us to eat it regularly, and (2) corporations can make a huge profit.
The abject cruelty to which animals are subjected in factory farms is available to anyone with an Internet connection, but some may be

unaware of just how much biotechnology has taken over the industry. In their quest to maximize “protein units per square foot,” factory farms now breed turkeys with breasts so large that it is physically impossible for them to mate. (The unfortunate workers who procure the semen from male turkeys for artificial insemination of the females were featured on the *Dirty Jobs* show.)
In addition, factory farms have managed to genetically alter chickens so that they never feel full, prompting them to eat as much as they can as quickly as they can. With today’s technology, maximizing protein units per square foot not only requires packing chickens into ridiculously tight quarters, but also refusing them even the modest relief of a full stomach.

But why are factory farms treating animals this way? It isn’t because they enjoy being cruel to animals. No, the blame lies with us. We consumers demand that they behave this way when we buy our meat purely for price, not caring at all for what was necessary for that meat to get on our plate. Like Stagnaro, we simply want meat that tastes good and that we can afford to have on a regular basis. We have power, and the animals don’t. Sucks to be them.
Christians, of course, are called to a higher moral standard. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, for instance, uses the language of justice in teaching that we “owe animals kindness.” It also teaches against causing animals to suffer or die needlessly.
While we might like its taste, very few of us need to eat meat. Even fewer need to eat it at the prices offered by factory farms.
This teaching is on strong bibli-

cal ground. God creates the animals for “good” in Genesis, without reference to human beings, and brings them to Adam — not to eat — but because “it is not good for the man to be alone” (Gn 2:18).
Eden is a non-violent kingdom in which all animals (human and non-human) live in vegetarian peace. With sin came death and violence, of course, but the kingdom of God prophesied by Isaiah — and to which we are to bear witness — is one where lions lie down with lambs and babies play with snakes.
No wonder Pope Francis teaches in his latest encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, that the Virgin Mary “grieves for the sufferings” of “the creatures of this world laid waste by human power.”
Given the interconnectedness of evil practices, we should not be surprised that factory farms are terrible in ways that go beyond how they treat non-human animals. They exploit workers, create drug-resistant “superbugs” and are among the most serious contributors to climate change. They’ve also driven small, local farms out of business, putting the power of how our meat gets to our plate in the hands of a tiny few corporations — corporations legally obligated to maximize profits.
Ah yes, profit — the golden idol to which North Americans are disproportionately quick to pay homage. Along with consumerism, these are the twin false gods to which 50 billion non-human animals are sacrificed in factory farms every year.
It doesn’t matter how good their flesh tastes. Christians have a moral duty to refuse to eat factory-farmed animals. They have been sacrificed to idols.



Design Pics

FREE-RANGE OR FACTORY FARM — It doesn’t matter how good their flesh tastes, or how cheaply it can be bought — Christians have a moral duty to refuse to eat factory-farmed animals, writes Charles Camosy. “They have been sacrificed to idols.”

Laudato Si’ and green energy

By Austin Mardon and Brett Fawcett

As exciting as the proposals of the pope’s “green encyclical,” *Laudato Si’*, have been, many commentators have missed one of the essential points of his vision. *Laudato Si’* calls for an “ecological conversion,” a change in our entire mentality in the way we run our society — an alternative to what he often calls “the throwaway culture.” Instead, he advocates a society of *investment* — not the impersonal financial investment of the stock market, but personal, meaningful ownership, which enables human persons to feel a genuine sense of responsibility and belonging in the world God created.
Thus, in one fascinating section, the pope quotes the bishops of Paraguay as saying that everyone has “a natural right to possess

Mardon is an Order of Canada-winning scientist and community organizer. He has published several books and articles on faith, mental health advocacy, meteoritic research, and his dog. Fawcett is a master’s student at Newman Theological College.

a reasonable allotment of land where he can establish his home, work for subsistence of his family and a secure life.” What is interesting about this passage is that it sounds very similar to the slogan of the Catholic Distributists at the turn of the previous century who held that every person should own “four acres and a cow.” The idea was that, as God’s image-bearers, human beings had the right to control their own subsistence rather than be subject to the whims of the great impersonal forces of the technocratic state.
In the developing world, an obvious example of this principle would be something like seed sovereignty, the question of the farmers’ right to seeds and arable land (rather than being dependent upon corporate ownership of these natural elements). But there is an intriguing Distributist possibility a bit closer to home.
In 2007, the California Public Utilities Commission made it their goal that, by 2020, all homes in California will be zero net energy. This involves, for example, installing solar panels in new residential construction, arranging for electricity to be used and stored in off-peak hours, and so forth.

At a glance, this is already a desirable goal simply because of its ecological consequences, but its advantages go further than that. It also means that homeowners have more control over energy and are not simply dependent on the energy companies. Indeed, the energy companies have already felt the financial strain from these measures, and in fact homeowners could potentially receive credit (and remuneration?) for *sending* energy to the grid when necessary. (The advocates of Zero Net Energy stress that it does not mean “going off the grid,” which also has a certain Catholic flavour of solidarity to it.)
This is the great unnoticed benefit of such a project: it gives the homeowner more control over her own life, and makes her more of an active and invested participant in the project of making her community and her world a greener and healthier place. Obviously, there are still a lot of problems to iron out, such as the problem of those who don’t own property or assets. Nevertheless, a move like this could be an excellent step toward realizing the Distributist goals that *Laudato Si’* calls for: a just distribution of power, in more ways than one.



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Which point of view will prevail in lively debate?

By Michael Jackson

Could women be ordained deacons in the Roman Catholic Church? The month of May 2016 saw a lively discussion of the question in the media, both religious and secular. *The Globe and Mail* led off on May 6 with an article, "The case for female deacons," by Phyllis Zagano, a Roman Catholic theologian at Hofstra University in New York. She gave a lecture on the topic the same day at a conference entitled "Women, the Diaconate and the Future of Ministry" at St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto.

