



Justice action

Commitment to reconciliation between Canada's Aboriginal peoples and other citizens is vital for our children and grandchildren, said Senator Murray Sinclair in Montreal recently. He was there to receive the 2016 World Peace Award from the World Federalist Movement — Canada.



Co-ordinators of Care

The western gathering of Diocesan Co-ordinators of Care and Safe Environment Policies was held in Edmonton this year — the fourth year the group has met to discuss best practices and challenges in the area of abuse prevention.

Eco-friendly buses

The Regina Catholic School Division has introduced propane-fuelled school buses on some of its routes, resulting in 80 per cent fewer emissions, warmer cabins, and better starting for the winter.

Peace initiative

Pope Francis has put the full weight of his global pulpit behind a *Caritas Internationalis* campaign urging governments, especially in the West, to get on with the business of ensuring a negotiated peace in Syria, writes Michael Swan.

Christian exodus

"Despite the fact that thousands and thousands of Christians have left, and are increasingly pushed out, especially from Iraq, why are we not focused on this?" asks Danish journalist Klaus Wivel.

Summer viewing

Summertime and the viewing is usually easy and ephemeral, writes Gerald Schmitz, but there are film releases that deserve a deeper look.

Inquiry needs to address underlying racism

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls needs to address underlying racism and colonialism, observers say.

Deacon Rennie Nahanee, who heads the First Nations ministry in the Vancouver archdiocese, said he hopes the inquiry, whose commissioners were named Aug. 3, will mirror the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in examining systemic causes underlying the issue.

"My own suspicion is it still stems from the residential schools and the colonial history of Canada," he said.

"When we look at colonialism and its impacts past and present, we do see the systemic effects it has had on Aboriginal men and women," said University of Ottawa professor and lawyer Claudette Commanda.

Colonialism "dispossessed" Aboriginal peoples of "the right to be who they are" and their "natural way of life," and their rights to their land, she said. "When looking at colonialism we have to look at it with a broad lens."

The federal inquiry will look into the circumstances surrounding 1,200 murdered or missing indigenous women. B.C. Provincial Court Judge Marion Buller, the first female First Nations judge in the province's history, will lead the commission.

While the inquiry is focused on women and girls, Canada needs to examine "the systemic racism and violence against our men as well," she said.

Inquests and fact-finding missions that look into what happened in various incidences of racism have not stopped the racism, she said. "Colonialism still continues. Society in general has to stop its thinking and behaviour toward Aboriginal peoples."

"Canada needs one big history lesson," she said. She noted TRC chair Justice Murray Sinclair, now a senator, said Canada has to "accept its dark, colonial history" and without accepting it, it "can't move forward."

Commissioners include Michele Audette, former president of the Quebec Native Women's Association; Qajaq Robinson, a Crown prosecutor in Nunavut who is fluent in English and Inuktitut; Marilyn Poitras, an assistant professor of law at the University of Saskatchewan with a background in litigation and treaty implementation; and Brian Eyolfson, from the Couchiching First Nations in Ontario, who at the time of his appointment was serving as deputy director of the Legal Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

With a budget of \$53.86 million, the inquiry is expected to run until the end of 2018.

Nahanee said he hopes it will examine the so-called Highway of Tears between Prince Rupert, B.C., and Prince George, B.C., where nearly 50 indigenous women dis-

appeared over the past 30 years. He expects it to examine the ongoing victimization of indigenous women and girls in Vancouver's notorious Downtown Eastside.

"Why are these things still happening to First Nations' women?" Nahanee said. "These are the questions I hope the inquiry will find the answer to. I'm also hoping more Canadians will become aware of what this investigation is all about."

Nahanee said he hopes the inquiry will have an approach similar to the TRC's Calls to Action that "called on different segments of society to respond" such as universities, schools and churches to "do their part."

"The church is doing something now, especially about prostitution in Vancouver through the social justice office," he said.

The church has a number of ministries in the Downtown Eastside to help women "working on the street to show them somebody cares."

Commanda said the inquiry must place the families of the murdered and missing women at the forefront. Their voices must lead and direct the inquiry, including its recommendations, she said.

The Liberal government launched the inquiry last December, with a consultation with the families. Commanda said the families raised concerns about the murder and disappearance of First



Art Babych

INQUIRY — Judge Marion Buller, the first female First Nations judge in British Columbia, speaks after it was announced Aug. 3 that she will be the chief commissioner of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women. Buller was introduced at the launch of the latest phase of the inquiry, held in the Grand Hall of the Canadian Museum of History. The federal government has committed \$53.86 million over two years to establish the inquiry.

Nations girls and women more than a decade ago.

"We must never forget about the families," she said. "They carry the voices for their murdered and missing loved ones. The families are the frontline workers."

On 'Mercy Friday' pope visits prostitutes

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Continuing his Year of Mercy

practice of going one Friday a month to visit people facing special struggles, Pope Francis paid a surprise visit to a community

helping 20 young women get their lives back together after being rescued from prostitution.

The pope visited the house operated by the John XXIII Community in northeast Rome the afternoon of Aug. 12. The community members, the Vatican said, were "20 women liberated from the slavery of the prostitution racket. Six of them come from Romania, four from Albania, seven from Nigeria and one each from Tunisia, Italy and Ukraine."

The women's average age is 30, said a Vatican press statement. "All of them have endured serious physical violence" and are now being protected.

One of the young women, identified only as East European, told Vatican Radio she never dreamed she would be able to see the pope up close and "tell my story to a holy person like him. I was very emotional and kept crying because I could not believe what I was seeing and hearing."

The young woman said she told the pope that she had been offered a job as a caregiver in Italy, but the offer was fake. Instead, "they kept me locked in an apartment for two weeks, drugged me, tied me up and



CNS/Dean Lewins, EPA

OLYMPIC GOLD — Canadian swimmer Penny Oleksiak and U.S. swimmer Simone Manuel hold up their medals after tying for gold in the women's 100-metre freestyle final Aug. 11 during the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. The 16-year-old swimmer from Toronto was a breakout performer for Canada at the Summer Games in Brazil after winning four medals in the pool, including gold, silver, and two bronze medals. Oleksiak was the Canadian flag-bearer in the closing ceremonies Aug. 21.

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Jesus invites us to love, Pope lauds Refugee Olympic Team

feed the crowds today

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Jesus' compassion toward people in need is not a vague sentiment, but a calling for Christians to bring that same compassion to others, Pope Francis said.

By miraculously feeding thousands of people, Jesus made an act "of faith and prayer" that "shows the full strength of his will to be close to us and to save us," the pope said Aug. 17 at his weekly general audience.

Thousands of people packed the Paul VI audience hall, waving and stretching out their hands eagerly, hoping to greet the pope. Noticing a small child surrounded

by people trying to greet them, Pope Francis motioned the crowd to make way and gave the child a blessing.

In his audience talk, the pope reflected on the Gospel reading of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Jesus, he noted, "does not have a cold heart," but rather is moved by those who follow him and "feels bound to this crowd."

However, the pope noted that Jesus is not only concerned with feeding the hungry crowd, but also invites his disciples to take part in feeding them.

"The Lord goes out to meet the needs of men and women and wants to make each one of us concretely share in his compassion," the pope said.

Jesus' blessing of the loaves before their distribution, he continued, is also repeated in the Last Supper and continues today in the celebration of the eucharist.

In living this communion with Jesus, Christians are called not "to remain passive and estranged" but to relate with men and women by offering "a concrete sign of Christ's mercy and attention," the pope said.

"While we are nourished by Christ, the eucharist we celebrate transforms us, little by little, into the Body of Christ and spiritual food for our brothers and sisters," he said.

The miracle of the loaves and fishes, Pope Francis stressed, is a reminder of the church's two-fold mission to "feed the people and keep them united; that is, to be at the service of life and communion."

Christians, he stressed, are called to be "a visible sign of the mercy of God, who does not wish to leave anyone in loneliness and in need."

"We believers who receive this bread are compelled by Jesus to bring this service to others with the same compassion of Jesus. This is the path," the pope said.

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a personal message addressed to each of the 10 members of the new Refugee Olympic Team, Pope Francis wished them success in their events and thanked them for the witness they are giving the world.

Naming each of the team's athletes from South Sudan, Syria, Congo and Ethiopia, Pope Francis said he had read some of the interviews with team members "so that I could get closer to your lives and your aspirations."

"I extend my greetings and wish you success at the Olympic Games in Rio — that your courage and strength find expression through the Olympic Games and serve as a cry for peace and solidarity," he said in the message, signed in late July.

The 2016 Summer Games marked the first time a refugee team officially participated in the Olympics. Team members marched under the Olympic flag and, in the event a team member wins a medal, the Olympic anthem was to be played instead of the national anthem of the athlete's home country.

Pope Francis expressed his



CNS/David Gray, Reuters

REFUGEE OLYMPIC TEAM — The new Refugee Olympic Team arrives for the opening ceremony in Rio de Janeiro Aug. 5. In a personal message addressed to each of the 10 members of the new Refugee Olympic Team, Pope Francis wished them success in their events and thanked them for the witness they are giving the world.

hope that through the team "humanity would understand that peace is possible, that with peace everything can be gained, but with

war all can be lost."

"Your experience serves as testimony and benefits us all," the pope told team members.

U.S. LCWR leaders look at future

By Andrew Nelson

ATLANTA (CNS) — Two keynote speakers spoke to attendees at the Leadership Conference of Women Religious assembly in Atlanta about keeping grounded and the mystery found in a changing world.

Sister Pat Farrell, of the Franciscan Sisters of Dubuque, Iowa, an LCWR past president, spoke of centring religious life leadership in contemplation.

Margaret Wheatley, author and management consultant, urged members to push back against a current of reactive thinking.

The Aug. 9 - 12 assembly drew nearly 800 participants under the

theme of "Embracing the Mystery: Living Transformation." All of the speakers pointed to the need for contemplative engagement with the struggles and sufferings of the world.

In her Aug. 11 keynote, Farrell said that on a personal level, contemplation is "transformative" and on a communal level it is "transformational leadership."

She spoke of centring religious life leadership in contemplation, describing contemplation as "a response to the movement of Spirit that has been stirring in and among us for some time now, becoming increasingly manifest."

"Where this contemplative impulse might be leading is less obvious. What will be the long-term effect of reclaiming and deepening the contemplative dimension of religious life, of exploring emerging consciousness?" she asked.

Women religious "can only create their future together," Farrell said, "and there is urgent need to be able to sense what is emerging in the group."

In her address Aug. 10, Wheatley told the assembly: "We are living in a time of constant reactivity. I can say confidently, thinking has disappeared from leadership. Reactivity is at an all-time high.

"The feedback from leaders is 'Tell me what to do, I don't have time to think.' That's offered as a legitimate excuse. It's OK to say, I am no

longer thinking, I am just doing stuff."

Taking the time to consider choices and contemplation is not withdrawing from the world, she noted. Instead, it shows wisdom, she said, instead of reacting to crisis after crisis.

The history of Christian women mystics shows an experience of clarity, rapture and complete confidence found in prayer, she said, encouraging her listeners to deepen their prayer life.

"In order to be the people who can be the presence of God, the presence of spirit, the presence of peace, we have to take prayer very seriously, we have to take surrender as the path, and we have to take contemplation and reflection and contemplative prayer as the means to go deeper and deeper into this surrender to mystery. And that leads to an incredibly blessed life," she said.

Sister Mary Pellegrino, congregation moderator of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, Pennsylvania, assumed the office of LCWR president for 2016 - 2017.



CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz

WOMEN DEACONS COMMISSION — Phyllis Zagano, a senior research associate in the religion department at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., and a PM columnist, is one of six women appointed by Pope Francis to a 13-person Commission to Study the Women's Diaconate. She has written extensively on the subject of women deacons.

Dominicans celebrate 800th anniversary

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — By encountering those who suffer, Christians will regain the passion of being witnesses of the truth rather than succumbing to the temptation to preach salvation through knowledge and not through the redeeming power of Jesus' death and resurrection, Pope Francis said.

"In the encounter with the living flesh of Christ, we are evangelized and we regain the passion to be preachers and witness of his love. We also free ourselves from the dangerous temptation of gnosticism which is so current today," the pope said Aug. 4 to members of the Dominican order from around the world.

Attending to the cry of the poor and the marginalized also can help preachers better understand and experience Jesus' message of compassion for people, he said. "The more we go out to satisfy the thirst of our neighbour, the more we will be preachers of the truth, of the proclaimed truth of love

and mercy."

Dominican delegates were in Italy for their general chapter meeting in Bologna July 15 - Aug. 5.

Founded by St. Dominic of Guzman, the Dominicans — also known as the Order of Preachers — are celebrating the 800th anniversary of the approval of their order by Pope honourius III in 1216. According to the Vatican's 2016 yearbook, the order has 5,769 members, of whom 4,385 are priests.

Meeting with them a few hours before he was scheduled to travel to Assisi, Pope Francis jokingly said he was spending "a day among friars."

"Today we can describe this day as 'a Jesuit among friars' because in the morning I'm with you and in the afternoon I'm in Assisi with the Franciscans," he said.

For eight centuries, he said, God has enriched the church with the gift of Dominican friars and nuns whose ministry was built on "three pillars" of preaching, witness and charity, pillars that will "secure the future of the order"

and "maintain the freshness of the foundational charism."

The study of theology is essential, the pope said, but without "a personal union" with God, the Dominicans' preaching "will not touch the heart" and lead to conversion.

Dominicans are called to be "faithful masters of the truth and courageous witnesses" in order to embody the Gospel and make it tangible for others, he said.

"The faithful not only need to receive the word (of God) in its entirety, but also to experience the witness of life of the one who preaches. The saints obtained abundant fruits because — through their lives and mission — they spoke with the language of the heart that knows no boundaries and is understandable to all," he said.

Charity toward those suffering thirst for God, he continued, also must awaken in them a zeal to care for the "suffering flesh of Christ" in those who cry out for "an authentic and liberating" word.



CNS/Stringer, EPA

BLESSED TERESA OF INDIA — A sand sculpture of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata is seen in Rourkela, India. Although the canonization of Blessed Teresa is at the Vatican, special festivities to honour her will continue in Kolkata until Christmas.

Rock the Mount a celebration of mercy

By Kiply Yaworski

CARMEL, Sask. — Rock the Mount 2016, “Putting on the Whole Armour of God,” was held July 23 at the historic Mount Carmel shrine west of Humboldt, Sask., with music, talks, drama, games, prayer, opportunities for confession, and celebration of mass with the bishop.

Music throughout the day was provided by Saskatchewan artists Brad Johner and the Johner Boys, and the Trudel Family of Honey-moon, Sask. Keynote speaker was Matt Nelson of Shaunavon, Sask., who writes the blog Reasonable Catholic and contributes to Word on Fire Ministries.

This year’s daylong Rock the Mount was dubbed a medieval festival of faith, a theme reflected in the medieval games held during the day, and drama presentations about St. Joan of Arc and St.

George. The concession was provided this year by volunteers from the Father Sinnett Council of Lanigan, Sask.

A number of priests were on hand to offer the sacrament of reconciliation after a morning penitential service. Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon presided at the afternoon celebration of the eucharist, along with Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB, of St. Peter’s Abbey, Muenster.

In his homily, Bolen reflected on the profound mercy of God, and the gift of prayer, which allows each person to be in intimate relationship with God.

“What God desires of us in prayer is that our lives become a conduit of openness to the word that God wants to speak to us, so that our lives become a place where we are daily — minute by



Tim Yaworski

ROCK THE MOUNT — Flag bearers prepare to lead the opening procession for the celebration of mass during Rock the Mount July 23 at the Mount Carmel shrine.

minute, hour by hour — able to stand in the presence of God and pour out our hearts,” the bishop said.

Trusting that our lives are in

the hands of our merciful God, “our lives become eucharistic — caught up in the paschal mystery of God’s boundless love, shown in the dying and rising of Jesus,”

Bolen said.

He encouraged those gathered to go forth to be “a sign of God’s boundless mercy for those around us, and for the world.”

CCCB issues Year of Mercy text on reconciliation

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (CCCB) Episcopal Commission for Doctrine has released a text on the beauty of the sacrament of reconciliation or confession.

The text entitled “The Beauty of Mercy: Pope Francis and Confession” compiles a series of Pope Francis’ quotations on the sacrament. It’s intended to “aid Canadian Catholics in celebrating the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy” and to “encourage and challenge both penitents and priest confessors,” according to a release on the CCCB website.

The four-page text is divided into the following headings: God never Tires of Forgiving Us; Finding God’s Forgiveness through the Church; Responsibilities of Priest Confessors; and Confession in the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

“Since he was elected Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis has continually emphasized the infinite mercy of a God who never tires of reaching out,” the document says. “Throughout his teachings, the Holy Father has put forth the Sacrament of Confession as a gift that permits each one of us to encounter the mercy of God in a personal and profound way.”

The quotes from Pope Francis describe the sacrament is one of healing, forgiveness and mercy.

The CCCB document points out however, how the sacrament is anchored in the church.

“The Holy Father stresses that forgiveness is not something that we can give ourselves,” it says. It goes on to say, simply asking God for forgiveness “in one’s own mind and heart” is not enough, because “Jesus himself entrusted to the church the ministry of the forgiveness of sins.”

Going to a priest is a humbling experience that may induce shame, and requires courage, the

document says. “(The pope) continually stresses that the sacrament of reconciliation is a profound gift that strengthens our personal relationship with Christ, heals us, and renews our baptism when we were first incorporated into the community of faith.”

The document’s longest section deals with the responsibilities of priest-confessors, in helping penitents find peace, understanding, liberation and happiness.

“Being merciful is not the same as being lenient as a confessor — nor is being rigid a way to offer mercy, Pope Francis says. Neither the lax nor the rigid confessor ‘treats the penitent as brother, taking him by the hand and accompanying him in his conversion!’ ” the

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Archbishop Hayes dies in Halifax

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Halifax Archbishop-emeritus James Hayes, one of the last remaining Canadian participants in the Second Vatican Council, died in Halifax at the age of 92 on Aug. 2.

Hayes attended the first session of Vatican II as the secretary of Halifax Archbishop Gerald Berry, and as a Council Father as an auxiliary bishop for the second session in 1965. He was named Archbishop of Halifax after Berry’s death in 1967. He retired as archbishop in 1990.

During his episcopacy he served as president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops from 1987-89. He hosted the 1984 visit of St. John Paul II to Nova Scotia.

Through his commitment to Christian unity, he was one of the founders of the Atlantic School of Theology that offers theological training in an ecumenical Christian environment.

“He did something pretty radical at the time, and took a bold step for Christian unity,” said Rev. James Mallon, a priest in the Halifax archdiocese. “You can debate the model, but he took a principle of Vatican II and moved on it.”

The archbishop also “took a move on priestly formation,” with underlying principles of a more “incarnated experience,” as opposed to a more monastic, academic priestly formation, Mallon said.

“He was definitely a pioneer in that respect,” he said.

After Hayes’ retirement as archbishop, he worked full time until 2012 as a palliative care chaplain at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax.

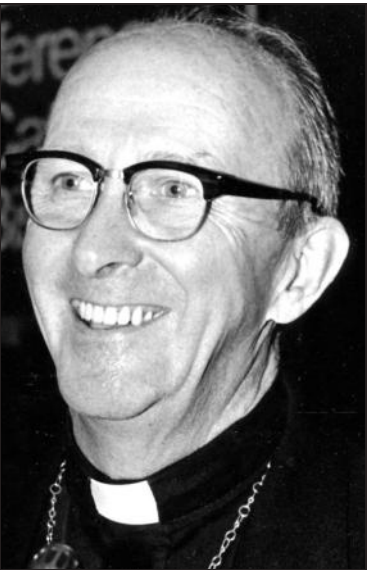
“He basically spent his entire time visiting the sick, the dying and doing funerals,” said Mallon. “He was seen around the hospitals at all hours of the night. He never stopped.”

Mallon said that when Hayes was brought to the hospital the week before he died, he asked for his hospital ID. When asked what he would need it for, the archbishop-emeritus reportedly said, “You never know when someone might need a priest.”

“In the 10 years I’ve known him here in Halifax, I’ve always found him to be a welcoming, gentle and kind man who has always been supportive of bringing the church forward to a credible expression of the gospel,” Halifax-Yarmouth Archbishop Anthony Mancini said in a statement.

When Mallon was 19, he asked to see Hayes over a “troubling theological question.”

“It was quite preposterous, this young guy went to see the bishop about my participation in an event not 100 per cent on-board with the



CCCB

Archbishop James Hayes

Catholic faith,” said Mallon. “He assured me I was not compromising anything by being involved in the way I was involved.”

“Here he was Archbishop of Halifax and he made time for this 19-year-old!” he said.

A couple of years later, when Mallon had begun studies for the priesthood as an independent student in Mission, B.C., Hayes was supportive, even though he had no formal ties to the diocese.

One Christmas, however, when he was home visiting with his family, the archbishop called him and asked him if he would drive him to the Valley. When they returned from the trip, Hayes asked to come in to meet his family. “My mother’s ironing, and here’s the archbishop walking in!”

“He had a great presence with the people and he remembered everyone’s name,” he said.

Mallon notes that Hayes was ordained a priest in 1947 when he was 23 years old, the same day Mallon’s mother was born. “He was a great scholar,” he said. “He had a tremendous memory, mostly on liturgical details.”

Hayes’ funeral took place Aug. 5 at St. Mary’s Cathedral Basilica in Halifax.



Tim Yaworski

DEACONS ORDAINED — Two seminarians from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon were recently ordained to the transitional diaconate, taking vows of chastity and obedience and taking up new roles in another step on the path to priesthood. Bishop Donald Bolen presided at the ordination of Michael Yaremko (right) at the Cathedral of the Holy Family June 24. At that celebration the bishop also welcomed home Deacon Edward Gibney (left), who was ordained to the transitional diaconate June 15 in Rome, where he is studying at the Pontifical Beda College. After a summer assisting in the diocese, Gibney will return to Rome for another year of study, while Yaremko will return to St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton.

Catholic women's groups give witness with actions

By Alicia Ambrosio
Salt and Light

HALIFAX (CCN) — Women who belong to Catholic organizations give witness to God by the causes they support and the influence they bring to bear on a variety of issues, said Halifax Archbishop Anthony Mancini.

At the opening mass of the 96th annual national convention of the Catholic Women's League of Canada and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations North American Conference, Mancini told the women they acted on the Word of God as Mary did, even "in a country inclined to hear many words, many voices, which are not always God wants us to hear."

The archbishop linked the opening of the convention Aug. 14 to the following day's feast of the Assumption of Mary.

"Mary experienced the real presence of the Word of God every time she went to the temple,

Ambrosio is a producer with Salt and Light Television.

but Mary also heard the Word of God in her home, spoken by the angel Gabriel," he said.

Mary "carried the Word of God, gave birth to the Word of God" shared God with the world around her and, in doing so, she shared in his victory, he said.

More than 700 women from across North America were gathered for the Aug. 14 - 17 convention, which focused on palliative and hospice care.

After the mass, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil greeted the women in attendance.

"Your voice is important in our national conversations" he said, adding that the members of the organizations should continue to keep government focused on the important issues.

The Catholic Women's League became a national organization in 1920. In 2016 the organization had nearly 84,000 members in parish councils across Canada. At the local level, members have carried out service projects aimed at improving the lives of people in the community. Nationally, the league has met with government



Salt and Light

OPENING MASS — Halifax Archbishop Anthony Mancini celebrates the opening mass of the 96th annual national convention of the Catholic Women's League of Canada and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations North American Conference in Nova Scotia Aug. 14.

officials to try to shape legislation. The World Union of Catholic

Women's Organizations was founded in 1910 and represents

100 Catholics women's organizations in 66 countries.

Sister shares helpful guidelines for challenges of Year of Mercy

HALIFAX (CCN) — For many the Year of Mercy is a challenge. One finds oneself wondering "how do I do this mercy thing?" While it does entail a certain amount of humility and willingness to let go of oneself, there are some helpful guidelines. Sister John Mary of the Sisters of Life shared some of the necessary "dispositions of the heart" with the 700 women attending the Catholic Women's League national convention in Halifax.

According to Sister John Mary

there are key "dispositions of the heart" one must have to be a woman (or person) of mercy. These dispositions are summed up in three key words: Receive, Delight, and Persevere.

Receive: In the context of being a person of mercy, to receive essentially means to be present to the person before you, to the day before you, and to place emphasis on being instead of doing. Naturally it also means not running away from whatever is before you, whether it be an unpleasant task or person.

Delight: Having received the person before you, the next key is to delight in their presence. That doesn't mean being giddy with laughter, necessarily (though sometimes it might). Instead, it means asking "who is this person before me?" Instead of asking "what should I do for this person?" one should focus on seeing the goodness of the person before them. When one is focused on the goodness of the person before them they are moved to mirror

that goodness, even if that person does not recognize their own goodness. Without this disposition any act of goodness can become mechanical, void of love.

To borrow the words of Pope Francis, this is the disposition that distinguishes between the church and an NGO.

Persevere: Having received and delighted does not guarantee that all will be well. But being a person of mercy means not giving up. That might mean continu-

ing to patiently mirror goodness to a person who cannot see their own goodness, or that might mean upholding values that are not popular. The important element is to avoid being discouraged in the face of perceived failures or setbacks. Sister John Mary gave the example of the current situation in Canada where a law on euthanasia was recently passed saying, "we may have lost the legal battle, but not the spiritual battle."

Key reasons for euthanasia psychological, not physical

By Alicia Ambrosio
Salt and Light

HALIFAX (CCN) — The key reasons patients have sought access to physician-assisted death have not been directly linked to physical illness but human suffering, according to one Canadian physician.

Sister Nuala Kenny, a Sister of Charity of Halifax and a physician, told women gathered for the 96th annual Catholic Women's League convention in Halifax that human suffering has been medicalized.

In February 2015 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the country's ban on doctor-assisted death was unconstitutional. In June of 2016 the Canadian Parliament passed a law regulating physician-assisted death.

Kenny said the Supreme Court ruling that legalized medically assisted dying made euthanasia available to all competent adults with grievous, irremediable illnesses. In June 2016 Parliament passed a law regulating access to physician-assisted death.

The law would limit access to

"competent" people over 18 who suffered from illnesses that would cause an irreversible decline in capacity and would lead to a reasonably foreseeable death. Yet there was no definition of competent and worse, "Canada has people who want a very wide net, they want this open to as many people as possible," Kenny said.

The most serious problem with the discourse around medically assisted dying, according to Kenny, was a skewed understanding of human suffering which would lead people to ask to die for reasons linked to psychological factors.

In surveys, people who expressed a desire for doctor-assisted death had cited factors such as a loss of dignity, a fear of dependence, loss of control, and hopelessness. Kenny said those things indicated psychological distress, not physical symptoms. She offered as an example the difference between chest pain and heartache. The former was a physical symptom while the latter was just as real but could not be treated.

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Senator urges action for reconciliation and justice

By Roma De Robertis, SCIC

MONTREAL, Que. — Commitment to reconciliation between Canada's Aboriginal peoples and other citizens is vital for our children and grandchildren, Senator Murray Sinclair told a gathering at McGill University here Aug. 11.

"Reconciliation belongs to each and every one of us," stressed the former chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Al-

though it is "going to take generations," reconciliation is "not a spectator sport" and requires action now, he added.

The former judge and law professor was in Montreal to receive the 2016 World Peace Award from the World Federalist Movement — Canada. The free public event at the law faculty also included a panel discussion with the theme, "From Global to Local: The Importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to Reconcilia-

tion in Canada."

The event was held during the World Social Forum, which drew thousands of people from around the world to Montreal Aug. 9 - 14 to focus on social and ecological justice and human rights. (See related story, this page.)

Sinclair said Canada was one of many countries historically involved in "cultural genocide." Few Canadians learned about harmful effects of colonial policies, he added.

Britain's Royal Proclamation of

1763 outlining European settlement of Aboriginal territories "was one of the most arrogant documents of the world," he said. While it promised to uphold indigenous sovereignty, after Confederation the Canadian government denied Aboriginal self-government and took resources from indigenous lands.

He said Canada also rejected indigenous peoples' ability to maintain their economies and raise their children. Generation after generation, "resistance was considered futile," he added.

Sinclair said many citizens and "some in the churches" denied harmful effects of seven generations of government-sponsored residential schools administered by churches. He said both residential and public schools taught the "mythology of Indian inferiority." Indigenous people "were treated as irrelevant in the history books" and lost respect for themselves and their own people, he added.

However, after the TRC engaged with church and government leaders to seek their support, "the churches joined forces with the commission." He said through TRC community hearings, they came to believe what the residential school survivors were saying.

Sinclair urged his audience to read the TRC's 2015 final report which outlines what Aboriginal people "should be protected from and what they have a right to expect" in future.

He noted today's young indigenous leaders are well informed, with both western education and teachings of Aboriginal elders. They will publicly protest, demonstrate and take legal measures to ensure

Aboriginal rights, he said.

Conflict "could easily get out of hand," becoming "more and more violent," warned Sinclair.



Art Babyeh

Senator Murray Sinclair

"We cannot allow that to happen," he added.

Instead, we must peacefully develop relationships that ensure transitional justice on the path to reconciliation. "We must never lose sight of the principle of mutual respect," he said. Leadership is needed by citizens as well as from provincial and federal governments, he added.

Sinclair encouraged participants to focus on one of the recommendations of the TRC report. "Talk to colleagues" and employers, write letters to members of Parliament and influence others, he advised. "If they don't hear from you, they will assume that you don't care," he added.

"Citizens of this country must decide to take action" for reconciliation and justice, said Sinclair. "When you hear about injustice, speak out about it," he urged.

Committing globally to another world

MONTREAL — With thousands of people from around the world, Sister Roma De Robertis participated in the 2016 World Social Forum (WSF) held here Aug. 9 - 14.

A former Saskatoon diocesan editor for the Prairie Messenger, she is co-ordinator of justice, peace and integrity of creation ministry among Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception and Associates. De Robertis is a member of the SCIC leadership circle based in Saint John, N.B. The SCIC also invited Maria Olalde to participate in the WSF. Originally from Colombia, she is a political science student at the University of New Brunswick Saint John.

For the first time, the WSF was held in the Global North, gathering civil society (non-governmental) organizations, social movements, activists and engaged citizens. They celebrated the theme, "Another world is needed. Together, it is possible!" Also in Montreal, De Robertis participated in the ecumenical World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL) held Aug. 8 - 13 with the theme, "Resist, Hope, Invent: Another World is Possible!"

The first WSF was held in 2001 in Brazil in response to rapid expansion of globalization policies creating exclusion, poverty and environmental degradation. The Montreal forum offered more than 1,000 presentations and activities in French, English and Spanish focusing on social justice, peace, human rights, climate justice and ecological sustainability. The presence, wisdom and rights of indigenous peoples were highlighted, as was the urgent need to recognize and change colonial attitudes, policies, practices and legislation.

De Robertis is a member of the JPIC Atlantic network. Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation is a service of the Canadian Religious Conference which participated in the theological forum. Based in Montreal, the religious conference includes leaders and members from women's and men's religious communities across Canada.

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace was an official WSF partner, with a strong emphasis on youth participation and international guest speakers. Also engaged on forum panels and in

workshops and creative events were leaders from KAIROS:

Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.



Sister Hélène Allain, NDSC

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM — Sister Roma De Robertis, SCIC (right), and Maria Olalde were among participants at the 2016 World Social Forum (WSF) held in Montreal Aug. 9 - 14.

Religious freedom advocate welcomes court decision

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Religious freedom advocates welcomed the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal decision July 26 requiring the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society (NSBS) to accredit Trinity Western University's (TWU) future law school.

However, the Catholic Civil Rights League, which intervened in the case, raised concerns about the narrow focus of the decision on administrative law. It "did not address Charter arguments on the need for respect for authentic pluralism," said the League in a July 27 release.

Constitutional lawyer Albertos Polizogopoulos, who represented the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada in its intervention, said he was happy with the decision. "We did hope, however, the court would address the religious freedom issues or questions arising out of the Barristers' Society's decision."

"The Court of the Appeal was able to resolve the appeal without going that far, and dealt solely with the jurisdictional questions," he said.

Polizogopoulos said the Nova Scotia Appeal Court ruled differently than Ontario's, which upheld a lower court decision in favour of the Law Society of Upper Canada

not to accredit graduates of TWU's proposed law school.

"Both decisions are related to the provincial legislation that creates the bar societies," he said. "In Ontario, the justices ruled the legislature gave the law society wider authority to deal with law schools than Nova Scotia did."

The Court of Appeal held it is outside the Barristers' Society's jurisdiction to try to regulate TWU's internal policies, pointing out the evangelical Christian university is a private institution not governed by the Charter or the Nova Scotia Human Rights Code. The court ruled the legislation establishing the society did not empower it to engage in determining Charter or human rights code compliance of parties outside of Nova Scotia.

The decision points out the only reason TWU's proposed law school graduates would be denied society membership is due to the university's community covenant that asks faculty and students to abstain from sexual activity outside of traditional marriage. In the decision, Justice J.A. Fichaud wrote the society had no objections to the quality of the education a law graduate would receive, only the existence of the covenant.

The court upheld Justice Jamie Campbell's Superior Court decision of January 2015 that said: "Allowing the (Barristers' Society's) decision to stand would have a chilling effect on the liberty of conscience and freedom of religion."

The League pointed out the decision paves the way for Nova Scotia to adapt its legislation so the NSBS does have jurisdiction over law schools the way Ontario's does so as to enable it to discriminate against graduates of a Christian law school.

"By engaging in a broad discussion of possible proposals toward a pathway of rejecting accreditation of TWU, the court seemed to invite a future clash of competing Charter rights," said the League.

Trinity Western University welcomed the decision and defended its Community Covenant.

"The Community Covenant is a core part of defining the TWU community as distinctly Christian," said Amy Robertson, a spokesperson for the university in a statement. "We are not making a statement about LGBTQ people; we are making a statement about traditional Christian marriage, which is sacred to us."

"The same covenant calls for all members of the TWU commu-

nity to respect the dignity of others regardless of their background," she said. "Loving one another without exception is one of the most important principles of the Christian faith."