The May 11 *Prairie Messenger* carried two articles, one by Phyllis Zagano, making the case for female deacons despite recurrent opposition to the idea, and the other about Dr. Zagano and her lecture at St. Michael's College. A week later, the May 18 PM again featured Phyllis Zagano in a story, "Pray for the future of female diaconate: theologian." The headline of another story in the same issue was: "Pope tells women religious Vatican will study women deacons."



Michael Jackson, an Anglican deacon, says for the sake of ministry in the Roman Catholic Church, and the diaconate in general, his hope is that a future surprise of Pope Francis will be the ordination of women to the diaconate.

On May 13, The Associated Press had reported that Pope Francis said he was willing to "create a commission to study whether women can be deacons in the Catholic Church." But the next day, a Vatican spokesperson tried to dampen down speculation: the pope, he asserted, "didn't say he had any intention of introducing diaconal ordination for women, much less priestly ordination for women."

What are we to make of all this?

Phyllis Zagano makes a convincing case for the female dia-

Jackson is an Anglican deacon and a canon of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle. He serves at St. Paul's Cathedral in Regina. He is co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant Implementation Committee of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle and the Archdiocese of Regina (ARCCIC). Jackson's online study of the diaconate can be accessed at www.quappelle.anglican.ca-ministry-diaconate.

conate in the Roman Catholic Church, citing both the timeliness and desirability of this ministry of service, and the historical record that there were women deacons in the early church. Most students of the diaconate — Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican — concur with Zagano that women were ordained deacons between the first and ninth centuries and even beyond, especially in the East. True, they were sometimes called deaconesses rather than deacons, and their ministry was at first different from that of their male counterparts — for example, they were responsible for baptism of women. Yet Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople stated in 1995 that "there is no canonical difficulty in ordaining women as deacons in the Orthodox Church." Two years later, at a consultation of Orthodox women at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, Bartholomew spoke of the "call for the full restoration of the order of the deaconesses."

The opposition to ordaining women as deacons is vigorous in some quarters, especially at the Vatican. This is not surprising. There is a fear that if women were ordained as deacons, there would be an expectation that they could then be ordained priests. And successive popes have categorically declared that women cannot be ordained priests (much less bishops). On the other hand, evidently aware of the scholarship on the issue, the Vatican has never stated that women *cannot* become deacons — only that they *will* not.

Part of the problem is the continued existence of the "transitional" diaconate, the stepping-stone to the priesthood that has existed for over a thousand years. But the diaconate was originally a "full and equal order" in the church, in the words of U.S. Episcopal scholar James Barnett; people were ordained directly to the presbyterate without passing through a *pro forma* period as a deacon. Like many others in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions, I argue that the church should abolish the transitional diaconate and return to that ancient practice. It would affirm the integrity of the diaconate as a "full and equal order" and attenuate the apprehension in the Roman Catholic (and Orthodox) Church that the female diaconate would be a stalking horse for women priests. In any case, as Phyllis Zagano points out, since her church has ruled out women priests, that actually strengthens the case for women deacons.

In 1964, *Lumen Gentium*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI, approved the restoration of the diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church as a permanent vocation, open to married men. The *motu proprio* of Paul VI in 1967, *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, effectively revived the diaconate in the Latin West after a slumber of a millennium. American Roman Catholic theologian Kenan B. Osborne argues that, "if the permanent male diaconate can be re-established after 1,100 years of inactivity, then in a similar way there can be a re-establishing of the ministry of deaconesses after a similar length of inactivity."



Wikimedia Commons

WOMEN IN THE EARLY CHURCH — "Most students of the diaconate — Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican — concur with (Phyllis) Zagano that women were ordained deacons between the first and ninth centuries and even beyond, especially in the East," writes Michael Jackson. (Procession of the Holy Virgins and Martyrs. Mosaic, Ravenna, 7th century.)

What are the chances of this happening?

According to the May 18 PM story, Pope Francis told the heads of women's religious orders from around the world that he would establish a commission to study "the New Testament deaconesses" and "the question of whether women could be admitted to the diaconate." His understanding was that "the women described as deaconesses in the Bible were not ordained like permanent deacons." However, he would ask the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith "to tell me if there are studies on this."

It is moot that there were deaconesses in the New Testament period or even deacons, as the office was later understood. American Roman Catholic deacon and author William Ditewig notes that the "Seven" chosen by the apostles for a ministry of service in Acts 6 were not associated with deacons until Irenaeus did so in the late second century. However, by the time of I Timothy, likely in the mid-second century, orders of ministry were taking form, including the diaconate and the episcopate. That "emerging diaconate" (the title of Deacon Ditewig's 2007 book) apparently included women: "whatever particular ministries the deacons are exercising at Ephesus do not appear to be gender-specific."

According to Phyllis Zagano's research, Pope Paul VI, after his restoration of the permanent (male) diaconate, asked for a study of the possibility of admitting women to the order. The result was an article by Benedictine Father Cipriano Vagaggini in 1974, "The Deaconess in the Byzantine Tradition," apparently written for — and later suppressed by — the International Theological Commission, of which he was a member.

"In that article," Vagaggini said in 1987, "I maintained, and still maintain today, that the competent authority of the church, if it judges it appropriate, can admit women to the sacrament of order in the diaconate." In 1987, Vagaggini was asked to make an intervention

before the synod of bishops on the laity in the area of women in the church: this took the form of a much longer essay, "The Ordination of Deaconesses in the Greek and Byzantine Tradition," which concluded that "... theologically, in virtue of the use of the Byzantine Church, it appears that women can receive diaconal ordination." As was the case with his 1974 article, Vagaggini's 1987 study was not acted upon by the Vatican.

In the 1970s, French scholar Roger Gryson had also concluded that women were ordained as deacons in the early church. Ten years later, however, historian Aimé-Georges Martimort argued the contrary view. Then, in a 2002 book, *Priesthood and Diaconate*, German theologian and bishop Gerhard Müller maintained that deaconesses held appointed offices like sub-deacons and lectors and were not sacramentally ordained.