Robertson pointed out LGBTQ students can and do attend the university and find it "a safe, welcoming place."

TWU awaits one more Appeal Court decision from British Columbia. All other law societies in Canada have accredited the proposed law school. The League, represented by its president Phil Horgan, a constitutional lawyer, intervened in B.C. along with Archbishop J. Michael Miller and the Archdiocese of Vancouver. Horgan represented the League at both levels of court in Nova Scotia.

TWU underwent a similar court battle over the accreditation of its teachers' college that went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. In that case, Canada's highest court ruled against the B.C. College of Teachers that had denied accreditation. The Supreme Court ruled there was no basis to determine that those who graduate as teachers from TWU would be discriminatory in the classroom, and differentiated between belief and conduct.

Provinces must provide better funds for palliative care

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Respecting the moral conscience of Canadians who oppose medical aid in dying requires systemic changes to improve access to palliative care, according to those who oppose the recently legalized procedure.

“We have the law and we can’t change the law but what we can do is fight for more and better palliative care,” said Ian Gentles, research director for the deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research. “It will help save us from the corruption of turning all of our medical practitioners, our doctors and our nurses, into killers.”

That requires first and foremost a commitment by provincial governments to provide increased funding for palliative care.

“Of all the range of medical treatments, palliative care is relatively inexpensive because it doesn’t involve any expensive surgeries or expensive equipment or expensive drugs,” said Gentles. “All it involves is keeping the

patient comfortable, hydrated and fed, and when necessary having the pain managed.”

Since 2005 Ontario has been allocating a percentage of its health budget to support residential hospice care and expand the existing palliative care network.

Earlier this year the province announced an additional \$75 million will be invested in the sector over the next three years. That money will be added to the \$80 million already allocated over the next three years to bring total funding to \$155 million or \$51.66 million per year. Those additional funds will increase funding to 39 facilities and support the establishment of 20 new hospice facilities.

“Supporting hospices so they can continue to provide excellent care is an important part of our government’s commitment to improve palliative and end-of-life care across the province,” said Dr. Eric Hoskins, the province’s Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, in a June 10 press release announcing the funding.

Gentles called Ontario’s move a step in the right direction that

needs to continue beyond the three-year mark.

“We have to make sure that in the remotest corners of this country that everybody gets good palliative care when they need it,” he said.

“That’s a matter of plugging it into the provincial health care budget (indefinitely).”

Toronto Cardinal Thomas Collins expressed similar sentiments in February when he addressed the federal government’s Special Joint Committee on Physician Assisted Dying.

“Proper palliative care is not available to the majority of Canadians,” he said. “It is a moral imperative for all levels of government in our country to focus attention and resources on providing care which offers effective medical control of pain and even more important loving accompaniment of those who are approaching their inevitable end of life on earth.”

During his five-minute address Collins noted that “our worth as a society will be measured by the support we give to the vulnera-



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

CHOICES — When given the choice of palliative care or assisted suicide, most at the end of life choose the former.

ble,” and to offer the vulnerable death is the complete opposite of offering support.

More recently on Canada’s West Coast Archbishop Michael Miller agreed with Gentles in a piece the Archbishop of Vancouver wrote for LifeSite News.

“With assisted suicide now the law of the land and claiming its first victims, I am greatly alarmed by the impact it is having,” opened the article dated July 5. “We need to redouble efforts to help members of our communities who feel that suicide is the answer to their sufferings. We must call on our governments and on the medical community to provide better and more accessible palliative care.”

Rick Firth, president and CEO of Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, which represents both the hospices and employees, said the change needs to come from within the medical community more than from government — although he isn’t opposed to increased funding.

“An approach would be to train more primary caregivers to do palliative care so that people don’t have to leave their family doctor and go to a specialist to receive the care that they need,” said Firth. “We’ve got a system that is very focused on acute care and cure and

often palliative care referrals come in late in the game.”

He said many patients who are still technically in the “curative treatment mode” could benefit from components of the palliative care philosophy such as advanced care planning, grief counselling and pain management approaches. Firth said medical schools should start training doctors to embed these concepts into routine visits with patients nearing their final stage of life.

“The biggest thing that we can do right now is education of our health care workers and the public on palliative care,” he said. “My biggest concern would be the individual that makes the decision for assisted death because they couldn’t get access to good palliative care. We have a moral imperative, as well as a planning imperative, to make sure that no one in Ontario takes that option because they do not have access to good palliative care.”

Gentles said when someone is presented with both medical assistance in dying and good palliative care, the patient almost always opts for the latter.

“It saves lives and upholds the Christian respect for life that Catholics and all other Christians should adhere to.”

CBA supports expanded euthanasia access

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Canadian Bar Association (CBA) is calling on the government to expand access to euthanasia in a way that, according to opponents, would make it “wide open.”

At its annual meeting, the CBA passed three resolutions to urge the federal government to amend the Criminal Code and allow doctor-assisted dying to mature minors and people suffering psychiatric illness, as well as permit advance directives for people diagnosed with an illness such as dementia. The resolutions passed unanimously at the council level.

“You would have no limits if they were to accomplish their goal here,” said Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition.

Passed in June, the Liberal government’s assisted dying legislation, Bill C-14, was much narrower in scope than what many advocates had sought, based on their interpretation of the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in the Carter case that struck down Canada’s blanket ban on assisted suicide.

The chair of the CBA’s constitutional law and human rights section said their resolutions indicate support for “constitutional rights” as outlined in the Carter decision.

“We have urged the government to align its legislation with the Carter decision and resultant jurisprudence,” said Richard Grant. “The minister is obliged under Bill 14 to look at mature minors, psychiatric patients and advanced consent.”

The law requires the government to have committees in place by December, and to report to both houses of Parliament by December 2018, he said.

Hugh Scher, legal counsel for the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, questioned whether the CBA had expertise over the impli-



CCN/D. Gyapong

CBA ANNUAL MEETING — Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin told journalists Aug. 11 the court does not legislate from the bench when it makes sure laws are consistent with the constitution.

cations of expanding access to mature minors and those with psychiatric illness.

“It’s inappropriate for them to be wading into that debate, particularly absent any such expertise,” he said. “Where the bar association does have expertise is over adjudicative process, fairness, natural justice and legal safeguards to prevent against risks of abuse.”

Scher noted the Supreme Court also called for a regime of judicial oversight to protect against abuses.

“The Supreme Court left it open to Parliament to review and to strike the proper balance between respect for people with advanced illnesses seeking euthanasia or assisted suicide and the requirement of the government to protect vulnerable people and others from the risks of abuse of a legislated system,” he said.

Parliament engaged in substantial consultations both before the bill was introduced and afterward, Scher said. Based on these consultations, Parliament “determined it would be inappropriate, or at least premature” to allow access to these additional groups “at the outset.”

In a plenary address to the CBA Aug. 12, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould stressed the level of non-partisan consultation her government engaged in its “end-of-life” legislation to find the “right balance between protecting autonomy and protecting the vulnerable.”

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, who addressed the CBA Council Aug. 11, told journalists she could not comment about any specific court cases, but she did speak on the issue of legislating from the bench.

“We are very conscious of the fact that our elected parliamentarians and legislators are the primary lawmakers,” she said. But in a constitutional democracy, “citizens have a right to come to the court and ask the court to weigh in on whether a particular provision is constitutional.”

If there is a constitutional defect, the court either gives Parliament or the legislature “time to reconsider the matter or come up with their own law or if the best option is to do something immediately the court will try to adopt a restrictive remedy.”

Euthanasia is a false solution, says Kenny

Continued from page 4

ed medically, except for killing the person with heartache.

Euthanasia, said Kenny, is a false solution to the drama of suffering.

This medicalization of human angst poses challenges for all Catholics and especially Canadian Catholics opposed to euthanasia.

In the same way Jesus trusted that if he went through the passion the Father would take care of him in unimaginable ways, a Catholic would trust that human suffering would not be without meaning or value. However, “this argument has no footing to stand on in public because it is rooted in faith, and thus not

understood,” said Kenny.

“The medicalization of suffering is the rejection of the Paschal Mystery,” she said. The wider society’s rejection of the mystery of the death, passion and resurrection of Christ would lead to future challenges regarding physician-assisted death and require Catholics in Canada to oppose revisions to loosen Canada’s law on euthanasia, according to Kenny. “We need to roll up our sleeves, to advocate for palliative care,” she said adding that every diocese and parish would need to be actively involved in advocating for palliative care.

“I’m sorry, but that’s what we’ve been asked to do if we walk the walk,” said Kenny.

Co-ordinators of Care gather in Edmonton

By Blake Sittler

EDMONTON — The Western gathering of Diocesan Co-ordinators of Care and Safe Environment Policies was held June 7 - 8 in Edmonton. This is the fourth year the group has met to discuss best practices and challenges in the area of abuse prevention.

Some 20 representatives brought together their policies from most of the dioceses in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.



Blake Sittler

CO-ORDINATORS OF CARE — Speakers Christa LaForce of Edmonton Police Child Protective Services and Samantha Dover of Zebra Child Protection Centre spoke to diocesan co-ordinators of care at a western Canadian gathering held in June.

Jubilee for the sick, disabled celebrated at Wakaw shrine

By Mary Nagy

WAKAW, Sask. — The Jubilee for the Sick and Persons with Disabilities celebration June 12 was also the blessing and opening of the third set of Holy Doors of Mercy at the National Shrine of the Little Flower at St. Theresa Parish in Wakaw, Sask.

Committee members welcomed the many pilgrims at a hospitality table in the entrance of the church, followed by the stations of the cross.

Lisa Anderson, a teacher from the St. Therese Institute in Bruno, spoke of the history and meaning of the mural of St. Theresa in the sanctuary at the institute, giving the audience a deeper understanding of the saint's life.

Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., gave a talk on the canonization of St. Louis Martin and St. Zélie Martin, the parents of St. Theresa.

He shared the extremely difficult lives of the Martin family. Despite their trials, they were still able to maintain their sanctity. Thévenot felt their canonization should be a spark for married couples in today's world. He said they give hope for family life and encouragement to reach our own sanctity.

Following the presentations, a buffet luncheon was served. Some people shopped in the religious articles store, while others celebrated reconciliation or continued with their private devotions.

More pilgrims participated in the afternoon celebrations. The crowd gathered at the outdoor altar on the church grounds.

One of the presenters at the two-day gathering was Wayne Provencal, one of the financial administrators with APEX, an insurance group formed by 20 dioceses from western and northern Canada. He spoke of the importance of a shared understanding of implementation of policy.

"I don't want to get on an airplane if the pilot doesn't know what to do in case of a storm," he said.

Provencal and Bishop David Motiuk of the Ukrainian Catholic

Eparchy of Edmonton spoke of formalizing the group of western regions by naming provincial reps who would potentially then address the need for a national conversation to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops next year.

Brian Gedicks, Associate General Counsel for the Knights of Columbus in the Greater New York City area responsible for litigation management in that region, spoke about how the knights in the United States are putting huge efforts into educating their membership about the importance of becoming aware of how diocesan safe environment policies affect their ministry.

Eco-friendly school buses introduced

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — A rainy morning under a couple of tents surrounded by yellow school buses next to École St. Mary School was the scene as the Regina Catholic School Division (RCSd) introduced the new Blue Bird propane-fuelled school buses.

"Eighty per cent fewer emissions, warmer cabins, better starting profile for the winter; they're equipped with all the technology: engine diagnostics, GPS controls and satellite mapping and routing, full camera system so that we can ensure 100 per cent reliable safe and timely transportation," said David White, one of the principals with LP3 Transportation Solutions, with which the RCSd has contracted for its school bus service.

Four buses are specially equipped for wheelchair passengers. White said it was the mission and values of the Regina Catholic School Division that led the company to bid for the contract.

"We at LP3 are honoured to be partnering with the Regina Catholic School Division. Since the beginning when we were choosing which school divisions we would like to put in a proposal it was a match with the mission and values of Regina Catholic School Division that we could get behind and honour," said White in addressing the gathering.

Ward Hepting, another principal in the company, said the "L" in the company name is from the parent company, Legacy group of compa-

"Are you a member of a council that meets in a parish? Are you doing ministry in the parish?" he asked. "If so, then you are a volunteer parish minister and need to abide by the policies."

Another speaker, Lisa MacQuarrie, youth co-ordinator for the Archdiocese of Edmonton, spoke about the implications of safe environment policies and practices for youth camps and ministries with youth.

She spoke as a diocesan minister but also as a mother of six and as a person who attended a summer camp almost every year of her youth.

"Kids go to camps to be re-

vived and rejuvenated and because they are fun," MacQuarrie said. "Good preparation of the camp staff goes a long way to making the camps safe."

MacQuarrie outlined the five-step approach her office uses to ensure the parents and parishes that the camps are a good place to send children. The steps include screening, defining appropriate interactions between counsellors and kids, monitoring and supervision, ongoing training and responding when incidents occur.

She noted that expectations of what camps can do to ensure the

— CULTURE, page 19



Frank Flegel

PROPANE INNOVATION — Jess Henderson of Roush Cleantech and Ward Hepting of LP3 point out the innovation in the engine of a propane-fuelled school bus.

nies headquartered in Saskatoon and the "P3" stands for purpose, passion and promise. White said the company is employee-owned and the new bus drivers will have the opportunity, if they wish, to become shareholders. LP3 hired most of those who drove for First Student, the company that held the bus transportation contract previously.

The buses will transport about 5,000 elementary school students on 83 routes throughout the city. The buses are more efficient and cheaper to operate than traditional, diesel-fuelled buses. "They

burn cleaner and have less wear on the engine so maintenance costs are lower, and propane is cheaper than gasoline or diesel," said Jess Henderson of Roush Cleantech, the company that provided the fuel operating system.

The new buses and a revamping of the bus routes provided the division with a "cost avoidance" of about \$650,000, said superintendent of Business, Finance and Technology, Curt Van Parys. "The government has asked us to find efficiencies and this is one area where we did."

Director of Education Domenic Scuglia said the new buses are quieter and more environmentally friendly. "Our faith asks us to be environmental stewards and we are really excited about the way that LP3 partnered with the bus company to offer fuel efficiency and also considerate to the environment. That's important in teaching our students environmental stewardship and we want our students to make that a priority in their lives."

Correction

THEODORE TRIAL — The legal complaint brought by Good Spirit School Division against Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board and the government of Saskatchewan reported in the PM (July 27, page 7) was incorrectly referred to as the Theodore trial.



Tim Yaworski

SASKATOON — Several groups joined the Saskatoon Peace Coalition to present a memorial event to mark the 71st anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Held at Grace Westminster United Church Aug. 9, the evening program included speakers, music presented by local choirs, Japanese drumming, as well as the lighting of candles and a moment of silence in memory of those killed in the atomic attacks.

Syrian peace may be attainable, but not by war

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

As Armenian Catholics, the Moubayed's don't want to disagree with the pope. But as Syrians who fled their home in Aleppo last year while the bombs came closer and closer, the married couple are not so sure peace is possible.

Pope Francis has put the full weight of his global pulpit behind a *Caritas Internationalis* campaign urging governments, especially in the West, to get on with the business of ensuring a negotiated peace in Syria. "Syria: Peace is Possible" launched July 5 with a video by Pope Francis urging the world community to work and pray for peace in Syria.

"Everyone has to recognize that there is no military solution for Syria, but only a political solution," said Francis. "The international community must therefore support the peace talks heading toward the construction of a government of national unity."

"It's possible, but . . ." said Nayiri Moubayed, clearly uncomfortable with the question of peace now for Syria. "Maybe after four or five years."

Her husband, George, thinks it will be 15 or 20 years before Christian refugees such as his family will be able to return to Aleppo. It isn't just a matter of rebuilding the devastated city — its houses, businesses and infrastructure. A culture of peace will take even longer to build.

"The most important is the people, not the infrastructure," he told The Catholic Register.

Nayiri, George and their six-year-old son Michel have been in Toronto since Jan. 23. After years of armies, militias, barrel bombs and snipers, then six months as refugees in Beirut and a lucky



CNS/Ammar Abdullah, Reuters

IS PEACE POSSIBLE? — People gather July 25 at a site hit by airstrikes in a rebel-held neighbourhood in Aleppo, Syria.

escape thanks to Nayiri's Canadian sister who could sponsor them, the Moubayed's don't look back at their old homeland and predict the sudden flourishing of a democratic, open and peaceful society.

But there's no viable alternative to a negotiated peace as soon as possible, said Ryan Worms, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace's director of in-Canada programs. From Development and Peace's perspective, in collaboration with the community groups it supports inside Syria and among Syrian refugees, negotiations have to include Bashar al-Assad's government.

"What we can say as Development and Peace is, if you want the belligerents to end the conflict you need all of them to talk to one another," Worms said. "You do

not do peace with your friend. You do peace with your enemy or with the groups that you are fighting on the ground. If there is no form of dialogue between all parties to find a peaceful, diplomatic solution, I don't see how we will reach a permanent peace."

As Canada's Caritas agency, Development and Peace has been involved in putting together the Peace is Possible campaign (syria.caritas.org) and will sponsor a national day of prayer for peace on the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, Oct. 4.