The International Theological

Commission took up the work on female deacons again in the 1990s, but its brief paper on the subject in 1997 was not signed by then Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the commission, and was not published. Another much longer study by the commission in 2002 drew heavily on the work of Martimort and Müller. While it did not completely rule it out, it firmly discouraged the notion of women in the diaconate.

Which point of view will now prevail — that of Gryson, Vagaggini and Zagano, or that of Martimort and Müller? Cardinal Müller is now prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to which the pope is referring the question. So the signs are not encouraging. But Pope Francis has shown himself to be full of surprises. For the sake of ministry in the Roman Catholic Church, and the diaconate in general, my hope is that a future surprise will be the ordination of women to the diaconate.

Dialogue involves asking questions and telling stories

Continued from page 6

touch with Christ as he was with his father. At important moments, Jesus spent time in prayer. He prayed to his father before choosing his disciples, before difficult tasks and especially in the garden on the night of his passion.

Effective dialogue involves asking questions and telling stories. Asking a question invites the listener to reflect on his or her response, allowing the conversation to go beyond, "Yes I do; no you don't."

Gray used many examples of Jesus telling a story and then asking a question. When in Luke 10:29 the young man asks Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Jesus tells him the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Gray recounted many of her own experiences with young people. Often the conversation turns to human rights; the right of the

unborn fetus or baby against the right of the woman. Then it shifts to who is more fragile, more needy, as in the case of the paramedic called to rescue a woman and her child clinging to life on the roof of a submerging car. Who does he take first? Well, of course, the baby. Why? It is more helpless. Then, is not the fetus much more helpless?

In sharing examples and the learning she has gained, Gray left the audience energized and inspired. She explained each person is called to fidelity to the one who never fails to go to the marketplace and to continually remember the culture of dialogue. The soul of the apostolate is the heart of ministry. We need to be reservoirs, not channels.

Due to a grant received, each attendee received a copy of Gray's book, *Love Unleashes Life: Abortion and the Art of Communicating Truth*.

Storytelling is the quintessential human activity

Big Picture, Small Steps

Ryan LeBlanc



What I love about teaching is pointing students toward new knowledge and experience. As a teacher I am not supposed to be the centre of attention. Yet I stood before my students the other week and asked them to pay attention to me talk about myself.

Here's the context: Grade 12 students study the meaning of hope and suffering. In our class we followed the journey of Ed Dobson, a Christian pastor diagnosed with ALS. He was brutally honest about the despair and anger he experienced, as well as the hard work he needed to do to accept hope in his situation. In response, I asked students a number of personal questions inviting them to reflect on instances when they experienced hope in the midst of suffering that they could connect with Ed's.

We did not share in class because I could not make a safe enough space for my students to express to each other what I was asking them to call to mind. As a teacher on the front line of widespread social problems, I know some of the burdens they carry and marvel at them. A general, open discussion in class would not honour the depth of their stories.

So I told mine.

I intentionally shared some of

the most vulnerable moments from my life, seeking to provide a living human being that my students could connect to their lives and Ed's life. The great lie of suffering is that we are alone. The best I could offer was the assurance that in spite of my professional (mostly) appearance, I too had suffered.

Some of my stories told of the hope I had finally seen fulfilled; some told of hope veiled.

I knew my students could have reacted in any way to my stories: indifference, cynicism, ridicule. I didn't think they would, and they didn't. But they could have. I offered anyway.

In fact, the story, our stories, my story, became an important and revered location for each of us to make meaning of our lives that really matters. Because storytelling is the quintessential human activity, it became the place where we experienced human connection.

Sometimes I get nervous about opening the classroom to students' lives. Besides the work involved in creating and maintaining a safe space for students to volunteer their stories, I fear the temptation to share superficially.

Or, I fear we will become so drawn into personal experience that I fail to provide students with the "big picture," the ever-unfolding dramatic history of salvation, experienced in the specific human lives of today and always. We can get so locked up in our first-person point of view, we can forget the Author of our existence has revealed the origin, destination



Design Pics

TELLING STORIES — We have always told stories, writes Ryan LeBlanc. “From cave paintings to Grimm’s Fairy Tales to last weekend’s exploits to the data of the scientific method, we seek the meaning of our progression through events.”

and meaning of each of our lives.

From the very beginning we have told stories to each other — the genesis of liturgy and Sacred Scripture — of seeking and finding that continuing action of he who made all that is. We cannot find him any other way than in a progression of events that has its own integral meaning — through a story.

So, we have always told stories. From cave paintings to Grimm’s Fairy Tales to last weekend’s exploits to the data of the scientific method, we seek the meaning of our progression through events. Where religious education provides its irreplaceable value is in its capacity to weave the individual and social stories of today within a loom that holds an eternal tapestry.

I finished my story for the day. My students paused and absorbed it. Within them, they had the opportunity to find where their stories of suffering and of hope brought them belonging, and not isolation. They had the space to look at and care for

their own stories. Ed’s and my faith, broken and limping as it is, shows them trust and gratitude is possible for them, for all.

As the young mother with incurable cancer in Oregon who chooses to live puts it, “A story’s end changes the meaning of every page.”

Oh, right. I never *was* at the centre of attention.

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In memory of one who served with faith, compassion

Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



My mother-in-law, Anne Fitzgerald, passed away April 27. It was unexpected, insofar as death can ever be unexpected at the age of 91. She had been urging the doctors and nurses to admit her to palliative care, but they assured her she wasn't ready for that yet. Considering the shape she was in, they figured she still had a few good years left.

She had been hospitalized because she was suffering from consumptive heart failure, which is characterized by shortness of breath and general weakness from exertion owing to the inability of the heart to increase its output. The main treatment, from what I could understand, is the draining of liquid from the lungs, and this was proceeding without incident.

One evening they took her out of her room for some routine tests. When she came back she seemed no different. Then she was gone. It was quick and quiet, the way she would have wanted it. One moment she was there, the next she wasn't. It was a blessing, for she had lived independently all her life and dreaded the idea of being placed in a nursing home.

My daughter Brigid was with her at the time, and Colleen and I soon joined her. Our other daughter, Caitlin, was called out of her evening Spanish class and was there within 20 minutes. Other relatives were either there already or

came when they heard. Altogether there were 10 of us keeping vigil in the private hospital room where they had moved her: four daughters, two granddaughters, a nephew and his wife and daughter, and me. Tears were shed.

"Who's going to keep everything together now?" asked Brigid. "Grandma always kept everything together."

Indeed, she had taken a major hand in bring up practically every person in that room, and dozens more besides. Anne was the go-to person for anyone with questions and troubles, and whether she had an answer or not, she always brought comfort. She defined the notion of social justice — in her attitude, in her convictions, and in her work.

She was a political activist, supporting first for the CCF and then the NDP, working tirelessly for Father Bob Ogle, her cousin, when he decided to enter Parliament, against his family's wishes, in 1979, when he unseated Liberal Cabinet Minister Otto Lang, and again in 1980 after the Clark government fell. She ran his constituency office until Bob's sister, Mary Lou, could free herself to take on the task — and it was, in the words of one observer, "the best-run constituency office in Canada."

She was a social activist, working for the poor, the handicapped, and the disadvantaged. In her

middle years she converted her house into a group home for mentally challenged women. She raised her son John, who has Down syndrome, and her daughter Angela, who was severely handicapped with hydrocephalus, and neither suffered from lack of attention.

In the meantime she worked full- and part-time jobs to make ends meet. She worked as a cleaner at the church. She babysat my children, and others'. She worked as a server at the Bessborough Hotel, and when management refused to pay her taxi fare home after a late shift she organized the

other servers into a sort of union who all got cab rides home on the nights they worked late.

Anne cared for her children and her children's children. She was a founding member of Light of the Prairies, a community based on the L'Arche model, whose mission is to provide individualized residential aid for people with varying degrees of cognitive abilities. Her son John lives there now. Anne was also involved with founding the L'Arche communities that were eventually established in Saskatoon.

She worked for the church until the end of her life, and when the

time came it was her old friend and longtime parish priest Msgr. Raymond Senger who laid her to rest. The prayers, the funeral, the interment — I remember little of these, as my memory tends to block out intense experiences. I remember my daughter read a beautiful eulogy, and I remember that everything was as Anne would have wanted it: simple, straightforward, glorifying God rather than God's servants on earth.

I came away from it with a feeling that my mother-in-law's life was worthy of imitation, and that I was a better person for having known her.



C. Moore

A PARISH BLOOMS — Carmen Moore's parish calls the community to "be humble, live in mercy, and experience joy." The parish bulletin board is a representation of the faith lived out in community.

Parishioners urged to be humble, live in mercy and experience joy

By Carmen Moore

Our parish pastoral council has introduced this threefold theme for the year for our entire parish here at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Grande Prairie, Alta. The homilists often use it as a framework for their homily or for any church activity or concern we may be having. It is an effective and inclusive way to give a holy structure to the year's work and growth both within the church as well as in our own lives. In the month of May just past, when we honour and recognize our holy Mother Mary, I have been contemplating how this parish theme relates to me as a parishioner living out my vocation as a busy wife and mother.

The first directive is to "be humble." We may find this virtue one of the "easier" ones to embrace as a parent. Scripture tells us, "Do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you" (Rom 11:18) and in Luke 14:11, "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Motherhood

seems to bring many chances for humility. I feel naturally inclined to have life be less about my own promotion and have more of an unselfish approach to ensuring my family has their own needs met. It is difficult to be arrogant when you do not have the time or attention to your appearance you may have once had, time or money to buy designer clothes or possibly even to shower. I cannot recall the last time I felt "exalted" on my own accord and I see Christ as the one to do that for me now if I allow him to do so through the building up from friends, colleagues or others.

The second directive is to "live in mercy." We read much about mercy lately as Pope Francis has declared this the year of mercy and many articles and discussions have been the result. These discussions often seem lofty and international and yet I know there are many concrete opportunities to experience mercy in my daily life.

How often do we find ourselves being aggravated by the little things our spouse or children may say or do when we are exhausted, distracted or late? This papal focus on mercy, as well as our parish focus on mercy, has inspired me to be more patient, loving and listen more intently to both my child and my spouse. Most surprisingly, I feel

the Holy Spirit calling me to have more mercy on myself. Parents, especially moms, can often be overcome by guilt at not bringing "Pinterest" pages to life, having the biggest or best vacations to experience and put on Facebook, or not making every waking moment productive and in service to others. Jesus is calling me to be gentle to my own self, have mercy on me, in a beautiful way, born out of the fact that I too, am his child.

The third directive is to "experience joy." This has been another surprise for me as I assumed I was living joyfully, as this is my usual temperament. I began to see it as more than just being happy for a good portion of the day, or even the absence of irritation. Psalm 118:24 tells us, "This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." As a mother, I get incredible joy out of seeing my child learn something new, making me laugh, being able to thoroughly enjoy a day out as a family, and to feel a part of a unit that Christ has made. We can see each day as a gift from God, a day that God has made for us, and we can be glad in that.

There are things that call for our attention, but experiencing joy on a regular basis may need to be more of a focus than we are currently allowing ourselves to have.

When I am joyful, I find my entire family to be more joyful. It helps to set the tone for all of us. My joy is a gift I can give to my entire family and friends if I allow God to foster that within me.

I am grateful for the call of our parish community to "be humble, live in mercy, and experience joy." There is a bulletin board up in the

church where parishioners can fill out ways or times in their lives when they felt any of these three virtues. This is a beautiful representation of the faith lived out in our communities and the way church is carried forward into our community and world. I look forward to seeing it "bloom" not only for me but for others as well.

God's love heals our love of selfishness

Continued from page 5

or view pornography, but can still fail to be sensitive and loving toward his wife. "I would say that's a violation or failing to love properly."

Likewise, unreasonably abstaining from sex or being unreasonably demanding about it can also be failures to love properly, he says.