Canada is a member of the International Syria Support Group of 26 nations and NGOs who have sponsored negotiations in Vienna last year and Geneva this year. The negotiations have included the Assad regime. At the same

time the Commission for International Justice and Accountability has been preparing the legal case to try Assad and his Central Crisis Management Cell of senior government and military leaders for the barrel bombs, razing of entire cities and besieging cities so that civilians could not access humanitarian aid and food.

Peace negotiations held thus far have ruled out negotiating with designated terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State and the Al Nusra Front. Canadian soldiers are currently training Kurdish fighters who are taking on both groups. The United States and several allies are bombing Islamic State positions in co-ordination with the Iraqi military on the ground attempting to retake Mosul. The Kurds, who are seeking an independent state, have been excluded from the talks by the Turks. Russia's bombing campaign on behalf of the Assad forces has been suspended, but Russia maintains forces inside Syria.

"I'm not sure it's our role as an NGO from Canada to really say

what and how the political process should work," said Worms.

But Development and Peace has advanced the idea that Syrian civil society — unions, community associations, non-governmental organizations — should be involved in the peace process.

"As of today, we are working with some of these groups. There's a richness of expectations, of views and also of dreams of different civil society groups within Syria," Worms said.

The idea of civil society in the Middle East is a western fantasy in the eyes of George Zuhair Kassir, an elder of Toronto's St. Benhem Syriac Orthodox Church. As a retired chemistry professor who worked in his native Iraq, Jordan and elsewhere, Kassir never saw an NGO or association in the region that could operate without the specific patronage of the authoritarian rulers of the region.

"These are luxuries," said Kassir. "You have to stop the war and then do the other things according to civilized society. The war is there. The intruders are there. The killing happens every day, emigration every hour. You can't find the best solution for all that. You have to stop the war in any way (you can), and then you can start bringing people — decent, thoughtful people — to sit and make rules for the future."

Worms maintains that the organizations and people who can make a peace deal work are already in Syria and ready to contribute.

"I don't want to enter into the details of the groups we are working with for security reasons," he said. "But you have a diversity of groups. You're talking about university students . . . also farmers. It could be medical personnel who decide to organize themselves to advocate for greater access to medicines to the conflict zones . . . mothers who would organize around ensuring safe access to schools for their children."

Nayiri Moubayed thinks the best hope for the Christians in Syria is the restoration of the Assad regime to full control of the country, despite whatever war crimes he may have committed.

"If it is Bashar al Assad, there will be various cultures, various people," she said.

But she doesn't think that scenario is very likely either.

"We love Syria. But after the war, everything is changed. They destroyed everything," she said.

"While the people suffer, incredible quantities of money are being spent to supply weapons to fighters," said Pope Francis. "And some of the countries supplying these arms are among those that talk of peace. How can you believe in someone who caresses you with the right hand and strikes you with the left hand?"

Refugee crisis is in developing nations

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

There is a global refugee crisis, but it's not in the rich west, the international director of the Jesuit Refugee Service told The Catholic Register in an email.

Writing from wartorn South Sudan on the eve of the nascent country's fifth anniversary, Jesuit Father Tom Smolich pointed out how it is poor countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia that house the bulk of the world's refugees while rich nations fret over a tiny trickle from the world's 65 million displaced people who make it to their shores.

"Eighty-six per cent of refugees are in developing-world countries. Twenty-five per cent of people in Lebanon are Syrian refugees. That is a crisis, not Europe!" Smolich wrote.

The American priest is particularly disappointed in the U.S. debate over accepting refugees.

"In the U.S.A. especially, we are unwilling to own up to our role in creating refugees in the Middle East and Central America," he said.

Attitudes toward refugees within the church are often parochial and myopic, Smolich said.

"We (the JRS) are criticized in Syria and Iraq for helping and hiring all," Smolich said. "Several bishops would prefer (we hire and help) Christians only — which is against the Gospel and incredibly short-sighted politically. The future of the church in the Mideast is in a mixed reality. The JRS is trying to build the post-war future now — perhaps a bit like the kingdom of God."

JRS offers its services in refugee camps to Muslims and Christians alike, serving them because they are refugees. They hire Muslim teachers, health care professionals and others who work side-by-side with Christian colleagues. It's a policy based on the results of the 2010 Vatican synod on the Middle East where church fathers urged open, democratic, secular societies as the best way of protecting minority Christian populations. The JRS hopes Christians and Muslims who have worked together when they were refugees will continue to work and live together in the region when the war ends.

With refugees across the globe now waiting an average of 17 years before they either settle permanently in a new home or can

return to their old homes, refugees are now the prime example of what Pope Francis means by the "globalization of indifference," Smolich said.

"At JRS we would say the only way to deal with this is to come to know real people, hear their stories and be guided by the Spirit," Smolich wrote.

The JRS is uninterested in the legal distinctions that define different refugee populations, Smolich said. About two-thirds of the 65.3 million people whom the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees counts are not legally refugees because they haven't yet crossed an international border. This includes 6.6 million internally displaced people in Syria and 3.4 million in Iraq.

"JRS and others serve them in the same way we serve those who fit the legal (1951 convention) definition of refugees. In a place like Syria they may or may not be better off than those living in camps in Lebanon or Jordan. Yes, it's more dangerous. But they're not in a camp, they're closer to home," he said. "Staying closer to home usually means a better chance of return or resumption of life after a conflict."

A merciful confessor listens

Continued from page 3

document says. "Rather, the truly merciful confessor listens, accompanies, and encourages."

The document exhorts priests to discover through their own examination of conscience and availing of the sacrament its healing power for deeper conversion.

It concludes with Pope Francis' invitation during the Jubilee Year of Mercy to focus on the sacrament of reconciliation as "an important dimension of experiencing God's mercy."

"So many people, including young people, are returning to the sacrament of reconciliation; through this experience they are rediscovering a path back to the Lord, living a moment of intense prayer and finding meaning in their lives," the document quotes Pope Francis as saying.

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At World Youth Day, church shines on the world

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

KRAKOW, POLAND (CCN) — From the outside, a church can look cold and dark. The stained glass windows don't reveal much of what's inside. But when you walk in, the sunlight streams through the multi-coloured glass and the church comes alive.

This is how the secular world often sees the Catholic Church, said Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley during English catechesis at World Youth Day in Krakow. People often think the church is just a rigid institution of traditions and beliefs. But during the celebrations, the world caught a glimpse of the church's inside.

From July 26 - 31, the global church came alive in this Polish city. Young people from around the world became one in their love for Jesus Christ. No language, culture or class changed the fact we were all there for one reason: to be empowered in our one faith.

The streets were littered with pilgrims. The city was shut down for the celebrations. Many businesses were closed for the week. Residents were encouraged to stay home during times of the main events. No private vehicles were allowed to enter the city and only select transit routes were running at certain times of the day.

Still, the city was buzzing with excitement. Pilgrims brightened the streets with their country's colours. Music and cheering were heard throughout the day and night. Even the residents of Krakow were joyful as they watched young people flood the trams, the roads and the parks. Joy filled every corner.

This is the spirit of the church I

wish the secular world would see more often.

Something as mundane as laundry day became a testimony to the oneness of the Catholic Church. There weren't many laundromats in old town Krakow. The closest one available to us was a 24-minute walk. In a city where you don't speak the language or understand the street signs, the search was a quest in and of itself. More than 20 pilgrims shared eight pairs of washers and dryers. Pilgrims from Tennessee, Nashville, Vietnam, Italy, Portugal and Canada bonded over dirty clothes and cryptic machine instructions.

While we waited for loads to finish, we shared a makeshift potluck dinner from food we bought at a supermarket around the corner. We played charades and sang songs. We talked about our past World Youth Day experiences and how our faith has changed our lives.

During our four hours at the laundromat, I couldn't help but think about the instant camaraderie the pilgrimage created among all of us.

The same instant camaraderie happened when you squished like sardines into the only tram that stopped near Blonia Park where thousands of pilgrims were going to meet Pope Francis for the opening mass. Everyone was hot and sweaty. There was no room to breathe, but spirits were still high and the excitement never left the pilgrims' faces.

When we camped out on the cold, wet ground of Campus Misericordiae and the radio translations were fading in and out, we still stood at attention if only to be a part of the prayer vigil. We slept next to strangers from other cor-

ners of the world and shared stories of the sacrifices they made to make it to the site.

As we trudged back home from the vigil site in the blistering heat, then a raging thunderstorm, pilgrims stayed together and shared food rations to weather the storm. The crowds were suffocating, but no one complained because we knew we were all in this together.

Because of World Youth Day, we shared the same joys and the same hardships. We shared the same excitements and the same anxieties. We came from very different walks of life, yet we were all the same.

This is the miracle World Youth Day brings. It changes your perspective on what the church actually looks like. It's not just a foundation built to support my personal faith, it is a family of people striving to do good and bring hope to the world.

World Youth Day is an opportunity for young people, like me, to realize how much our youthfulness is treasured by the church and the world. Bishops and priests took every opportunity to tell the young crowds how much they are valued as new leaders of the church.

Young people are at a transitional point in their life where they are trying to make their way in the world. Because of this, it is easy to get caught up in the burdens we create for ourselves about building a life and a purpose that will fulfil us. We are anxious about our new responsibility to contribute to the world around us and it makes us forget how much our youthfulness can inspire others.

Pope Francis said it best during the closing mass on July 31: "People may judge you to be

dreamers because you believe in a new humanity, one that rejects hatred between peoples, one that refuses to see borders as barriers and can cherish its own traditions without being self-centred or small-minded. Don't be discouraged. With a smile and open arms, you proclaim hope and you are a blessing for our one human family, which here you represent so beautifully."

During the week, Pope Francis talked about the refugee crisis, the political unrest in the Middle East, the religious persecution around the world, the environmental crisis, the marriage crisis and much more. But truthfully, I don't think he really needed to mention any of it.

World Youth Day is meant to empower us to be the change that we wish for the world. We know the kind of change we want to see and all the pope did was inspire us to mobilize our desire to be that change.



CNS/Bob Roller

WORLD YOUTH DAY — World Youth Day pilgrims pass Wawel Royal Castle as they make their way to Stations of the Cross with Pope Francis July 29 at Blonia Park in Krakow, Poland.

As we come down from our "mountain-top experience" in Krakow, our mission as young people is to bring the fire back into our own homes, parishes and dioceses. The point of any pilgrimage is always the journey back. It's not about the treasures you find on the journey, but about what you bring home as a person renewed.

Music program enriches students through sacred music

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

PORT PERRY, Ont. (CCN) — Maestro Uwe Lieflander always begins a Sparrows choir practice with a warm-up for the brain. A crowd of 80 children from ages three to 14 years old are busy chit-

chatting. But the room falls silent once Lieflander begins to play the first few bars of Mozart's "Requiem."

"Can anyone tell me the name and composer of this song," Lieflander asks the choir. All the children's hands shoot up in the air.

Lieflander shifts gears and plays the melodic movements of Johann Sebastian Bach. All hands shoot back up. He plays Beethoven and Handel. They know all of them.

Because of Lieflander's Sparrows Choir School program, the young Sparrows can recognize a sophisticated repertoire of classical sacred music. He likes to call the program a "music extension school" meant to complement a school's existing curriculum.



Catholic Register/ Jean Ko Din

YOUNG SPARROWS — Uwe Lieflander shares his enthusiasm for sacred music with youngsters in the Sparrows program at Immaculate Conception Parish in Port Perry, Ont.

"It really enriches the lives of the students and it really does what regular schools are supposed to do," said Lieflander.

The Sparrows program is run in partnership with parishes and individual Catholic schools to teach children traditional technique and the value of classical sacred music. The program is typically about 10 to 12 weeks long and

teaches music theory, singing technique and the rich tradition of liturgical music.

"This noble music leaves an indelible mark on the soul. It's almost like ordination, almost like baptism," said Lieflander. "Their lives are being put on a different track right here at the tender age of three or whenever they stumble into the Sparrows."

Lieflander doesn't just teach the technical composition of a piece of music. He gives its history and its significance so that youngsters get a deeper meaning of the liturgy.

Caroline Gainey has seen the transformation in her own children since they joined the Sparrows program at Immaculate Conception Church in Port Perry.

"It certainly brought more joy into my own home," she said. "They've grown an appreciation for sacred music and it brings about a real reverence for mass for them. The music is so beautiful that they know everything they're doing is for the glory of God."

Gainey said her three children look forward to choir practice every week and her family's life is always filled with beautiful sacred music, in the house and in the car.

Mary Lou Elliott, former principal of Canadian Martyrs Elementary School in Oshawa, Ont.,

saw her school transformed by the Sparrows program.

"These students came from homes that weren't able to financially engage in any extra-curricular programs," said Elliott. "These students went from knowing absolutely nothing about music to being able to identify Beethoven and Handel. . . . They went from zero to 100 in this course. It was absolutely phenomenal what these children were exposed to and what they learned."

Elliott has been retired for eight years and Canadian Martyrs has since closed, but she remembers how Lieflander was able to engage with the students. She watched as the students' self-esteem and self-worth grew as the weeks went by.

"He is absolutely a genius," said Elliott. "These students were, by the age of 10 or 12, were out vandalizing or out stealing . . . and yet he took every one of those kids and presented them with an opportunity that they will never again in their lifetime be able to do. It was just amazing what he could bring out of those kids."

Lieflander is a big ball of energy. It's no wonder the children are engaged. He is animated and playful. He leads fast-paced rehearsals

— SPARROWS, page 12

West will not recognize Christian Mideast exodus

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

Middle Eastern Christians have suffered soft, state-sponsored discrimination since the Ottomans ruled and that discrimination has been reinforced over generations by poor, underfunded education systems throughout the region. More recently this evil brew has been stirred into feverish, bigoted campaigns of hate spread by Saudi-funded Wahhabi preachers.

This last decade the whole thing exploded into massacres and mass exodus — a catastrophe recently recognized by the European Parliament and the United States Congress as an unfolding genocide.

The dam burst with the 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq and the millions of refugees who have flowed through and from the region ever since.

A veteran Danish journalist can't understand why this isn't news.

"Discrimination and persecution of Christians in the Middle East is not a clinical, irrational sickness. It is not a phobia. It is a deeply rooted judicial and administrative discrimination that Christians have been subjected to for centuries," writes Klaus Wivel in the conclusion to his recently translated book *The Last Supper*.

Wivel's book first appeared in Danish in 2013. It took more than two years and a global refugee crisis to prick the interest of an English-language publisher, New Vessel Press, which released the book in May.

Wivel — an atheist — finds lack of interest in the Christian exodus puzzling.

"Despite the fact that thousands and thousands of Christians have left, and are increasingly pushed out, especially from Iraq, why are we not focused on this?" Wivel asked in a Catholic Register interview by phone from Copenhagen.

He's not alone in wondering. In Toronto for the Knights of Columbus 134th Supreme Convention Aug. 2 - 4, Knights CEO Carl Anderson openly questioned the priorities of western governments and media.

"We preserve cities as heritage sites. Surely we have to preserve people as heritage sites," Anderson said. "For Yazidis, for Christian communities, yes there is a moral obligation. . . . Do you want to help preserve these indigenous communities that have existed in the region for over 2,000 years? If the answer is yes, that we feel a moral obligation. . . ." Anderson leaves the reporters in the room to complete his thought.

The United States has a particular duty to the Christians displaced first by the 2003 invasion and then by U.S.-backed Arab Spring uprisings that swept the region from Tunisia to Syria, said Iraqi Chaldean Archbishop Bashar Warda.

"They were the ones who invaded the country and changed the whole regime. They have a moral responsibility," Warda said.

Western governments have been reluctant to name the persecution felt by Christians for fear of doing even more harm to Christian minorities, said Wivel.

"There's been a conscious decision not to make this appear as if it's



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

TORONTO PROTEST — Few western voices have raised the alarm on the exodus of Christians from the Middle East, and it is something that Dane journalist and author Klaus Wivel, who is an atheist, has a hard time understanding.

a crusade — as if we are involved in the Middle East for Christian reasons," he said. "They didn't want it to seem as if we were there to protect Christians. They fear, I think with some justification, that if we talk about this too forcefully the Christians would be perceived as a fifth column and they would be attacked for that reason."

For western and particularly European media, talking about Muslim persecution of Christians has the appearance of accusing Muslim minorities in the West, many of whom left the Middle East to escape some of the same problems Middle Eastern Christians face. Immigrant Muslims who already face discrimination and accusations from demagogic politicians shouldn't have to answer for crimes against Christians in places where they no longer live, said Wivel. But reporters should not self-censor either.

"I understand the reason, but I think it's a very bad reason," he said. "We have to write about problems that are here. This is obviously a very big problem."

Neither the media nor western governments have succeeded in protecting Christian minorities by not talking about them.

"The fact is that, even though we did not talk about this, the Christians were driven out of Iraq. Our silence did not help the Christians, especially in Iraq," Wivel said.

As things now stand, journalists can write the obituary for a defunct Christian minority of Iraq, Wivel said. Christians, who before 2003 were four per cent of Iraq's population, make up 40 per cent of the refugees living in countries surrounding Iraq. A pre-2003 population of 1.4 million Iraqi Christians is down to under 300,000 mostly elderly and poor people who simply can't flee, according to a 300-page report the Knights of Columbus prepared for the U.S. State Department in May.