Love is what it all boils down to. Jesus, he says, relates all morality to the command to love — to love God and love one's neighbour as oneself; to love as Jesus loved. "That's the most positive way we can live."

Likewise, God loves us and that love does not destroy what is

natural. Rather, it can heal, elevate and ennoble human goods such as friendship and sexuality. "God's love heals our love of selfishness and disordered attachments that get in the way of our happiness."

As well as his undergraduate university students, Flaman has taught variations of his course to seminarians, those preparing for the permanent diaconate and in parishes. Each audience comes with its own set of questions. In the fall, he will offer a course at Newman Theological College, which he expects will be comprised of mostly seminarians.

Sex, Love and Marriage is published by Justin Press of Ottawa and can be ordered through local bookstores.

Moore is a freelance writer from Grande Prairie, Alta.

Killer robots being designed

A rare weapon used by Adolph Hitler in the Second World War was recently bought on eBay for \$18.

Bletchley Park historians in England recovered a Lorenz teleprinter from a home in Southend, Essex, where it had been lying forgotten on the floor of a shed. They realized it was part of the system Hitler used to exchange top secret messages with his high command.

While the Enigma system was used by the German war machine to exchange coded messages with frontline units, the more complicated and cumbersome Lorenz coding system was used to deliver detailed messages exclusively to the eyes of the commanders at static headquarters.

War has become a lot more complicated and complex in our modern world. Daily reports on the devastation created by the war machines of today bring that reality right into our own living rooms.

An even greater danger facing the world today are Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). Also called killer robots, they have been getting a lot of attention recently. LAWS have been called the third revolution in warfare.

Project Ploughshares, a research and education arm of the Canadian Council of Churches on issues of peace and public security, noted in a May 16 press release that last November UN member countries agreed to hold meetings on lethal autonomous weapons at the UN Convention on Conventional Weapons held in Geneva April 11 - 15.

Project Ploughshares summarized some of the ethical concerns this emerging technology creates:

- Does allowing life-or-death decisions to be made by machines cross a fundamental moral line? These machines will lack the human judgment necessary to understand the context and the ethical choices that must be made when deploying these weapons.

- Who will be held accountable for setting the decision-making parameters of these robots?

- How will the protocols put in place by the manufacturers affect the level of human control over the robots?

Computers still have major shortcomings, despite the speed at which they operate. IBM's super-computer Watson can process a million books' worth of information in one second, but in February, 2011, it told millions of viewers of the game show Jeopardy that Toronto is in the United States.

It took several days for IBM's computer engineers to find the problem in the machine. The mistake came just months after a computer glitch caused a "flash crash" on Wall Street, wiping out billions of dollars in equity.

Advocates of LAWS argue that robot weapons promise many of the same benefits as unmanned, human-controlled systems now in use — including limiting risks to military personnel, driving down costs, allowing penetration of enemy lines with little risk, and circumventing human shortcomings with faster response times and no fatigue or boredom. Robots don't get scared. They don't get mad. They don't respond to a situation with rage.

These autonomous weapons systems are currently not in use, but no doubt their advocates will push hard. UN officials are advocating world leaders adopt a treaty to ban the weapons. Alex Neve, secretary general of Amnesty International Canada, said lethal weapons without human control — whether they're used for policing or military purposes — would violate international humanitarian law.

The devastation wrought by killer robots is easily portrayed on digital screens. It would be a major catastrophe if this becomes feasible in reality. — PWN

Changing face of Canada's farm industry recorded in new census

By **Alfons Weersink,**
Guelph, Ont., Troy Media

Mapping the evolution of Canada's farm industry is not as simple as just examining the numbers.

Every five years, Canada's federal government asks us to provide details on who lives in our household. The demographic information is used to guide decisions ranging from school planning to transportation infrastructure to government transfers. Among the census questions is one that asks if you intend to sell agricultural produce. This may strike you as unimportant because 98 per cent of you will answer No. However, it allows Statistics Canada to determine if you are a farmer. If you answer Yes, you are directed to complete the Census of Agriculture on your farm operation.

The information gathered helps to characterize Canada's contemporary agricultural sector, including the total number of farmers and farms.

And a look beyond the basic numbers reveals a sector that is increasingly diverse.

The definition of a farmer and a farm is based on the potential ability and desire to sell agricultural products. It does not include a minimum sales criterion. Before 1991, such a threshold had to be met. And it still does in the United States, where a census farm is any operation that normally generates at least \$1,000 of agricultural produce. In Canada, however, farmers and the farms they operate are self-identified with potentially minimal sales.

The all-encompassing definition of a farm permits a measurement of total agricultural production. Someone who self-identifies as a farmer will be asked to detail the inputs used (i.e. time spent on farm work and area of land cropped) and the outputs pro-

duced (i.e. inventory of crops and livestock). Thus, total production of a commodity such as potatoes includes the volume sold by large full-time operators to major processors and those sold by individuals to friends and family.

Determining aggregate measures such as total production or farmland area requires measuring all potential farmers and farms. However, there are cautions with using such a broad definition of a farm for other purposes.

The 2016 census will likely reveal a continuation of a trend noted over the last 50 years: a decline of about 10 per cent in the number of farm operators and farms over the last five years between censuses. Assuming the trend continues, there are fewer than 200,000 farms in Canada and approximately 275,000 farmers running these farms.

Another trend likely to continue will be the growth in the number of commercial farms with sales greater than \$250,000. In addition to its share of the total number of farms, the absolute number will have increased to approximately 50,000. Hence, the decline in the number of farms and farmers will largely be associated with demise of small commercial operations and not those with sales greater than \$250,000.

The increase in the number of large commercial farms and the number of small part-time farmers reflects a growing diversity in the farm sector. Two generations ago, the countryside was fairly homogenous with single full-time farmers operating farms that supported single families. Now, many farmers can be involved in a single farm, and a single farmer can run several farms. At the same time, approximately

half of the farmers have full-time work off the farm.

The all-encompassing definition of a farmer requires us to be cautious when interpreting the total numbers and averages asso-

ciated with those numbers. Totals will likely be lower than the last census but the number of farmers with meaningful agricultural production, and to which farm policy is targeted, are likely to grow.

Given the large and likely growing number of very small farm operators, average performance measures will be distorted if we use the aggregate numbers to assess the health of the sector.

Inmate deaths after release above average

By **Fiona Kouyoumdjian**
and **Stephen Hwang**
Hamilton and Toronto

The tragic stories of Ashley Smith, Edward Snowshoe and other inmates who have died in Canadian correctional facilities have rightly made headlines. Less well-known are the premature deaths of hundreds of Canadians every year from preventable causes *after* they are released from jails and prisons.

Canadians might be surprised to learn that many health and social services widely available in the community are not available in most Canadian correctional fa-

cilities. We are missing a critical opportunity to reframe incarceration as a time to help people improve their health and well-being before returning to our communities.

We recently published a study in the Canadian Medical Association Journal Open that looked at the rates and causes of death for people who had been incarcerated. When we examined instances of death in almost 50,000 former Ontario provincial inmates over a 12-year period, we found a shocking discrepancy in life expectancy.

Compared to the general population, the average life expectancy of people who had experienced

incarceration was four years shorter for men (73.4 years of age compared to 77.6 years) and 10 years shorter for women (72.3 from 82.9 years).

The likelihood of dying while in custody was two times what we would expect for people of the same age in the general population. But even after people returned to their communities, the chances of dying was four times what we would expect for the general population.

We can't clearly distinguish the specific impact that incarceration has on life expectancy. But we

— **HIGHER RISK, page 19**



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE'S MONTHLY ACT OF CHARITY — Pope Francis visits with the "Chicco" community, part of the L'Arche movement, in Ciampino, Italy, May 13. The visit was one of the pope's monthly acts of charity during the Holy Year of Mercy. The pope spent the afternoon with 18 people who have developmental disabilities.

Weersink is a faculty member in the Department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (FARE) at the University of Guelph. www.troymedia.com

Parishes exploit funerals as a commercial opportunity

The Editor: A recent review of my will forced me to consider some post-death questions. I have taken up these questions with my local parish council, pastor and even my local bishop, and the responses I have received have been most disheartening.

What is the true nature of my relationship to the Catholic Church community? Consider this: later today I will walk into my parish church to celebrate eucharist and I will be greeted at the door and welcomed. However, if I die and my friends try to carry my body through those same doors my

friends will have to pay a substantial fee to do so. Funeral Homes, following Catholic Diocesan and Parish Directives, automatically add a "use of church" fee to the total funeral services bill.

In the same league as "charging" to administer sacraments, especially baptisms and weddings and funeral masses, this is a version of "pay for pray." Officials argue that there are indirect costs involved with the celebration of such rites and the parents or wedding party should be happy to pay such costs, and in terms of funeral costs that is the

least charge applied.

No matter how it is rationalized, it is requiring or expecting pay to perform or preside at sacred rites for living or deceased members of my community. When a funeral mass is compared to other funeral services provided by a funeral home which deserve to be paid for, this brands my death and a community funeral as a commercial opportunity for the parish.

The revisions to my will will seek to avoid the opportunity of my parish to commercially exploit my death. — **Gerald Regnitter, Christopher Lake, Sask.**

CWL urge accountability from Canadian mining companies

The Editor: In the May 18 Prairie Messenger I read Deborah Gyapong's article on D&P calling attention to mining justice.

At the CWL annual convention held in Montreal in 2007, which I was chairing as national president, one of our resolutions was titled "Global accountability for Canadian registered mining companies." In it the CWL "urged the federal government to withdraw all support from Canadian registered mining companies that do not respect international environmental standards and human rights, and also to develop legal mechanisms that ensure that Canadian registered mining companies are held accountable (for their actions in foreign countries) to uphold the same environmental and human rights standards required in Canada."

When our CWL took this reso-

lution to the federal government that fall, we were assured by several senior policy advisers at the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that our Canadian mining companies did indeed respect international environmental standards and human rights wherever in the world they functioned and, indeed, that foreign countries were

grateful for and pleased with their presence.

It seems that our research nine years ago did not find this was so, and that D&P and *Caritas Internationalis* partners are as concerned today as we were then. It is to be fervently hoped that they are successful in setting things right now. — **Lorette Noble, Candiac, Que.**

Oil companies also receiving federal aid

The Editor: You cannot imagine how surprised I was when reading the article of Gwyn Morgan on "Stop throwing money at companies" in the May 18 Prairie Messenger.

It is not the throwing that amazed me but the names of the companies he mentions. Not one oil company. Was Gwyn a director of oil companies? Or was he going to write another article on billions

we've thrown at oil companies?

So, why does he look at the *speck* and paid no attention to the *log* given to the oil companies? How about the billions thrown at the oil companies between the years of 1961 to 2013?

Please give us another great surprise at our throwing money? — **Dr. Dominique Kerbrat, OMI, Winnipeg**

Higher risk of deaths for prison inmates

Continued from page 18

know that those in prison have a higher risk of early death for a variety of reasons beyond incarceration itself, and that this high risk extends far beyond the period of imprisonment.

People who spend time in jails and prisons in Canada often experienced serious adverse events in childhood, such as physical or sexual abuse. As well, the majority have not completed high school. They have high rates of diseases including mental illnesses, substance use disorders, HIV and hepatitis C. They also tend to have low rates of employment and high rates of homelessness.

Kouyoumdjian is a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto and a family physician in Hamilton. Hwang is a practising physician in general internal medicine at St. Michael's Hospital and a research scientist at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health in Toronto. www.troymedia.com

So what can we do to prevent these premature deaths?

The time in custody offers a valuable opportunity for evidence-based interventions. One obvious focus is preventing the harms associated with substance use, which is very common among inmates. Substance use leads to premature death directly, for example through overdose. It also leads to premature death indirectly, via infection with HIV or hepatitis C in people who share needles, or through cirrhosis and liver cancer in people who drink heavily.