Even if Iraqi government forces, with the help of U.S. and other forces, manage to retake Mosul in coming months, most Iraqi Christians aren't going home.

"They felt, and this is true, that

some of their Sunni Muslim neighbours actually helped out Islamic State — to point out where the Christians and the Yazidis lived," said Wivel.

In Syria, continued survival of diverse Christian communities will depend on the outcome of the war. But survival under Syrian President Bashar al-Assad means Christians will be sheltering under the protection of a murderous war criminal and dictator.

Sizeable Christian communities, both in the region and in the diaspora, are constantly throwing their support behind military dictators — General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt, Saddam Hussein when he ruled in Iraq and Assad in Syria.

"The Christians have sided with the military regimes because that's where they think they will get the most protection," Wivel said. "They would rather live with a military regime than with Islamists. I think that's the math that they're doing. There isn't a third option here, unfortunately."

"A dictator who would try to succeed in governing his country is much better than what you say is this democratic system like the western (system)," Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III Younan told reporters in Toronto Aug. 3. "When you don't have this kind of firm, strong government you will be quickly led to chaos. And chaos is the biggest enemy to minorities in the Middle East."

Not all Middle Eastern bishops are looking to relatively secular, military strongmen. Warda believes a new consensus must be forged globally and in the Middle East.

"Daesh (also known as Islamic State) is not a Middle East problem," Warda said. "It is a global phenomenon. You cannot defeat Daesh without the Muslims. You have to get the Muslims involved in this war. You have to. There's no way out."

But is the West afraid to promote a democratic politics that doesn't ignore religious reality? From Copenhagen, Wivel sees that Europe has no appetite or capacity to talk about religion.

"Europe is becoming more and more secular," he said. "It's not something I decry. I myself am a secular person. We are less and less interested in Christianity in Europe. That strangely enough goes for the church as well, especially where I come from. The church is not very Christian here in this country. I will offend a lot of Christians saying that, but I think that's true when it comes to my country."

But if we can't talk about religious identity even in the church, if we no longer know what it means to live a shared Christian identity, how do we talk about the Middle East?

"You know I am a non-believer and I write that in the book. I think in Denmark and Scandinavia this is seen as giving the book some kind of credibility — because I don't have a Christian agenda for the book," said Wivel.

But in *The Last Supper* Wivel is not an anthropologist dryly observing the final days of some tiny lost tribe. He's witnessing the collective amnesia of the Christian West as the faith which has sustained our civilization, our democracy, our shared values is cut off at the roots.

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Some fine features from summer’s cinematic fare

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Summertime and the viewing is usually easy and ephemeral. Still, there are movie releases that deserve a deeper look.

Les innocents (originally titled *Agnus Dei*) is a masterwork that premiered at the Sundance festival. An article in the July 27 *Prairie Messenger* featured an inspiring interview with its director, Anne Fontaine. The story, based on true events in 1945, takes place in a Polish convent where a number of nuns have been raped by invading Red Army soldiers, the resulting concealed pregnancies provoking both medical and spiritual crises. Taking big risks to come to their aid are two non-Christian doctors from the French Red Cross, Mathilde (Lou de Laâge), the daughter of

Fulton in these early scenes), Oscar is encouraged by his father, Peter (Aaron Abrams), to dream, but also haunted by witnessing a brutal anti-gay hate crime, the instrument of violation becoming a nightmarish recurring vision of internal torment. Oscar also has an imaginary friend, a talking pet hamster (voiced by Isabella Rossellini no less) named “Buffy.” As a teen his best friend, but not girlfriend, is Gemma (Sofia Banzhaf), with whom he shares off-beat costuming interests. His ambition, ultimately frustrated, is to get into a New York cinema makeup program.

As Oscar is increasingly alienated from Peter, a hotheaded homophobe whom he blames for driving away his mother, Brin (Joanne Kelly), he retreats into his room, the closets of which still have her clothes. Another refuge is the treehouse he built

with his dad. It’s there that he’s forced to confront his attraction to Wilder (Aliocha Schneider), a co-worker at the hardware store where both have part-time jobs, and the cool kid with the look and locks of a young Greek god.

Oscar is afraid of what he feels inside. He’s struggling with the monster coming out of the closet. When relations with his dad reach a crisis point, he’s fortunate to have a sympathetic mother to turn to. He might not be able to escape to the Big Apple, but as the last scenes on Fogo Island suggest, he finds a place to be himself and pursue his art. Dunn brings an impressive intense and imaginative visual style to this coming-of-age/coming-out story that, for all its surreal elements (not just the hamsters), brilliantly captures the raw experience of a troubled adolescence.

On the much lighter side is octogenarian Woody Allen’s 47th feature **Café Society** that opened the Cannes film festival. As usual it features a nebbishy New York Jewish character who falls for alluring young women. The former is Bobby (Jesse Eisenberg), the son of working class-parents who has higher ambitions than toiling in a butcher shop. His mother Rose’s brother Phil Stern (Steve Carell) is a big-shot Hollywood producer in the late 1930s heyday of studio pictures. So it is that the affable, if rather shy and awkward Bobby, lands in L.A.’s enchanted surroundings petitioning Uncle Phil for a job, any job. Meanwhile back in the Big Apple, gangster brother Ben (Corey Stoll) is taking care of business in the manner of a cement-suit crime drama.

Bobby’s persistence pays off, and even better he finds himself attracted to Phil’s ever-so-lovely personal secretary Veronica, “Vonnie” for short (Kristen Stewart). Claiming to disdain Tinseltown’s pretensions, she humours Bobby with a supportive casual companionship while dampening any romantic hopes because she already has a “journalist” boyfriend. The problem is, her lover is actually the married Phil who goes back and forth about whether to leave his wife and children. There’s trouble in Phil’s posh poolside paradise and when he breaks off the relationship with Vonnie she seeks comfort in Bobby’s arms. Forget any happy Hollywood ending, however, because Phil does abandon his family and Vonnie chooses him and fabulous fortune.

A heartsick Bobby returns to New York and goes to work in Ben’s nightclub. Turning it into an upscale destination for the rich and famous, he becomes an impresario of this gilded café society, showing a talent that a visiting Phil and Vonnie can admire. Indeed when Ben, convicted on multiple charges including murder (becoming a Christian on death row because it offers an after-life), the notoriety seems only to increase the venue’s popularity with the in-crowd. Bobby still holds a flame for Vonnie but settles instead for the charms of another Veronica, a gorgeous divorcée (Blake Lively) happy to stay home and have his children. Of course, this being a Woody Allen picture, any sweetness and light has a fatalistic edge, summed up in the philosophy that



CNS/Paramount

‘WORLD’S WORST SINGER’ — *Florence Foster Jenkins* is a richly imagined period piece set in 1944 New York based on an actual person who lived to sing. Meryl Streep, Simon Helberg (seen here) and Hugh Grant star.

“life is a comedy written by a sadistic comedy writer” and “live every day like it’s your last because some day you’ll be right.” Bathed in the golden cinematography of master Vittorio Storaro, the movie flits by as a series of frothy sketches, as evanescent as the pleasures of a summer’s night.

Another richly imagined period piece set in 1944 New York is Stephen Frears’ **Florence Foster Jenkins** (<http://www.florencefosterjenkinsmovie.com/>) based on an actual person who lived to sing. Florence (Meryl Streep) was an aging wealthy heiress, society matron and patron of music who had survived for decades with the effects of syphilis contracted from her first husband. Her second, an English actor named St. Clair Bayfield (Hugh Grant), appeared devoted while living in a separate apartment he secretly shared with a young and beautiful lover. Florence’s fame as the “world’s worst singer” was enabled by St. Clair using her money to pay off audiences and critics. Blissfully unaware, she acquired an accompanist on piano, Cosmé McMahon (Simon Helberg), pursued vocal lessons, gave concerts and made bestselling recordings, ultimately fulfilling her dream to sing at Carnegie Hall — packed with well-lubricated war veterans given free tickets. Streep, a good singer, is brilliant as a laughably bad one. Moreover her performance balances the humour with moments of real tenderness and pathos up to the last earthly bow.

Also based on actual events is the wartime thriller **Anthropoid**, directed by Sean Ellis who is also co-writer, producer and cinematographer. Cillian Murphy and Jamie Dornan (Mr. Fifty Shades of Gray) play Josef Gabcik and Jan Kubis, Czech resistance fighters parachuted into their occupied homeland on a mission, codenamed “Operation Anthropoid,” to assassinate the high-ranking Nazi overlord Reinhard Heydrich, the “Butcher of Prague” and an architect of the final solution. Over months of preparation conflicts emerge with the local resistance. Tensions also arise between Josef and Jan, who falls in love with one of the women in the circle that supports and shelters them. The operation obviously exposes everyone to deadly risks and if successful will certainly bring savage reprisals.

Although filmed in Czechoslovakia, the casting of Hollywood actors in main roles (with passable Czech accents) is no doubt a commercial compromise. Everyone speaks English except of course the dastardly Germans. That reservation about authenticity aside, the movie shifts into high gear with the staging of the messy, apparently botched, assassination attempt (on May 27, 1942) followed by acts of betrayal and torture leading up to the ferocious finale in a church where Josef and Jan have been hidden with five other parachutists. This was a heroic real-life suicide squad, in contrast to the dreadful movie of that name about supervillains saving the world.

Finally, a welcome family-friendly fantasy adventure from Disney is David Lowery’s **Pete’s Dragon** (<http://movies.disney.com/petes-dragon-2016>), a superior remake of the 1977 animated original. Pete (Oakes Fegley) is an orphan boy lost for years in the forest whose friend and protector is a magical green dragon he names Elliot. There’s a “green” message too in that Pete’s return to human society involves a forest ranger, Grace (Bryce Dallas Howard), working to preserve the habitat and its endangered species, threatened by the lumber and hunting interests of her own fiancé Jack (Wes Bentley) and his brother Gavin (Karl Urban). Screen legend and passionate environmentalist Robert Redford, who’s just turned 80, also stars as the storyteller who believes in the boy. Highly recommended for all ages.

- Les innocents (France/Poland)
- Closet Monster (Canada)
- Café Society (U.S.)
- Florence Foster Jenkins (U.K.)
- Anthropoid (Czech Republic/U.K./France)
- Pete’s Dragon (U.S.)

“die-hard communists,” and the Jewish Samuel (Vincent Macaigne). The stern Mother Abbess (Agata Kulesza) sees only shame and dishonour. She tries in vain to keep it all under wraps and suffers even more from a terrible sense of guilt. “They (Soviet soldiers) should have killed us,” she says at one point. She has been violated too and in desperation commits an act by a cross that seems unforgivable. Accepting damnation, she cannot forgive herself.

Yet out of this dark winter ordeal that has so shaken the nuns’ faith comes a spring of God’s mercy and promise of new life. The convent takes in homeless orphans of war to be raised along with the babies born from its violence. Mathilde and Samuel may not be believers but it is through them that the spirit of innocence survives.

Earlier this month I had what was in effect a private screening of writer-director Stephen Dunn’s **Closet Monster**, a multiple award winner including being chosen best Canadian feature at last year’s Toronto film festival. It was in a big theatre in a crowded megamultiplex, and I was the only one in the audience. Just as I had been heartened by a small independent homegrown film getting such a release, here was evidence of their usual lonely fate, not only beside competing blockbusters like *Star Trek Beyond* and *Jason Bourne* playing to packed houses, but in comparison to crud like *Mike & Dave Need Wedding Dates*.

Closet Monster features a terrific performance from Connor Jessup as Oscar Madly, a Newfoundland teen torn between divorced parents and wrestling with his sexual identity. As a young boy (played by Jack



CNS/Disney

PETE’S DRAGON — Oakes Fegley stars in a scene from *Pete’s Dragon*, highly recommended for all ages, writes Gerald Schmitz.

As summer days fade, remember the lessons learned

Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



I'm rather sad as I watch summer coming to an end. We are well into August's shorter days and the cooler temperatures that signal fall's imminent arrival and the inevitable return to workaday routines. Summer, even for adults, seems to hold a "school's out" mentality: we all slow down and relax a little more. We manage to take long weekends off, go on holidays, and hang out in parks and on beaches.

Revelling in being outdoors, we pour creative energy into our gardens, hit the golf course as often as we can and spend time cycling or walking. Anything barbecued becomes our favourite go-to meal and we eat outdoors and sit around campfires, roasting marshmallows, singing songs and telling stories. We throng to the various festivals in our cities, taking advantage of the chance to celebrate food, theatre and music. Summertime is, for many of us, a lovely interlude where we have the time to "recreate" and enjoy a gentler rhythm of life than is usually available to us.

As families with children can attest, that ends rather abruptly with September's mandate, "back to school." It's also "back to work" for most of us and the normalcy of taking up our everyday routines and tasks. Lessons and sports start up again and we climb back onto the treadmill of our daily life. Busyness takes over and we quickly forget the, *lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer*. If, however, we are lucky, or more accurately perhaps, if we are wise, we will carry some of summer's wisdom with us into our everyday life.

Summer, if we pay attention to it, frees us to experience the truth of poet Carl Sandberg's line: "Once having passed over the margins of animal necessity, human beings come to the deeper meaning of their bones: the song and the dance and the story and the time for thinking things over." Summer, with its rich possibilities for down time, allows us to get to the "deeper meaning of our bones," that is, the depth level of spirit/soul. In the dizzying array of daily demands, we seldom have the time or space to get there. Philosopher Simone Weil's words ring true for so many of us: "We in our materialistic culture are in danger of spiritual starvation, not because there is no bread, but because we have persuaded ourselves we are not hungry."

It is not a question of disparaging work. In a few weeks we will

be celebrating Labour Day and the contribution of workers worldwide. Catholic social teaching has always emphasized the gift and dignity of human labour, recognizing it as our contribution to God's ongoing creation. Work, whether paid or volunteer, comes to us as gift, as anyone who has struggled with unemployment or underemployment can attest. In our labour, we use our God-given gifts and talents to build a better world even as we are given the material means to support ourselves and our families.

But as Sandberg points out, once our physical needs are met and we step aside from work, we are able to attend to the small, quiet, voice within. Human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and the deeper meaning of our bones confirms our bone-deep need of God. Being both matter and spirit, both need nurturing.

That's where the song, the dance, the story and the time for thinking things over comes in. As artists, poets and mystics everywhere have always known, Spirit is accessed and nurtured more easily through imagination, symbol, and silence than it is through activity, performance, and constant noise. We intuitively know when we say that music "feeds the soul," and similarly, we've experienced the ecstasy of expression that movement and dance provide. Through the lens of stories, we have gained insight into our hearts and heads as our encounters with great literature stir and enlighten us. All of these speak to spirit, and given the time to think things over, we are led to a

Sparrows program keeps young people involved

Continued from page 9

that flutter from moments of great concentration to moments of laughter. He loves the children and the children love him.

This is why, Lieflander said, it is strange to look back at the origins of the program. It began in 1999 as a children's choir program at St. Joseph's Church in Mississauga. Pastor Rev. Marco Testa saw a need for the children of the parish to be involved in Sunday mass, so he invited Lieflander to be the new choir director.

Lieflander was skeptical at first. Conducting the parish's children's choir didn't exactly compare to his aspirations to conduct world-renowned choirs and orchestras.

"One Tuesday afternoon, at 5:30 p.m., I will never forget that, in 1999," he said. "I had 10 kids there sitting in a semi-circle, sitting there frowning and me sitting there frowning as well because I was still waiting for the Bolton Symphony to call me."

He didn't really know what to



M. Weber

LAST, LINGERING DAYS OF AUGUST — The sun sets on a beautiful mid-August evening. "Even as we enjoy these last lingering days of August, as we say goodbye to summer and start making plans for September, let's not forget the deeper meaning of our lives. Let's not forget the wisdom of these golden days and the lessons we have learned: the importance of the songs we sing, the dances we dance, the stories we tell each other and the time we take to think things over," writes Sandy Prather.

more mysterious and profound way of knowing and being. We have touched our bone deep need of God.

Theologian John Shea tells the story of a woman who was asked what it was that she wanted written on her tombstone. "There's always something," she replied. I find that to be true; there is always something to keep us busy and distracted. Even as we enjoy these last lingering days of August, as we say goodbye to summer and start making plans for September, let's not forget the deeper meaning of our lives. Let's not forget the wisdom of these golden days and the lessons we have learned: the importance of the songs we sing, the dances we dance, the stories we tell each other and the time we take to think things over. We will be more human because of it.

do with them, so he grabbed music from the repertoire of an adult choir he was conducting and taught it to the children. He was immediately surprised at how quickly the children picked it up.

"I almost had fun the first time," said Lieflander. "The second time, all the kids were back and not only were they back but there were more of them."

Lieflander has taught more than 14,000 Sparrows over 17 years of the program and the retention rate has been incomparable. Many young Sparrows who joined at the age of three are still participating in the program as 20-something university students.

"Once a Sparrow, always a Sparrow," he said.

He currently manages more than 200 Sparrows in local programs in five locales: Toronto, Ottawa, Port Perry, Barrie and Vancouver. Throughout the year, he travels to the different parishes and schools in Ontario, while an assistant instructor manages the Vancouver program.

Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre

Retreats & Workshops

Art as Spiritual Expression — Gisele Bauche

Saturday, Sept. 17, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Cost: \$40 (includes registration, refreshments and lunch)

Inner Peace in Divine Love: A Spiritual Retreat in Daily Life

Dianne Mantyka, MDiv. Sept. 18, 22, 29 & Oct. 6 & 16, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Cost: \$225 (limited enrolment of eight)

Contemplative and Mystical Powers — Linda Labelle, MA, MS

Tuesdays, Sept. 20, 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18 & 25, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. Cost: \$95

Living Cosmology: Dwelling Within the Journey of the Universe

A webcast with Mary Evelyn Tucker & Richard Rohr, OFM

Thursday, Sept. 22, 7 - 9 p.m. Cost: \$10 webcast. Supper at 5:30 p.m. - \$14 (if available, confirm with receptionist two days prior). Facilitator: Sarah Donnelly

Understanding Codependency:

Living into Healthy & Loving Relationships — Kim Morrison, PhD

Friday, Sept. 23, 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cost \$55 (includes lunch)

Moving to Higher Ground: Conversations in a New Key

Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers, MDiv. Saturdays, Sept. 24, Oct. 29 & Dec. 3, 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., and Thursdays, Oct. 6, 20, Nov. 10, 24, 7 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. Cost: \$280 (Saturday lunch available at \$12 each. Limited enrolment of 12. Attending all sessions strongly recommended)

Joy Through Movement: T'Ai Chi Chih — Donna Aldous

Friday, Oct. 7 - Saturday, Oct. 8, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$100 commuter; + \$160 live-in (includes B & B)

Dreams: Listening to the Holy Unconscious — James Schmeiser

Part of the Spiritual Direction Formation Program, open to the public. Saturday, Oct. 15, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cost: \$40 (includes refreshments and lunch).

The Holy Year of Mercy — Bishop Gerry Wiesner, OMI

Wednesdays, Oct. 19, 26 & Nov. 2, 7 - 8 p.m. Cost: by donation at the door.

Icon Workshop Series — Anne Mycyk and Gisele Bauche

Oct. 19, 26; Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Dec. 7, 14 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Cost: \$175/eight classes, plus \$110 to \$125 for the gesso wood panel board.

Includes: materials, pigments, 23 kt gold leaf on bole. To register: gbauche@sasktel.net

Holy Scripture, Holy Lives: Bible Study for Busy People

Gisele Bauche. Come for one, some or all sessions. Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, 10 a.m. - 12 noon, repeated from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Cost: \$15/session.

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Holy Eucharist: Wednesday afternoons. (Call to confirm time — all are welcome!)

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Taizé Prayer for Christian Unity: Second Tuesday of the month, 8 p.m. Sept. 13.

Day Away: Gisele Bauche. Second Wed. of the month. Cost: \$25 w/lunch. Sept. 14.

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Prather, BEd, MTh, is a teacher and facilitator in the areas of faith and spirituality. She was executive director at Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert, Alta., for 21 years and resides in Sherwood Park with her husband, Bob. They are blessed with four children and 10 grandchildren.

In every age, the Lord is our refuge



Liturgy and Life

Michael Dougherty

Aging baby boomers arguably don't want to feel that they are getting old. Marketing surveys show an age cohort desperate to deny the reality of aging bodies. Corporate advertisers quickly respond. They fill the media with products from anti-aging creams, virility-enhancing drugs, to adult diapers all promoting the illusion of continuing youthful vigour for this generation while all the physical evidence suggests otherwise.

Our "perishable body weighs down the soul," says the Wisdom author. These words, which were long attributed to King Solomon, ring as true now as over two millennia ago. Contemporary Scripture scholars now place the authorship of this text in the Jewish Hellenistic period centuries after Solomon and likely only a century or two prior to the time of Jesus.

We can see in this book the influence of Greek philosophical tradition on Jewish thought. Both have strains pointing toward self-renunciation and detachment from material possessions as a way toward spiritual fulfilment. The "reasoning of mortals is worthless, and our designs are likely to fail." We can only be saved by the wisdom God imparts.

When my father was the age I am now he had already been in a long-term care facility for a half-dozen years. A body stressed by 70-hour work weeks at his garage and fill-

Dougherty is co-chair of the Social Justice Committee at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse, Yukon.

ing station, endless exposure to toxic chemicals, summer hours spent in a blazingly hot, tiny aluminum-roofed building he called an office and in the winter freezing in that same un-insulated shed with its single pane windows, wore him down. All his working life he worried about how he could wring enough income out of a declining business in a dying industrial district to support his wife and seven children. The post-war dreams of a decorated veteran had dimmed in the grim and grit of daily toil.

In his last years his faculties slipped from him one by one. The last time I saw him he had just turned 69. Blind, deprived of speech, permanently bedridden, I held his hand as I told of my own dreams and plans. All too soon, when I had to leave, he squeezed my hand. It was the only way he could tell me that he had heard me. I took that weak pressure on my hand as his blessing.

My journey over the next months would take me as far away as I could conceivably get from his nursing home room. Along dusty roads on the fringe of Botswana's Kalahari Desert, onto the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and into slums surrounding Lusaka, Zambia, I saw other people struggling to realize their dreams and aspirations assisted by Canadian international development agen-

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 4, 2016
Wisdom 9:13-18
Psalms 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14-17
Philemon 9-18b
Luke 14:25-33

cies like the Mennonite Central Committee and CUSO. While away on my travels under the brilliant Southern Cross stretching out high in Africa's dark night sky, my father died.

In our second reading we hear Paul writing from prison in the Roman province of Caesarea Maritima (currently northern Israel) to Philemon of Colossae. It was likely around the year 58 during the two years he spent jailed there. Imprisoned also by an aging body and infirmity Paul had come to rely on a runaway slave named Onesimus. Age and martyrdom would soon claim all the remain-

ing first apostles. Paul asked Philemon to accept Onesimus back no longer as a slave but as a brother. Paul sent his companion away realizing that his own dreams had to be passed on through these new converts to an emerging Christianity community.

On a recent late June morning fresh off a 36-hour bus ride down from Whitehorse, I made my way over to the Saskatoon senior's complex where Leo and Helen Kurtenbach live. Oblate Brother Walter DeMong met me downstairs and brought me up to the Kurtenbach apartment. Leo, now 97 years old, enjoyed sharing memories with Walter and me. The word on younger friends and the social justice causes close to our hearts buoyed us.

Age had not dimmed their enthusiasm for life. As the psalmist says, "In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge." If we really understand this then "we may shout for joy and gladness all our days." I left these honoured elders with a light heart and still lighter soul.

Luke's gospel passage offers two short simple stories. In this passage with the parables of the unfinished tower or army of ten thousand Jesus warns that people cannot share his vision unless they willingly relinquish family, possessions and plans. Without a real spirit of detachment we cannot become full disciples of Christ.

A long time ago a woman of Indian descent shared what was in effect a modern parable with me. Her mother with her last years approaching resolved to lighten the material cord tying her physical being and spirit to her earthly presence. This quiet but intensely devout woman began giving away all her possessions. Item by item she disposed of her personal treasures. Friends, family and even strangers benefited from her resolve. Eventually all she had left were two saris — one for daily wear and one for special occasions.

Time finally came for her life cord to be cut. It was not a thick mooring cable like those tying most of us fast to this earthly port desperately clutching our accumulated wealth and unrealized plans. For her only the finest of threads held her. It could be broken with no more than a last smile. Better tend to my tether!

We all need to better understand mental health and mental breakdown

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



As young boy I longed to be a professional athlete, but I had to soon accept the unwelcome fact that I simply wasn't gifted with an athlete's body. Speed, strength, coordination, instinct, vision, I got by in ordinary life with what I had been given of these, but I wasn't physically robust enough to be an athlete.

It took some years to make

peace with that, but it took me even longer, well into mid-life, before I came to both acknowledge and give thanks for the fact that, while I wasn't blessed with an athlete's body, I had been given a robust mental health, and that this was a mammoth undeserved blessing, more important for life than an athlete's body. I had often

wondered what it would be like to have an athlete's body, to possess that kind of speed, strength, and grace, but I had never wondered what it must be like not to have a strong, steady, resilient mind, one that knows how to return a lobe, split a defence, not be afraid of contact, absorb a hit, and not let the rigours of the game break you.

And that recognition was bought and paid for by some of the most painful moments of my life. As I aged, year after year, I began to see a number of my former classmates, colleagues, trusted mentors, acquaintances of all kinds, and dear friends lose their battle with mental health and sink, slowly or rapidly, into various forms of clinical depression, mental paralysis, mental anguish, dementia of various kinds, dark personality changes, suicide, and, and worst of all, even into murder.

Slowly, painfully, haltingly, I came to know that not everyone has the internal circuits to allow them the sustained capacity for steadiness and buoyancy. I also came to learn that one's mental health is really parallel to one's physical health — fragile, and not fully within one's own control. Moreover just as diabetes, arthritis, cancer, stroke, heart attacks, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and multiple sclerosis, can cause

debilitation and death, so too can mental diseases wreak deadly havoc inside the mind, also causing every kind of debilitation and, not infrequently, death, suicide.

How might one define robust mental health? Robust mental health is not to be confused with intelligence or brilliance. It's neither. Rather it is steadiness, a capacity to somehow always be anchored, balanced, buoyant, and resilient in the face of all that life throws at you, good and bad. Indeed, sometimes it can be a positive blockage to creativity and brilliance. Some people, it seems, are just too grounded and sane to be brilliant! And brilliant people — gifted artists, poets, musicians — not infrequently struggle to stay solidly grounded. Brilliance and steadiness are frequently very different gifts. Through the years that I have been writing on suicide, I have received many letters, emails and phone calls, with anguished concerns about understanding mental health. One letter came from a woman, a brilliant psychoanalyst, somewhat anxious about her own steadiness and that of her family, who wrote: "Everyone in my family is brilliant, but none of us is very steady!" Of course, we all know families where the reverse is true.

In short, we need a better understanding of mental health; perhaps not so much among doctors, psychiatrists, and mental health professionals, where there is already a considerable understanding of mental health and where valuable research goes on, but within the culture at large, particularly as this pertains to suicide.

When we see someone suffering from a physical disability or a bodily disease, it's easy to understand this limitation and be moved to empathy. But this is predicated largely on the fact that we can see, *physically* see, the disability or the sickness. We may feel frustrated, helpless, and even angry in the face of what we see, but we generally understand. We get it! Nature has dealt this person a particular hand of cards, no one's to blame!

But that's not the situation with mental health. Here the disability or sickness is not so overt or easily understood. This is particularly true where the breakdown of a person's mental health results in suicide. For centuries, this has been badly misdiagnosed, not least morally and religiously. Today, more and more, we claim to understand, even as we don't really understand. A deeper, more intuitive eye is still required. We still don't really understand mental fragility.

Our physical health can be robust or fragile. The same is true for our mental health. In both cases, how strong we are depends a lot upon the hand of cards we were dealt, our genetic endowment and the environment that shaped us. We don't get to order our bodies and minds from a catalogue, and nature and life don't always deal the cards evenly.

We need to better understand mental health and mental breakdown. Psychologically and emotionally, we are not immune to all kinds of cancers, strokes, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. And they too can be terminal, as is the case with suicide.

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Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website: www.ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser

Church needs to think, pray about women deacons

By Phyllis Zagano

Pope Francis named just one woman from the Western Hemisphere to his commission on women deacons.

That would be me.

So, what happens next? Fact is, I do not know. I assume at some point in the not-too-distant future, I will receive an invitation to go to Rome to meet with the other commissioners. Our mandate is to study women in the diaconate.

When he spoke to the members of the Union of International Superiors General in Rome on May 12, the Holy Father said he was especially interested in the women deacons of the early church. He said he would ask the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith what it had on the matter and, yes, at the sisters' request, he

Zagano is senior research associate-in-residence at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y. Her books include Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future and Women Deacons? Essays with Answers.

would form a commission.

I wonder what the doctrinal congregation sent. I wonder if it sent along the 1997 International Theological Commission report that found no barrier to women deacons. I understand the report was printed, numbered and readied for the International Theological Commission president's signature, but he refused to sign it. It was not published.

At the time, the International Theological Commission president and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith prefect was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

I don't think we should groan too much. I actually wonder if, 19 years ago, there was wisdom in Cardinal Ratzinger's decision. The diaconate, restored as a permanent vocation, was only 30 years old then, still almost in its experimental and exploratory stages.

It took quite a while for many episcopal conferences to answer the Second Vatican Council's call to restore the diaconate as a permanent vocation. While many U.S. bishops began ordaining

married men as deacons nearly as soon as they could, others did not jump in quickly. For example, it took nearly 40 years for dioceses in the United Kingdom and Ireland to begin training deacons. Even so, the diaconate grew. There are now more than 42,000 deacons worldwide, largely concentrated in western Europe and the United States.

Theory about the diaconate also grew, in keeping with its spread around the world. Paulist Press led the way in the United States with many books by and about deacons. I raised my hand and voice often to ask about restoring women to diaconal ministry.

By 2002 a new International Theological Commission committee, headed by a former graduate student of Ratzinger, completed a study document concluding that "the ministry of discernment, which the Lord left his church," should decide the question of women deacons.

The 2002 International Theological Commission study depends heavily on the work of one scholar, Aimé Georges Martimort (1911 -

2000), who strongly opposed returning women to the diaconate in his 1982 book (translated to English in 1986), *Deaconesses: An Historical Study*. In 2002 the International Theological Commission seemed to agree with Martimort, but included his determination that the question of women in the diaconate was unresolved.

In the years since, other scholars have looked at the question, have retranslated studies and original documents, and have questioned why only half the diaconate has been rejuvenated so far.

Now, in 2016, the ministry of discernment about women in the diaconate has been handed over to 12 scholars under the presidency of another scholar, a Jesuit professor of dogmatic theology who is also the doctrinal congregation's secretary. And so the commission will meet, discern and, one hopes, decide on a recommendation.

Outside the commission meetings, the larger ministry of discernment is already moving along. The usual suspects are criticizing the pope and his commission, one even blogging about

"deaconettes" while fomenting insurrection, if not schism. Others either raise false hopes about women priests, or fight the paper tiger that suggestion represents.

Despite the frayed edges of the conversation, I think it is important for the church — the whole church — to think and pray about women deacons. Were they ordained in ceremonies identical to those used for men? Yes. Was that always the case? Who knows? Did their ordination ceremonies include the epiclesis — the calling down of the Holy Spirit — and the laying on of hands? Yes. Did they have the same tasks and duties as men deacons? No. They had some. But neither did men deacons share their tasks and duties, including anointing ill women and those newly baptized. History alone cannot decide this. One hopes the Holy Spirit is in the details.

I cannot tell you how things will be resolved, or when. I can only say that it appears Pope Francis will make a decision. I genuinely believe his decision, whatever it is, will be the right one.

Pope Francis, gender ideology and colonialist blinders

By Cristina Traina

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At World Youth Day in Poland last month, Pope Francis again condemned "ideological colonization" on issues of gender. It's a note he has struck before, and the outcry from LGBTQ advocates that resulted from his latest remark was both predictable and understandable.

In his address to the Polish hierarchy, Francis once again upheld gender essentialism against the more complex experiences of LGBTQ people. Once again he seemed, paternalistically, to prefer a "simple faith" over sophisticated theological reflection on gender. And once again he seemed simply to repeat the maxims of his two immediate predecessors, St. John Paul II and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

We should never minimize the pain such declarations cause, particularly when they result in coercive policies. Yet we should not overlook an important difference in Francis' position, a difference we need to understand if we hope to have thoughtful discussions on LGBTQ issues with people of his persuasion.

Specifically, we can listen more closely to Francis' claim that rich countries are unjustly shoving the idea of gender choice down the throats of poor nations. We hear Francis as if he were talking primarily about gender. But for him the real problems are northern cultural imperialism and the still-potent effects of colonialism.

For Francis, the story behind

Traina is a professor of religious studies at Northwestern University and a member of the advisory board of New Ways Ministry, a Catholic advocacy group for LGBT Christians. This column first appeared on the ministry's blog, Bondings 2.0.



CNS/Paul Haring

WORLD YOUTH DAY — Pope Francis accepts materials from young people during the closing mass of World Youth Day at Campus Misericordiae in Krakow, Poland, July 31.

the slogan "the ideology of gender" — a slogan that almost always appears in the context of coercion of poor countries — is one he has told before, and it concerns a loan for the construction of schools for the poor two decades ago in his native Argentina.

Approval of the loan, Francis noted in a press conference last year, was contingent on a minister of education accepting and using a textbook that the unnamed funders prescribed in which "gender theory was taught."

In Francis' words:

"This is ideological colonization. They introduce an idea to the people that has nothing to do with the people. With groups of people yes, but not with the people. And they colonize the people with an idea which changes, or means to change, a mentality or a structure . . . certain loans in exchange for certain conditions. . . . Why do I

say 'ideological colonization'? Because they take, they actually take the need of a people to seize an opportunity to enter and grow strong — through the children."

It's clear from the context that the situation was coercive: If you want to borrow our money to serve children in desperate need of education, you will use the book that we approve, whether or not it makes sense to your students in their historical and cultural setting or addresses their most pressing educational deficits.

From Francis' perspective, northern countries that still benefit from colonialism should not be placing endless conditions on almost all forms of grant-in-aid, and even interest-bearing loans, that they make to the Global South, as if southern countries should "earn" northern support.

Rather, as a matter of justice, northern nations should be freely

sharing wealth, academic expertise and other advantages they wrongly gained from colonialism with their neighbours whom they wrongly impoverished by it. When northern nations place conditions on aid that seem intended to undermine what he perceives as the last outpost of indigenous strength in southern nations — their family networks — it's the last straw.

Let's be clear: I'm not arguing that Francis does not have a traditional Argentinian cultural view of gender as binary. He does. I'm not arguing that he's demonstrated a subtle understanding of LGBTQ experiences of gender. He hasn't.

But what Francis is saying, we need to hear: If almost nothing the Global North has forced on the Global South has benefited it, if almost everything the Global North does is poisoned by self-interest, and if almost everything it has imposed has destroyed southern

cultural systems, why should he trust the Global North on gender?

We can work, write and pray for Francis' conversion on this issue. But in the meantime, here is an opportunity for a creative response to his legitimate frustration with the Global North. We can recognize that bad delivery systems compromise good content.

To cite one example: Nearly 500 years ago a Spanish bishop and an early missionary to Latin America, Bartolomé de Las Casas, condemned the coercive, ultimately unsuccessful northern methods of "conversion." It was a time when the dominant evangelization method of European explorers was, in his words, to "annoy, persecute, afflict, and arouse" Native Americans.

Some northerners managed to follow his advice to employ "the power of gentleness, service, kindness, and the words of the gospel to encourage them (the indigenous peoples) to put on the gentle yoke of Christ." He argued for this, and more, for the Native American in European courts. He didn't always win. But thanks in part to his critique of coercion, Christianity stuck.

Likewise, we northerners believe that the spirit of freedom and truth is truly stirring among LGBTQ people today.

Yet, our governments and multinational institutions are justly accused of repeating the sin of coercion. What if, despite our marginalization, we recognized our comparative privilege and power? What if we used that power to lobby not just for loans, but for reparations for the Global South? What if, in addition to continuing our important efforts at gentle, kind, compassionate service to LGBTQ people worldwide, we used that power to persuade our perhaps well-meaning but coercive governments to be less heavy-handed?

That might preach. Like Bartolomé de Las Casas, we will lose some cases. But our message, too, will eventually stick.

Reformation: disagreements not as deep as we thought

Challenge of Ecumenism

Thomas Ryan, CSP



A yearlong series of events in preparation for the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation will be kicked off in just a few months with an international prayer service in Lund, Sweden, on Oct. 31. Its chances of being a headline event are elevated by Pope Francis' participation in the prayer service organized by the Lutheran World Federation.

What observations might be made today about the Reformation by way of a run-up to these events? At a July 4 - 11 conference on "50 Years of International Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue: Assessment and Outlook" at the Lutheran Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg, France, Lutheran Dr. Kenneth Appold, a professor of Reformation history in Princeton, N.J., shared that the disagreements weren't as deep as we tend to think they were.

From 1523 onward, in the absence of any conciliar gathering until the Council of Trent in 1545, there were Reformation conversations or "colloquies" that developed. The aim was the reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants, and there were also some that took place between Reformed (Zwinglian) and Lutheran Protestants, and some between Reformed and Ana-Baptists.

These colloquies, noted Professor Appold, were distinguished by a number of patterns. First of all, they were convened by imperial and not ecclesiastical powers. There were, for example, imperial regional colloquies. And in order to run them, they used university ground rules for disputations. They were, in short, academic debates, with criteria for finding the truth, but they spent a lot of their time arguing about the principles and criteria for their debates. Zwingli's thesis, for example, got little discussion because most of the time was spent disputing foundational debate principles.

Were it not for such dynamics, observed Appold, and if they could have gotten to the questions at stake — like justification, indulgences, the real presence in the eucharist — they might have been able to find agreement. The academic approach did not prove

to be a suitable means for solving the problems.

And as we might observe given the events of our time, politics made it all the more difficult to have a clear conversation about faith. After the Diet of Worms in 1540, the Emperor of the Roman Empire was looking for allies against France and the French king, and he put pressure on the participants in the colloquies. In short, the goal of the talks wasn't so much to reach a theological truth as a political and military alliance. Many political actors got involved, noted Appold, which made a calm discussion about faith very difficult. And this led to a loss of hope and defiant stubbornness — a scenario that may sound familiar to Americans in this electoral season and to Canadians in their response to the Supreme Court's decision on assisted suicide.

To make matters worse, there were also internal Protestant disputes about some of the practices being introduced among Protestants, like new forms of worship and allowing priests to marry, which made it difficult for them to come to agreement amongst themselves.

Trent and Vatican II

Dr. Wolfgang Thönissen, a Catholic professor in Paderborn, Germany, related how the first decades of the Reformation reveal a new era in church life that required new methods of resolving the disputes. Although Luther had appealed to the pope in 1518 for a general council to resolve the disputed issues, it did not happen until the Council of Trent in 1545, due once again to tensions between the emperor and the church. And while the Council of Trent didn't condemn Luther personally, it did condemn his theology. Trent wasn't able to reach consensus on every issue, and tried to ignore the dissension among the church fathers regarding some of the Reformers' issues.

That said, Trent's formal proclamations looked like unity to the outside world, and for the next 400 years the Catholic Church operated from a perspective of condemnation. But what Trent condemned, the Second Vatican Council tried to clarify, observed Thönissen. Vatican II's examination of the questions of 1517 - 1545 led to the conclusion that the dissent among the



CNS/Angelo Carconi, EPA

ECUMENICAL EVENTS THIS FALL — Pope Francis greets people during a visit to Christuskirche, a parish of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Rome in this Nov. 15, 2015, file photo. The pope will visit Sweden Oct. 31 to participate in an ecumenical event in Lund marking the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

Roman Catholic theologians at Trent was overlooked.

An example: For a long time Catholics thought Lutheran reformers completely denied the real presence of Christ in the eucharist. But it was more the concept of transubstantiation that was rejected. What was overlooked was that, while among Catholic theologians this was the "most apt" language to use, it was acknowledged that there were other words that could possibly be used as well.

The point: apparently the Council of Trent didn't condemn everything people thought it had. It simply said that we think this terminology expresses it best, not

that any other way of talking about this should be condemned. From the outside, Trent's texts seemed to be a straightaway condemnation of Luther's texts; but from the inside, there was more nuance. "The teaching was not as fixed as we thought it was," said Thönissen.

If we look at some of the texts of Vatican II, like the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, The Declaration on Religious Freedom, The Decree on Ecumenism, we see that much of what Luther and the Reformers said is presented in Vatican II, e.g. the relationship between Scripture and Tradition; the reform of the sacred liturgy; the priesthood of

all the faithful; and the question of justification. This suggests that Vatican II took up the questions of Luther and the Reformation in a more conciliatory light. And the creation of post-Vatican II national and international Protestant-Catholic dialogue commissions carried the ball forward.

The dogmatic issues are important, and today, after 50 years of work, these commissions have produced an impressive collection of Agreed Statements on historically dividing issues.

We have reached a remarkable extent of accord. Our next step and challenge is reception of these agreements and their implementation at local levels.

We can be heartened by everyday heroics



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

"Peace be to the whole community." — Ephesians 6:23

It is difficult to ignore the news these days. Every news item seems grim, from wars to terrorist activity, economic turmoil to corruption scandals. Everywhere we turn we see evidence of humanity's intolerance, greed and corruption. Watching the news recently I simply had to change the channel. It's not so much that I want to bury my head in the sand, but at times the unrelenting negativity does wear you down.

What perked me up, I must confess, was news of good deeds. A stranger paying a neighbour's fine; a colleague's daughter rais-

ing funds to help her grandmother's fight against cancer; a hiker rushing to the aid of someone being attacked by a bear! For all of the sad news, it's important to remember the extraordinary reach of good-hearted citizens, behaviour that far outweighs the evil in this world, but which attracts far less attention.

Newsfeeds routinely saturate the airwaves with devastation and loss, and then end the program with a cute animal or kids' story. It's not enough. This fails to acknowledge the more heartening reality of everyday heroics: from big picture movements like Doctors Without Borders, to groundbreaking daily gestures like Snow Angels or soup kitchen volunteers.

The reality is that, as human beings, we do so much to stay

connected. The failure is in not seeing this each and every day. Most recently I joined my children as they hunted Pokemon via a new app that is revolutionizing how gamers connect. The game forces people to leave their homes, to walk their neighbourhoods, to reach out to fellow travellers. St. Mary's University campus here in Calgary is filled with young people hunting virtual creatures. On the one hand it is a security nightmare, with one fellow driving his pickup truck in reverse across our lawns while focused entirely on his phone. On the other hand, it has brought strangers to our door in a way we could neither have imagined nor expected.

I read recently about a strand of genetically identical trees in Utah's Fishlake National Forest. It stretches over 100 acres with 47,000 stems and a genetic legacy that is possibly a million years old. It is described as the largest organism on Earth. Nonsense! Human beings are the largest connected organism on the planet, and it is our duty to remember this, and to reach out to others, with every breath we take. This, surely, is Christ's enduring message. Do unto others. What a concept.

Ryan directs the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in Boston, MA.

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Who will win the U.S. Catholic vote in November?

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



Hillary Clinton was likened to Lucifer in a speech at the Republican National Convention, and then Donald Trump referred to her as “the devil.” Not to be outdone, at the Democratic National Convention, former New York Mayor Bloomberg called Trump “a con” saying, “The richest thing about Donald Trump is his hypocrisy.”

In a climate of highly personalized rhetoric and negativity, America’s two major political parties finished their respective (if not overly *respectful*) conventions this summer. My crystal ball suggests that the unpopularity of both presidential candidates will likely cause a lower voter turnout this November, that personal invective will play a larger role than clear policy debate, and that while faith will be used as a vote-gathering lever in these campaigns, religion is decreasing in importance as a

determining element how people cast their ballot.

Hillary Clinton grew up Methodist and taught Sunday school. While her denomination once had social gospel roots, Clinton has been quoted as saying that lessening emphasis on personal salvation and individual faith was an error. While the Methodist denomination officially defines homosexuality as “incompatible with Christian teaching” and opposes legalizing gay marriage and solemnizing same-sex civil unions, Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, which she attends, calls itself a “reconciling congregation” that does not make distinctions among those whom it serves. Abortion is formally frowned upon by the United Methodist Church, but the denomination nevertheless opposes criminalizing abortion as a medical procedure.

When growing up, Donald Trump attended a Presbyterian church in New York, returning to be married there (for the first of his three marriages). He also attended Marble Collegiate Church. That historic congregation’s pastor was Norman Vincent Peale, whose 1952 bestselling book *The Power of Positive Thinking* sold two mil-



CNS/James Lawler Duggan, Reuters

FAITH AND POLITICS — U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is seen in Washington Aug. 5. “While faith will be used as a vote-gathering lever in these campaigns, religion is decreasing in importance as a determining element how people cast their ballot,” writes Joe Gunn.

lion copies in six years. This message of personal fulfilment and the “prosperity gospel” mirrors more of “The Donald’s” personal credo than current Presbyterian policies. (Trump, it must be acknowledged, beat out five Catholic contenders to win the Republican nomination.)

Last February Pope Francis was not impressed with Trump’s promise to build a wall on the Mexican border, saying, “a person who thinks only about building walls . . . and not about building bridges, is not Christian. This is not the Gospel.”

As for the vice-presidential candidates, Tim Kaine of the Democrats is a Jesuit-educated Catholic, and Republican Mike Pence was once an altar boy — but later converted to Evangelical Protestantism.

The Pew centre reports that those who identify themselves as “born-again or evangelical” Christians constitute a sizeable share of the U.S. electorate — 36 per cent of registered voters — compared to 37 per cent of American voters who are non-evangelical Christians. (Evangelicals are less than

12 per cent of the population in Canada.) Evangelicals are much more numerous within the Republican party than among Democrats. Anecdotally, when once I attended a non-congregational religious service in Illinois, I noticed not one, but two Republican representatives had their photos and pamphlets included in the pew bulletin!

One key difference is race: whereas 87 per cent of Republican evangelicals are white, most Democrats who describe themselves as “born-again” or “evangelical” Christians are not white. This suggests that that race and economic status could be more of a deciding factor than religion among black and Hispanic evangelicals. (Alternatively, perhaps not all denominational members absorb the same Gospel messages.)

U.S. Catholics are politically the most split religious demographic — from 2002 to 2014 Catholics voted Democrat 50 per cent of the time. Jewish voters trended much more heavily to the Democrats (73 per cent) as did persons of non-Christian faiths (71 per cent) and persons of no religion (70 per cent). For their part, Protestants voted for the Democrats only 41 per cent of the time.

What is also revealing is that U.S. Catholics pay little political heed to their hierarchs. The centre of Applied Research in the Apostolate reports that only one in five Catholics recall reading the American bishops’ “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” and only one in 20 cites the document as a major influence in political choices. A Pew poll found that only 46 per cent of Catholics saw abortion as very important in deciding who to vote for, whereas other issues rated much higher: the economy (84 per cent), terrorism (81 per cent), health care (78 per cent), immigration (75 per cent) and even foreign policy (72 per cent).

The question for American Jesuit Tom Reese in 2016 is: will Catholics go to Trump in high enough numbers to counter Clinton’s advantage among minorities?

One inmate, one church: welcoming the prisoner

By Peter Oliver

“If every church in Canada worked with just one person coming out of prison, we could cut the prison population in half.” It’s an aphorism that comes up every so often when you work with Christians and prisoners. The federal government has tasked Micah with a contract that puts flesh to these boney words but there is a little more to putting this “proverb” to work than might be obvious at first glance.

What would a church do? What risks are involved? Who would need to be consulted? These are the kinds of questions that get asked from the church side of things.

The prisoner side of things is also punctuated by questions — often very different questions. Where will I live? What will I do for work? What about my addictions, old friends, old enemies and, quite often, where can I get my first pack of smokes? You may have noticed that church attendance isn’t one of the common burning questions. That sheds light on the biggest challenge associated with the “one church, one inmate” idea: there is a huge gulf between the culture of prison and the culture of most churches.

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

Building a bridge between faith communities and prisoners takes time, patience, commitment and a heck of a lot of head-scratching, ear-bending, soul-searching discussion.

It’s strange when you think of it. Welcoming the stranger, community building and loving your neighbour are the meat and potatoes of many Sunday services. You’d think by now, we church people would have worked out how to connect with prisoners. But one thing I can say is that there is a lot of goodwill in our faith communities. Dave (my colleague in crime prevention at



P. Oliver

CONNECTING WITH PRISONERS — Pastor Harry Harder with a former inmate at his church.

Micah) and I have been meeting with churches and we are encountering genuine interest and openness to the project. We even have a few churches that are actively engaged in supporting a person who is integrating into our communities.

Making it work is complex but

the absence of arm-twisting and/or carrot-dangling is vital to its success. The commitment is voluntary for both the person who is being received and the community that welcomes the individual. The heart of the church’s response is an offer of friendship and a community with whom one can worship. This kind of relationship building can help to put some of the survival questions, the “What the hell am I going to do when I get out?” issues, in perspective.

Time spent putting the gospel into action pays big dividends for the community as well. It helps Christians to get in touch with their identity. You can’t welcome someone from prison into your community without a lot of prayer, discussion and discernment. That kind of engagement builds up the community.

Facing our fears is another plus. Crime stories and criminal behaviour create a lot of fear. Left unexamined, these fears can grow, crippling and isolating us. The truth is, almost every prisoner is released back into our communities. Determining how we can support these individuals is a positive way of working through some of our fears.

It can be a win-win-win. Faith grows, the community benefits and we are all safer — sounds like Good News to me.

A dream provides revelation about human nature

Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



Many of us were waiting in line at an elevator for a tour of a multi-storeyed prison, which included a visit to an area where convicts were said to be held in “deep confinement.” Every few minutes a guard led a small group into the elevator and took them to one level or another, then returned for the next group.

When our turn came we went straight down to the lowest floor, passing several others along the way. As the door opened, the guard pointed at a stone arch and a stairwell leading to a region still further below, and said, “Once you get down those stairs, if you dare . . .” but his voice trailed off, and I felt a surge of fear tinged with curiosity of what we might see if we went there.

I assumed that the prisoners in deep confinement would be the most dangerous, psychopaths kept in cages like Hannibal Lector in *Silence of the Lambs*. Indeed, the level on which we had stopped was lined with cages all around, but other groups were already touring this area in what seemed a leisurely way, as if they had declined the guard’s challenge to go any deeper.

The elevator closed behind us, and we stepped timidly through the arch and began descending the steps. The stairwell was dimly lit and it took several sharp twists, but finally we reached a sign at the bottom landing: YOU ARE IN DEEP CONFINEMENT.

We had all felt some apprehension, but what met our eyes was a huge gymnasium where a thousand prisoners were sitting quietly — almost eerily — on risers surrounding the room, with some men and women even squatting on the floor beside us or leaning against the stone wall near the staircase. A few others jostled us on their way to look for seats (I instinctively groped for my wallet, afraid they’d steal it). One convict called me by name, and two men on the left looked at me curiously, as if faintly recognizing me, which only heightened my anxiety further. I smiled back bravely, but feared this crowd of

inmates could attack us at any instant, or break into some riot of their own.