We have a lot of evidence about ways to treat problems with substance use and to prevent associated harms. However, many of these standard treatments widely available in the community are not accessible in correctional facilities. This includes nicotine replacement therapy to help people quit smoking and methadone maintenance therapy for people who are addicted to opiates like heroin and morphine.

We know that people inject drugs in prisons but we don't provide access to clean needles, which leads to people sharing needles and becoming infected with

HIV and hepatitis C.

Even though the risk of overdose in the weeks after release from prison is 56 times what we would expect for the general population, in most jurisdictions we don't train inmates on how to prevent overdoses or offer them the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone when they are released.

We also fail to facilitate access to primary care when people get out of jail. With relatively high rates of early death from a variety of diseases, including cancer (1.6 times as likely as the general population) and heart disease (3.1 times as likely), primary care would provide former inmates with access to prevention programs and to be screened for, diagnosed with and treated for diseases.

Supporting people who experience incarceration is good for these individuals, their families and our communities. Improving access to appropriate treatments could help them improve their health, support their social functioning, improve public safety and decrease re-incarceration.

Let's not waste this opportunity.



Gamache

The Watchers

My love of birds
skipped a generation.
But now
young grandson
seems to share
my fascination.

By Donna Gamache

Faith groups offer strength

Continued from page 1

national community to work harder to prevent conflicts from happening by using the strengths of the faith-based organizations and the religious principles they imbue.

"Tap the faith resources, the wisdom of the different religions in preventing conflicts, in peace-building and in how we recognize human dignity. We just cannot allow conflict to happen and (then) respond," Tagle told CNS.

Tagle said: "As resources are stretched, if donors want to reach more people with better-quality help, then they must utilize better the ready-made tools that they have at their disposal. The World Humanitarian Summit offers us the chance to transform the current humanitarian system by giving local organizations their rightful seat at the table."

Msgr. Robert Vitillo, who heads *Caritas Internationalis* representation to the United Nations in Geneva, echoed his sentiments.

"Local and faith-based organizations are there helping people before, during and after the crisis," he told CNS.

"Yet often in these humanitarian situations, there's a lot of attention given to international agencies, and the national governments which have an important role," said Vitillo, who will become the new secretary general of the International Catholic Migration Commission June 1.

Vitillo said getting the required financial help, especially in protracted emergencies, to those most affected can be a big challenge. International and multilateral agencies often receive the lion's share of

the financial and material resources available which "sometimes do not reach the most vulnerable and most marginalized populations," he told CNS.

"So that's why we feel it's important to be sure that resources are available to the local communities and that those local communities also have a say in how those resources are used," Vitillo added.

Jesuit Father Tom Smolich, international director of Jesuit Refugee Service, said the fact that governments and the United Nations and its agencies "are realizing that the role of faith is really necessary to engage in crisis and solutions is very positive."

Smolich said that, at the summit, he had seen "an expressed and confirmed sense that religious communities, especially religious communities of refugees and the communities which receive them, play a huge role in making sure anything happens."

"JRS serves over 700,000 people. Over 50 per cent of them are Muslim. It's important for us to work with the Muslim community in services we provide," Smolich told CNS.

Anwar Khan, CEO of Islamic Relief USA's board of directors, appealed for the various faith humanitarian groups to "work together and speak together."

"The key issue is to bring people together, and that helps to recognize that we are from different faith groups, different religions, but we have a role in humanitarian action," said Ajit Hazra, faith and development director for World Vision International's South Asia and Pacific Region.



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U.S. bishops decry plans for raids on immigrants

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles said in a May 25 statement that a planned increase in federal immigration raids is “yet another depressing sign of the failed state of American immigration policy.” The raids were announced in mid-May.

Gomez’ comment was echoed by Seattle Auxiliary Bishop Eusebio L. Elizondo, chair of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration. The archbishop is chair-elect of the committee.

“These operations spark panic among our parishes,” Elizondo said in a May 25 statement. “No person, migrant or otherwise, should have to fear leaving their home to attend church or school. No person should have to fear being torn away from their family and returned to danger.”

While saying he recognized the federal government’s role in upholding immigration laws, he said the deportations would not be “an effective deterrent” to migration because these “vulnerable popula-

tions” are facing a humanitarian crisis in their home countries.

On May 24, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel deported a mother and her 14-year-old daughter from the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas.

ICE took the action despite knowing that the family was afraid of being killed in their home country, that their asylum claim had never been heard, and despite knowing that attorneys had requested a stay of removal and were in the midst of filing an appeal, according to Katie Shepherd, managing attorney for the Cara Family Detention Pro Bono Project, which provides legal representation and undertakes advocacy on behalf of mothers and children held in federal family detention centres.

According to Shepherd, ICE also knew that attorneys had requested a stay of removal for the family and were in the midst of filing an appeal.

“ICE swiftly deported the mother and her child, informing

counsel only after the fact. It is outrageous that, knowing that her appeal was in the works and that she had expressed a fear of return, ICE chose to hustle the family out of the detention centre in the dark of night and put them on a plane before the courthouse doors opened,” Shepherd said in a May 25 statement.