But the auditorium remained hushed. The whole throng seemed to be waiting for something to happen on the floor. And in another instant four prisoners were led out by an instructor who began putting them through a series of challenging and clearly unfamiliar aerobic exercises. The inmates on the risers watched their every move intently. Occasionally someone began talking aloud, but it took only a *Shhh!* from an officer to silence them.

One quarrel did break out — only briefly. The “instigator” appeared to be a man with a mental handicap, and another official

simply led him away, gently and firmly, as if more of a social worker than a prison guard.

Yet the disquiet stayed with me through the remainder of the tour, and to the end of the dream. As I woke up, I was certain there must be hordes of seething energies down in the so-called “unconscious,” ready to erupt at any time and send my life into hell and bedlam.

I rose and went to the washroom, where suddenly, all unbidden, came this redemptive thought: *These are the least of my brothers and sisters. They must be loved, every one of them. There is no other way.* Then, as so often happens in waking from a dream, a song began playing in my head:

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

Later in the day I realized that the energies in deep confinement are petty criminals. They’re almost likeable, yet often enough may become culprits messing up our peace in the quotidian rounds of a life. The deepest things are the most common, and perhaps the trickiest to rehabilitate — these everyday fears and angers, jealousies and guilts, the very things that make us human in the first place.


But see how still that great assembly had learned to sit! How unlike a mob they were, how ready to watch the show and take a turn on the floor when their time came.

Ratzlaff is the author of three books of literary non-fiction published by ThistleDown Press: *The Crow Who Tampered With Time* (2002), *Backwater Mystic Blues* (2006), and *Bindy’s Moon* (2015); and editor of *Seeing it Through*, an anthology of seniors’ writings published by READ Saskatoon. Formerly a minister, counsellor and university instructor, he now makes his living as a writer in Saskatoon.



M. Weber

NATURE’S BEAUTY — A fox dares to come close in her quest to feast on raspberries from a raspberry patch. “Our task must be to free ourselves . . . by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.” — Albert Einstein



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Farrell heads to Rome

Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Dallas was named to head the Vatican's new Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life. Officially beginning its work Sept. 1, it merges the current Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Pontifical Council for the Family.

Farrell is known as a pastoral moderate among the American bishops. Commentators see the appointment as an important part of Pope Francis' reform of the Roman Curia. Michael Winters, in an NCR blog, says: "Bishop Farrell is one of the ablest administrators in the church who also happens to possess the 'smell of the sheep.'" This appointment shows "that Pope Francis has a very clear idea of what is going on in the church in the United States, and who among the hierarchs are supportive of his vision."

Archbishop Blase Cupich of Chicago commented: "I welcome the news that Pope Francis has established a new department for Laity, Family and Life and has appointed Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas as the prefect. Bishop Farrell is uniquely qualified for this task and has my enthusiastic support."

Cardinal Donald Wuerl said: "How appropriate that so soon after the publication of the post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* with its widespread

and wholehearted reception in the church, we would now have a new Vatican office to further that important ministry. We rejoice to know that this challenge has been entrusted to the very competent Bishop Farrell."

Farrell has been the bishop of Dallas since 2007. Before that, he served as auxiliary bishop in Washington, D.C. During his tenure in Dallas, the diocese has made inroads in nearly all sectors of the life of the church, from an increase in priestly vocations to steady Catholic school enrolment during tough economic times. The diocese also has seen more than \$1 billion in expansion, renovation or new construction of churches, parish elementary and middle schools and high schools and other related facilities.

Farrell's "accomplishments and influence are well known throughout the Dallas community at large," said Matt Kramer, president and CEO of the Catholic Foundation, an independent non-profit organization that over the past 25 years has provided \$94 million in grants to religious, charitable and educational organizations through its hundreds of charitable trusts and funds. "It's no surprise that he would be tapped for this role at the Vatican; it is well-deserved," he told The Texas Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Dallas.

"He is a humble servant and a strong advocate for the thousands of people who need hope and help in life —

from children in poverty to immigrants who need a voice to families desperate for education and safe assistance," said Dave Woodyard, president and CEO of Catholic Charities of Dallas. "We wish him all the best and feel blessed to have had his counsel and partnership."

In 2014 Farrell supported the decision of the diocese to house a family that needed to be quarantined because of their exposure to an Ebola patient. For more than a month, four people who were members of a Baptist church were housed in a bungalow in the Catholic Formation and Conference Centre in southern Dallas. At a news conference at the end of the quarantine Farrell said, "We help people because we're Catholic, not because they are Catholic."

Farrell reacted to the announcement of his new role saying he was "extremely humbled" Pope Francis chose him for the new office. "I look forward to being part of the important work of the universal church in the promotion of the laity and the apostolate of the laity and for the pastoral care of the family in accordance with the pope's recent apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), and the support of human life."

In many ways, families today are facing challenges. Lay men and women are seeking a stronger voice in the church. Pope Francis needs strong support for his vision. It seems he has picked the right man for the job. — PWN

Myths about independent schools in Canada simply aren't supported

By Deani Van Pelt and
Derek J. Allison, Vancouver
The Fraser Institute

A lingering myth about private schools continues to cloud public perception in Canada — that private schools are only for the wealthy few.

A recent study using 2013/14 enrolment data provided by provincial ministries of education for every independent school (that's a more appropriate term to describe schools not ensconced in the public systems) in Canada revealed a landscape contrary to the stereotype.

It turns out that rather than

exclusive enclaves for the urban elite, independent schools in Canada come in a wide assortment of types and locations, and serve a remarkable range of educational preferences.

In 2013/14, Canada's 10 provinces were home to 1,935 independent schools, with 368,717

students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, accounting for 6.8 per cent of total school enrolments.

Consider first the urban enclave stereotype.

Although Canada is overwhelmingly an urban society (more than 80 per cent of the population lives in urban areas), fully 37.1 per cent

of all independent schools are located outside of large urban areas, with 22.1 per cent in rural areas and 15 per cent in small or medium-sized centres. Clearly, the "urban" stereotype doesn't hold for Canada's independent schools.

Most importantly, consider the types of schools on the landscape.

Almost half (48.6 per cent) of all independent schools in Canada have a religious orientation. The study found that a third (30.1 per cent) of independent schools in the country are non-Catholic Christian, 8.4 per cent Catholic, 4.9 per cent Islamic, and 4.5 per cent Jewish. Together they enrol almost 180,000 students. It's not wealth but religion, and its accompanying cultural implications, that define these independent schools. Independent schools also bring variety to Canada's schooling landscape because of what they teach and how they teach. Almost one third of all independent schools (30 per

— PROGRAMS, page 19

The facts behind private schools in Alberta

By Derek J. Allison,
London, Ont.

Public funding for private schools continues to be a hot topic in Alberta. As argued in a recent Edmonton Journal opinion piece, some want to eliminate all financial support for private schools. But what are the facts?

Less than four per cent of Alberta's school students attend private schools benefiting from public support. Given that this support amounts to 60 per cent — 70 per cent of the basic per pupil operating grants to public schools — the total amount that could be redirected from private to public schools is minimal.

According to a statement from the education minister's press secretary, Alberta's 94 financially aided private schools received \$151 million in grants this year. In comparison, financial statements from Alberta Education show that \$7,228,040,463 was spent on public, separate, Francophone and charter schools in 2015. That's \$7.2 Billion, with a big, fat "B." Public spending on private schools is a modest drop in a gargantuan bucket.

Just how far would the \$151 million spent on private schools go if spent on public schools? Given Alberta's 2016 budget allocated \$2.9 billion to build or modernize 200 public schools over five years, not very far.

Allison is professor emeritus, Western University, Ontario. He writes on education and social issues. www.troymedia.com

What's more, denying private school parents the partial support their schools currently receive in order to toss a small monetary morsel into the jaws of an insatiable public system would obviously increase overall public spending because taxpayers would have to pay 100 per cent of the costs for the 20,000 or so students for whom they currently pay only 60 to 70 per cent. Removing financial support from private schools would also deny this form of school choice to many poorer families.

Yet most disturbingly, restricting public funding to only public schools ignores the many benefits of a diverse, pluralistic, decentralized education system. Ensuring all children and youth can benefit from a high quality education is the best investment any society can make. To achieve this, governments must necessarily raise tax money to provide appropriate financial support to schools. Governments also have an obligation to establish and enforce appropriate educational standards.

But neither of these mean all children must therefore go to publicly operated schools. To the contrary, if we try hard it's not that difficult to imagine a system of publicly financed and regulated education that has no publicly managed schools at all: A system of public education with no school boards and no school board managed schools.

Still, a far better alternative to either a full public school monopoly or a fully decentralized system of independent schools is a blended system which allows parents

and pupils to freely choose between publicly and privately managed schools which best meet their preferences. Something much like Alberta's current system of public education. Ideally, though, the best blended system would not arbitrarily cap the number of charter schools as is currently the case in Alberta. It would also encourage more public boards to offer alternate schools requested by parents, and it would ensure all families — including the poorest — could afford to send their children to a private school if they so wished.

Both public and private schools benefit society and contribute to the public good. A mature, pluralistic society that fully respects the civil and human rights of its diverse population will recognize this truth and adopt policies which allow each to flourish in ways which mutually benefit families and society at large. Alberta's current arrangements are closer to this ideal than those in any other province. Let's look for ways to move this best system further forward rather than backward.



CNS/Stringer, Reuters

MEXICO MUDSLIDE — A woman gestures as residents shovel to recover belongings from their house damaged after Tropical Storm Earl caused a mudslide in Huauchinango, Mexico, Aug. 7. Forty people were killed.

Mining company in Philippines ordered to stop

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Residents of a small island in the central Philippines hailed a government order that stopped one of the country’s largest mining firms from removing nickel ore stockpiles from their village.

The removal of the ore was ruining local ecosystems, the residents said.

“We thought we’d see our island waste away first,” Rebecca Destajo, a village leader on Manicani Island off the coastal town of Guiuan in Eastern Samar province, told ucanews.com Aug. 18 after the government announced its decision.

Opposition to mining operations on the island had been ongoing

since the Hinatuan Mining Corp., an affiliate of Nickel Asia Corp., acquired rights to mine in the village in 1987.

The firm stopped operations in 1994 because of falling nickel prices, but resumed in 2001. Operations again were suspended in 2002 following local opposition supported by the Diocese of Borongan.

In 2005, the company was granted a permit to remove its stockpiles but residents protested, resulting in clashes with police.

Last month, a government audit found the mining company was taking too much soil and “disturbing the local ecology.”

“They are taking soil out and it goes to China. We are suspending the retrieval of stockpiles, to address the ecological balance,” Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez said Aug. 17.

Mining company officials said the government move was “unfair and baseless.”

“(The audit) did not follow the right procedures. They have not given us any opportunity to talk. We want to express our side,” said Francis Malones, company spokesperson.

The company has filed an appeal with the Department of Environment to lift the suspension.

The social justice group Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc., welcomed the government’s decision, saying “it has been a long time coming.”

“We acknowledge this unity among government agencies and peoples’ organizations to protect

the small islands,” said partnership co-ordinator Yolanda Esguerra.

She said the organization next would seek to revoke the company’s mining permit.

“It is now time that the government seek accountability from this mining company and ensure that it rehabilitates the islands,” said Rev. Odick Calumpiano, social action director of the Borongan Diocese.

The priest said the community is looking forward to the restoration of the ecosystem.

Island residents, mostly fishers and farmers, said they were looking forward to improvements in their lives without the mine.

“Many farmers were lured from their fields and went for the easy money in mining,” said farmer Manuel Gagap.

“There might be nothing left for our children if they continue with it. We might end up leaving the island,” he added.

The Hinatuan Mining Corp. had stockpiled 1.54 million tons of nickel ore on the island. It had exported 292,000 tons.

The company claimed Manicani has a life of 13 years remaining and that 37 acres of a total of 2,879 acres had been mined.

Protecting the innocent a matter of justice

By PM staff

The Little Sisters who fought the big system heard the cheers, held back tears and accepted the *Gaudium et Spes* Award from the Knights of Columbus during their 134th international convention in Toronto, held Aug. 2 - 4.



CNS/Knights of Columbus
Carl Anderson

Mother Loraine Marie Maguire, superior of the Little Sisters’ Baltimore province, nearly cried as she described how happy she felt walking out of the Supreme Court of the United States in Washington after hearing a unanimous May 16 decision in *Zubik vs. Burwell*. The Supreme Court ordered lower courts to find a compromise to exempt the Little Sisters of the

Poor and other religious employers from having to pay for health insurance that covers the cost of artificial contraception.

“I felt as if I was walking on air,” Maguire said. “It was one of the most hopeful, joy-filled days of my life.”

The Knights provided \$1 million to fund the exhaustive legal battle between the Little Sisters and the Health and Human Services mandate contained in rules for the 2011 Affordable Care Act.

The Little Sisters are the first religious order to receive the *Gaudium et Spes* Award, the highest honour bestowed only occasionally by the Knights.

This year the Knights reported they raised \$175 million worldwide for worthwhile causes and more than 73.5 million hours of volunteering. Their 2015 global fundraising was \$1.5 million higher than in 2014. Last year was the 17th year in a row that the Knights set records for both hours of service and dollars raised.

In Canada, the Knights of Columbus in 2015 raised \$22.2 million and gave more nine million hours of volunteer service. Quebec was Canada’s most generous province.

In his address to the Knights, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said protecting “the innocent is a matter of justice that imposes an obligation on all members of society.” He added that abortion is not just another U.S. political issue.

“It is time to stop creating excuses for voting for pro-abortion politicians,” he said.

“I do not see how it is possible to find another issue that can ‘balance’ the devastation of 50 million human beings killed by abortion,” he told Catholic News Service in an email Aug. 10. “There simply

is no other moral issue of that magnitude confronting us today. . . Catholics should draw a bright line between themselves and abortion by refusing to vote for any candidate who supports abortion rights.”

“The confusion arises on the question of what to do about it politically,” he continued. “Some politicians have sought to encourage that confusion by treating the issue of abortion as a matter of faith rather than a matter of justice. . . .

“And it is science — not faith — that leads us to conclude that the life developing in the mother’s womb is a human being.”

With files from CNS.

Philippine war on drugs out of control

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Philippine Catholic leaders say they are powerless to stop a growing number of extrajudicial killings that have come with President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs.

“What I predicted is happening, and the church is powerless to stop the killings,” Redemptorist Father Amado Picardal, head of the Philippine bishops’ Commission for Basic Ecclesial Communities, told ucanews.com. He said the killings are “already unstoppable,” adding that some church leaders are losing hope.

Picardal, who has linked the president to a death squad allegedly responsible for the killings of more than 1,400 people, warned of “dark prospects” for the Philippines following Duterte’s election in May.

During his campaign for the presidency, Duterte vowed to stop criminality, especially the illegal drugs trade, and corruption in the first six months of his term, warning that his administration would be a “bloody” one. Ucanews.com reported estimates of more than 600 people killed since Duterte was elected in May; 211 of those were murdered by unidentified gunmen.

Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan, president of the bishops’ conference, appealed to Filipinos’ sense of humanity amid the killings. He said he was “in utter disbelief,” adding that the killings “are too much to swallow.”

“There is a little voice of humanity in us that I believe is disturbed by the killings,” the archbishop said in a statement read in churches in his archdiocese in early August. He said the “voice of disturbed humanity is drowned out by the louder voice of revenge or silenced by the sweet privileges of political clout.”

“In our dream to wipe out drug addiction, are we not becoming a



CNS/Francis R. Malasig, EPA

PHILIPPINES DRUG POLICY — Filipinos carry the coffin of an alleged drug dealer at Manila North Cemetery Aug. 7. Catholic leaders say they are powerless to stop a growing number of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines that have come with Duterte’s war on drugs.

‘killing fields’ nation?” he asked.

“I don’t have to be a bishop to say this. I do not have to be a Catholic to be disturbed by the killings that jar us every time we hear or watch or read the news,” Archbishop Villegas said.

“From a generation of drug addicts, shall we become a generation of street murderers? (Can) the do-it-yourself justice system assure us of a safer and better future?” he said.

After three drug suspects were found murdered in the city of Tacloban in early August, Father Virgilio Canete of Palo Archdiocese said the killings are

“out of control.”

The victims, two of them women, were shot several times. A crude sign that said “I am a pusher, Lord I am sorry” was placed next to the bodies.

On Aug. 3, six people linked to a drug syndicate were killed in a police operation in the small town of Albura in Leyte province.

“Only the police and the president can stop the killings by declaring a moratorium,” said Canete.

“The church cannot do anything now,” said the priest. “It had already warned of the consequences. Only those who started these bloodbaths can stop it.”



CNS/Jonathan Bachman, Reuters

LOUISIANA FLOOD — Richard Rossi and his four-year-old great-grandson Justice waded through water Aug. 15 after their home flooded in St. Amant, La.

Opportunities are also everywhere and so you must always let your hook be hanging. When you least expect it, a great fish will swim by.

— Og Mandino