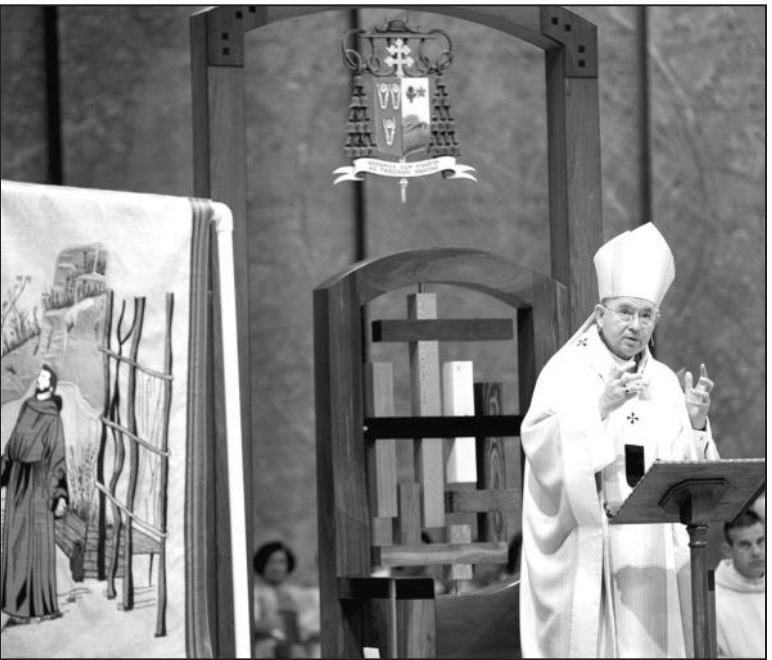
“Just like in January, we are seeing mothers and children who are confused, disoriented, and terrified for themselves and their children,” she added.

In January, Elizondo and Bishop Kevin W. Vann of Orange, California, chair of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, wrote to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson about recent raids that had netted 121 undocumented immigrants in a three-day span, many of them mothers and children.

“Our organizations have firsthand knowledge that these actions have generated fear among immigrants and have made their communities more

distrustful of law enforcement and vulnerable to misinformation, exploitation and fraud,” the two bishops told Johnson. “To send migrant children and families

back to their home countries would put many of them in grave danger because they would face threats of violence and for some, even death.”



CNS/Victor Aleman, Vida Nueva

U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY A FAILURE — Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles delivers the homily during the annual Celebration of Cultures mass in 2014 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. Gomez said in a May 25 statement that a planned increase in federal immigration raids is “yet another depressing sign of the failed state of American immigration policy.”

Hurried lives need moments of peace

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The voice of the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed can be heard only if Christians quiet their hearts through prayer, Pope Francis said.

People who live their lives in a constant hurry tend to overwhelm everything around them, so they need to take a moment “to recover a serene harmony not only with the world and with creation, but also with the Creator,” the pope said May 25 in a video message to participants at the German Catholic Church’s *Katholikentag* festival in Leipzig.

The five-day biannual event gathers tens of thousands of Catholics and Christians from around the country and includes concerts, theatre performances

and guest speakers. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and German President Joachim Gauck were scheduled to be among the speakers for this year’s festival.

In his message, the pope said participating in the festival gives “an authentic witness of Christ,” and he praised participants’ “solid commitment in favour of the weak and the needy.”

The festival’s theme, “Behold the man,” is a reminder that what is important lies not “in doing or in exterior success” but in being attentive to each other’s needs,” he said.

Through prayer and contemplation, he added, Christians can reach more familiarity with God’s mercy and become “always more merciful like the father,” especially toward the weak and marginalized whose lives are often deemed

worthless and who society basically asks “to die quickly.”

“We see how men and women are damaged, tossed around here and there and deprived of their dignity because they do not work or are refugees. We see Jesus suffering and tortured, looking upon the different forms of wickedness and brutality that men and women are subject to or inflict upon each other in this world,” he said.

Pope Francis expressed his hope that the German Catholic festival’s theme will give a voice to the poor and oppressed while spreading “the good news of Christ to men and women.”

“We implore the divine counsellor, the Holy Spirit, so that he may give the courage and the strength to be witnesses of that hope, which is God, for all humanity,” he said.

Deacons gather in Rome, celebrate Jubilee of Deacons

By Cindy Wooden

ROME (CNS) — Thousands of permanent deacons and their wives began their Year of Mercy celebration by cutting straight to the heart of what it means to be a deacon, how the ministry impacts their families and the challenge of explaining their vocation to others, including bishops and priests.

The pilgrims divided into language groups and hundreds of English-, German- and Portuguese-speaking deacons and their families gathered May 27 at Rome’s Basilica of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva.

Whether alone or with their wives, dressed in clerical collars or T-shirts because of the afternoon heat, they began sharing experiences of formation, homiletics training and ministry assignments even before the formal program began.

The Jubilee of Deacons concluded May 29 with a mass celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Square.

In the informal conversations and the sharing afterward, the women were active participants. Many of them had accompanied their husbands to formation classes, and all of them are directly impacted by their husbands’ ministries.

Deacon James Keating, director of theological formation at the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, Nebraska, said deacons are born in families, most of them fall in love and start families before discerning a vocation to the diaconate, and they often are called

upon to minister to other families.

Keating insisted that a deacon who has had proper formation in prayer, theology and the sacraments “will become a better husband,” his wife “will actually fall more in love” because he will be converted to a closer relationship with Jesus and a greater availability to others.

However, he said, that availability is not so much about time and activity, as it is about “being” a deacon. It’s about “relationships, not ministries,” Keating insisted.

Kimberly Norman, whose husband, James, is a deacon at Our Lady of Sorrows Basilica in Chicago, said Keating was right. Speaking of her husband, she said: “Yes, he is a better man. Yes, he is a better husband.” The preparation and ministry “has strengthened our marriage.”

Deacon Norman said his wife has changed, too, and is a particularly good example and reminder to him to make more time for prayer.

The jubilee for deacons began just two weeks after Pope Francis told members of the International Union of Superiors General that he thought it was a good idea to establish a commission to study the role of New Testament deaconesses and the possibility of women serving as deacons today.

The Normans said that was a great idea. “I’m very hopeful,” Kimberly Norman said. Deacon Norman agreed, saying, “Clearly, women have had leadership in the church, but it’s not recognized by ordination.”



CNS/Hendrik Schmidt, EPA

GERMANY HOLDS CATHOLICS DAY — People watch on a large screen as Pope Francis reads a video message May 25 at the opening ceremony of the German Catholic Church’s *Katholikentag* festival in Leipzig. The voice of the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed can be heard only if Christians quiet their hearts through prayer, Pope Francis said.

Giving thanks constantly and in all circumstances liberates us from envy.

— Edward Hays